

International Law Enforcement Games

by Cst. J.W. Noyes

The International Law Enforcement Games (ILEG) is an olympic-style sporting event held every two years in a different location, to promote physical fitness and camaraderie among peace officers from all over the world. In 1990, the ILEG were hosted by the Edmonton Police Service and RCMP "K" Division, July 29 to August 4, at Edmonton, Alberta.

The games drew 2325 competitors from 18 countries, from as far away as Zimbabwe, Turkey and the United Arab Emirates. The largest contingents came from Australia, the United States and Canada. The games were financed primarily through sponsorship, merchandising and registration fees from the athletes, raising a total of \$800,000. A/Commr. G.J. Grieg, CO, "K" Division, and Chief D. McNally, Edmonton Police Service, were instrumental in garnering public support to ensure the success of the games.

Forty-six different events were held, including ice hockey for the first time, and the "Toughest Cop Alive" competition unique to the ILEG. This popular event tests peace officers' agility, strength and stamina and is a specialty of Swedish and Norwegian competitors. Another Scandinavian and European favourite is the Police Pentathlon, consisting of five events: a practical police course shoot, swimming, cross country run, 100-metre hurdles and the long jump. It drew the largest number of competitors. Another popular competition with police service dogs tests the ability of both dogs and handlers, encompassing agility, obedience and team work in a variety of situations.

Medals were awarded for first, second and third place finishers in various age, sex and weight categories, and were distributed fairly evenly with the United States and Australia finishing slightly ahead of the rest.

At a trade fair held during the week, local and international exhibitors displayed and sold various items of interest to the public. The most popular items were the pins—more than one hundred different pins were produced, representing sporting events, sponsors, local law enforcement agencies and other departments. Profits from the sales of thousands of pins, T-shirts, ball caps, golf and rugby shirts helped finance the games.

A legacy of sporting facilities left in Edmonton from the University and Commonwealth Games provided first rate facilities for the athletes. Sports sites at the University of Alberta, Kinsmen Field House, and others set a new standard of excellence for the ILEG. More than 1300 volunteers signed up to help. The weather was very cooperative as well, with a full week of warm, sunny weather boosting sales of liquid refreshments.

The games commenced with an impressive opening ceremony at the Northland Coliseum, featuring local displays of culture and a parade of athletes. Later that evening, a Welcome the World barbecue drew 1600 people who enjoyed good food and music and socialized with fellow competitors. On Thursday