

Chicago-based investor hunting for war treasures

Memorabilia from
World War II era
is sought in C.R.

By Jeff Burnham
Gazette staff writer

Wanna get rid of that fork once used at the dinner table of Adolf Hitler? Looking for someone to take that 13th-century Japanese samurai sword off your hands?

Then your man is Jim Dryden, a Chicago-based collector of World War II memorabilia who scours the country for war souvenirs gathering dust in the attic.

He brought his traveling "you-got-it-I'll-buy-it" show to Cedar Rapids earlier this week, and plans to return Monday and Tuesday.

Dryden, 46, of Hawthorn Woods, Ill., said he began collecting WWII souvenirs about 20 years ago — though he's never been in the military.

It all started, he recounted, when a relative gave him a few Japanese items from WWII.

"I WAS fascinated by the craftsmanship. It's remarkable, especially in their blades, daggers and medals," Dryden added.

He's since gathered thousands of the items, ranging from German presentation goblets to 700-year-old samurai swords returned to battle in WWII.

Dryden has extended his gathering the past few years to coincide with his job as a retail consultant, which takes him around the country.

An advertisement Dryden took out for his Cedar Rapids stop



Jim Dryden

Fascinated by the craftsmanship

claimed he pays up to \$10,000 cash for some items. He declined to say how much he's invested in his collection, and termed an inquiry about where he gets his money as "inappropriate."

Eventually, Dryden wants to establish a museum to show his collection. "We need to illustrate to the younger generation that there was a major war going on for us up to 1945," he said.

Many younger people "really don't know what that war was about. They don't have any idea of who we fought, that we needed to stop the aggression of the Japanese and of Nazi Germany," Dryden added.