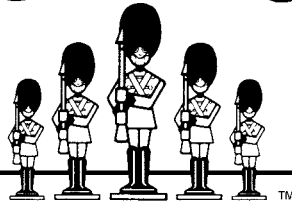


Summer  
2020

The Journal for Collectors

Volume 44 Number 2  
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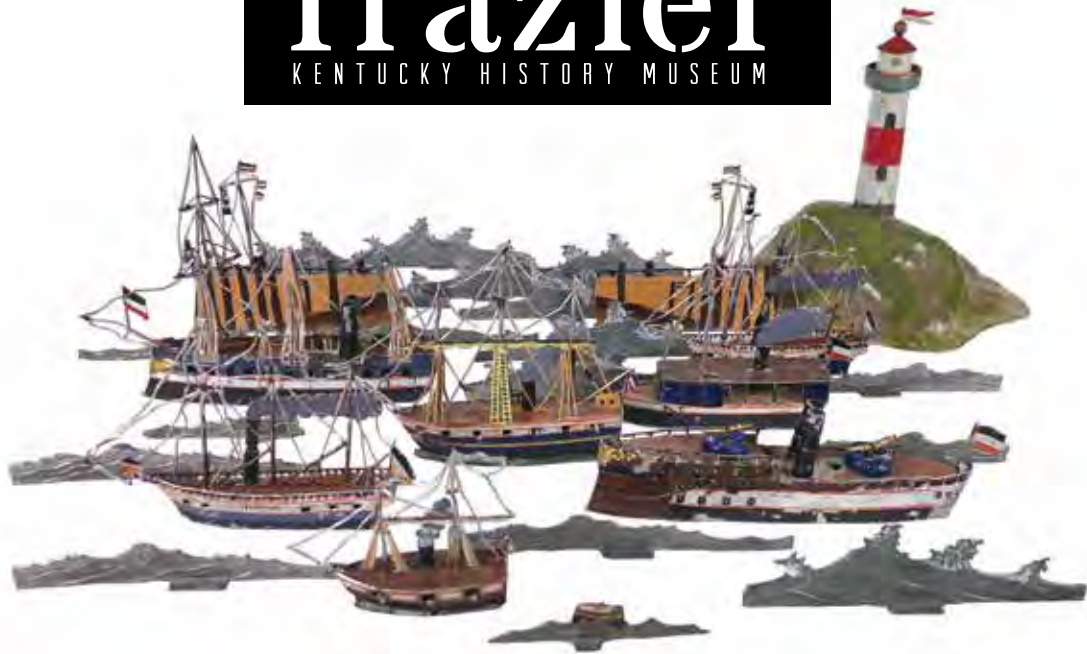
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POSTMASTER: Send address changes to:  
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Old Toy Soldier (ISSN 1064-4164) is published quarterly for \$36 per year.



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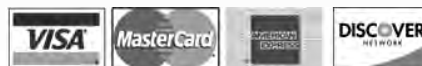
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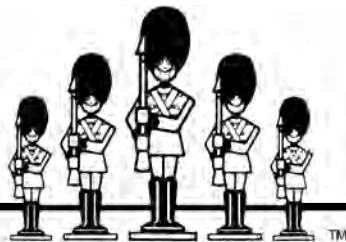


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*Old Toy Soldier* is printed by  
Banksville Express Printing  
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA

**Specialist Contributors**

Rob Wilson and Joe Wallis, Britains Military

Stan Alekna, Dimestore Figures

Norman Joplin, whatever takes his fancy

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Toy Soldier Marketplace Advertisements and all  
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Old Toy Soldier

P. O. Box 13324

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15243-0324

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ISSN1064-4164

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Britains/Beiser Officer New York State Militia, circa 1907

Photo courtesy: Rob Wilson

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**NUMBER 2**

**OTS Magazine  
Volume 44 #3  
Fall Issue  
Released  
November 2021**

**OTS Magazine  
Volume 44 #4  
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Released  
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# HOBBY NEWS

## ~ Editorial ~

It seems a lot longer than three months ago that I wrote my last Editorial. But as a British Prime Minister famously said "A month is a long time in politics.....". The ongoing pandemic has affected politics and everything else across the planet. Inevitably, this has impacted on our hobby in many ways, but not all negatively.

Starting first with the bad news, sadly we have to report that the famous Chicago Toy Soldier Show (CTSS) has had to admit defeat and recognise that its 40th anniversary event cannot take place this September as planned. Across the world we are having to accept that the world has changed. Many other shows and swap-meets have been cancelled, and it remains unclear when things will return to normal. But life goes on, and toy soldier collectors will continue to find ways of enjoying themselves with their fascinating pastime.

Despite the "lockdown", many aspects of the hobby remain buoyant. Activity on eBay is continuing unabated, while many auctions are seeing increased interest, despite the pandemic. Although the "Bull market" years of Toy Soldier collecting may have passed, at least for the time being, there remains considerable interest in rarer items. These continue to attract high, if not record, prices. While the more common items may not attract the high prices they did a few years ago, now is a good opportunity to pick up such figures quite



cheaply. Just the thing if, like me, you love to build up large displays! Assembling large parades or battle scenes is one of the best ways to enjoy toy soldiers.

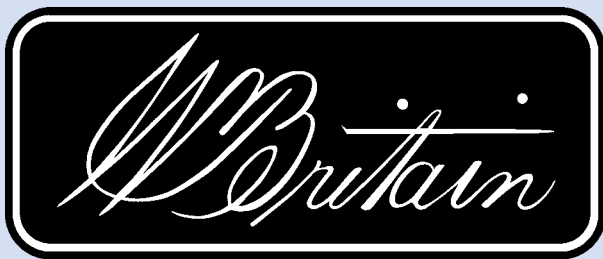
Life also goes on in other ways. While normal shows and similar events may not be possible at present, technologies such as Zoom enable people to meet "virtually". Roger Garfield and his team are planning to take advantage of this approach to hold a substitute for the CTSS on the dates originally planned for the anniversary event (see page 7 for details). Old Toy Soldier Auctions will also be holding a three day auction, highlighting the collections of the Pielin brothers. Their "Emporium" has always been a popular destination for visitors to the Chicago shows. Now we can all have an opportunity to get hold of some of the treasures they have acquired over many years of collecting.

One of the benefits of lockdown is that many of us have more time on our hands than usual as restrictions curtail normal activities. This provides opportunities for reflection and reorganisation, for life in general and, for collecting in particular. The lockdown has provided many of us with a window of opportunity to sort out and reorganise our troops. It also offers the chance to really look at the items we have collected through the years. Two of the articles in this issue offer different reflections on collecting over the years, focussing primarily on Britain's. Two other articles show the results of detailed research on how to grade and value items, focussing this time on Dimestore figures.

Many of us are finding a few surprises, as we sort out figures that we may have acquired many moons ago! My request for contributions to the magazine in the last issue has already stimulated a number of positive responses, including at least one article in the present issue, but we always need more. If you have been rediscovering things in your own collections during "lockdown", why not take this opportunity to sit down and "put pen to paper". Let other readers hear about what interests you and share the treasures that lie hidden away in your own collections that others would love to see.

RAW August 4th 2020

## W.Britain is on the Move!



### Our new address is:

W.Britain Model Figures  
22 E. Water Street  
Chillicothe, Ohio 45601 USA

### Our New phone number is:

1-740-702-1803  
Our UK Phone number will  
remain the same: (0)80 0086 9123

We are moving our offices and warehouse to southern Ohio! As of June 26th our Holland, Ohio offices will be closed and we will open the new offices on July 6th.

This relocation to larger warehousing and manufacturing space will allow us to increase our production of Hudson & Allen Studio products and handle the increase in figures from our miniature studios. You should expect to see new products arriving every 4 to 6 weeks from here on out. We even have a confirmed September delivery date for the 88 (25059)!

Please be patient with us over the next two weeks as we get settled in our new offices, showrooms and warehouse but please do not hesitate to call if you have any questions once we are settled after the 6th.

All the Very Best,  
Ken, Ericka & Ted,  
W.Britain Staff



## 2020 Chicago Toy Soldier Show Rescheduled to 2021 Due to COVID-19 Pandemic



**SCHAUMBURG, Ill, May 21, 2020:**

*After careful consideration, the Chicago Toy Soldier Show (CTSS) has decided to reschedule the 2020 Show to 2021. The 40th Anniversary of the CTSS will be celebrated on Sunday, Sept. 26, 2021, at the Hyatt Regency in Schaumburg, Illinois.*

Show Manager and CTSS co-owner, Roger Garfield, shared, "This decision has been an agonizing process, especially because 2020 was to be the 40th anniversary celebration of our Show".

"Beginning in early March we started to see all the special anniversary events we had planned begin to fade away. As the pandemic has continued, we saw the need to continue to modify a 2020 Show."

"After our May 13 conference with the Hyatt, it became clear that a Chicago Toy Soldier Show in September 2020 would need to be so altered that the Show would not be recognizable to our vendors and attendees. There would be fewer vendors and attendees. Room display and trading would be spread out throughout the entire hotel. A Sunday Show would be impossible to plan and carry out."

Jan Garfield, co-owner of CTSS, shared, "We could see this was rapidly becoming a logistical and financial impossibility. After discussing with the Hyatt what would be necessary to comply with health safety regulations, we decided to reschedule."

Roger said, "We are planning the 40th anniversary 2021 Chicago Toy Soldier based on our traditional schedule and layout. If we have to alter or reconsider how the 2021

Show will be laid out, run, or otherwise adjusted, we have enough time to do so."

Jan, Roger, and the entire CTSS family said, "COVID, you may have won this time, but we'll be back in 2021 to celebrate the 40th anniversary with all our friends!"

NOTE: Celebrated artist Doug Dearth created a special 2020-2021, CTSS vs. COVID poster to commemorate this unusual collecting year. Please help CTSS offset 2020 losses and underwrite the 2021 Show. For details, visit the CTSS online store at: [chicagotoysoldiershow.com](http://chicagotoysoldiershow.com)

The CTSS family decided to reschedule the 40th Anniversary Show using the following three factors as rationale:

1. Vendor concerns: After reviewing feedback from vendors, CTSS noted that many vendors were concerned about traveling, safety measures, and lower-than-average attendance levels. Vendors were also concerned about governmental restrictions and regulations, as well as flexibility with the venue.

2. Federal, state, and local regulatory considerations: According to Gov. Pritzker's 5-phase plan for reopening Illinois, events such as CTSS could resume in Phase 5. CTSS's leadership cannot guarantee that Schaumburg, situated in Cook County and part of the North-

east Region as outlined by Pritzker's plan, will be ready for Phase 5 by September. For the 2020 CTSS to take place as initially planned, Schaumburg would need to be in Phase 4 with an attendee limit of 50, or Phase 5 with testing, tracing, and treatment for COVID widely available, either a vaccine or treatment option, and no new COVID cases over a sustained period. In Phase 5, there would be no cap on attendees.

3. Venue and contractual issues and concerns: After discussing their options with the Hyatt Regency of Schaumburg, Illinois, CTSS's leaders determined that if held, the Show would undergo significant changes due to the hotel's restrictions regarding congregating. For room trading to continue, vendors' room assignments would be spread throughout the hotel to discourage large gatherings.

Chicago Toy Soldier Show is the oldest and largest Toy Soldier Show of its type in the United States.

### Contact:

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Chicago Toy Soldier Show

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[roger@chicagotoysoldiershow.com](mailto:roger@chicagotoysoldiershow.com)

Website:  
[www.chicagotoysoldershow.com](http://www.chicagotoysoldershow.com)



## HOBBY NEWS *(Continued)*



### CHICAGO TOY SOLDIER SHOW GOES VIRTUAL!

*You just can't keep a good Show down!*

Despite having to postpone its 40th Anniversary Show to 2021, CTSS is planning to pull the gang together online. The virtual version of the Chicago Show will take place on the Show's originally scheduled weekend of 26-27 September, 2020.

*Jan and Roger Garfield tell us that there is a Happy Hour  
and a virtual marketplace in the works.*

*The promoters say there may be a few more surprise events.*

The virtual event started as an online get-together for CTSS vendors but may expand depending on response. If you are interested in joining the virtual version of one of the world's oldest and biggest toy soldiers shows, let CTSS know at: [roger@chicagotoysoldiershow.com](mailto:roger@chicagotoysoldiershow.com)



# HOBBY NEWS *(Continued)*

## A WORD FROM NORMAN

Due to the current pandemic, publication of the book has been delayed, the good news is that a substantial amount of new information has recently been provided by ex members of Britains staff and executive.

Thank you to all of my friends who pre ordered the limited edition of the book. Your order is on file and I will email you all individually when there is progress and or a publishing date.

Sue and I would like to send good wishes to all our friends that we would usually meet at the Chicago Toy Soldier Show. If you would like to keep in touch we are always available.

Tel 262-692-3857 ~ [info@normanjoplin.com](mailto:info@normanjoplin.com)

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**VISITORS** are advised to call ahead to confirm hours. Note that the museum is not suitable for children under 12.

**THE TOY SOLDIER MUSEUM** is at 5459 Paradise Valley Road, Cresco, PA 18326.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION**, visit us on Facebook or [the-toy-soldier.com](http://the-toy-soldier.com), or call 570-629-7227.



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Chicago Toy Soldier Show



# BRITAINS NEW YORK STATE MILITIA - AN UNUSUAL VARIATION ON SET #149?

By Rob Wilson

According to James Opie, in his most recent book on Britains Toy Soldiers, set #149 *American Soldiers* is one of the rarest sets ever issued by Britains. This was one of the sets designed to fit on a game board. It used specially designed hinges with clips that enabled the figures to be shot down (using a toy cannon supplied with the set) and then immediately stood up again by simply flipping the base board. Introduced in 1907, the clips and boards required figures with rectangular bases rather than the oval shapes that Britains had favoured up until that point. The game board and clips were the invention of an American, Charles Beiser, who developed the idea in collaboration with Britains.

Set #148 the *Royal Lancaster Regiment* was introduced at the same time. It contained the same kinds of figures but painted to represent the British Regiment in tropical dress, with white solar toupees rather than the dark blue/black kepis worn by the Americans.

Many other Britains figures were redesigned at that time to have the new rectangular shaped bases that would fit into the same bases. However, with one notable exception (the famous Zulu Kraal set which was introduced 7 years later), Britains never followed through with this feature in their own catalogue. James surmises that these first two sets cannot have been a great commercial success and that surplus stocks were probably shipped to the USA as a job lot to be distributed by Beiser. Beiser seemed



Figure 1: Britains Knock down set #149 "American soldiers"

to have had more success issuing similar figures under the American Toy Soldier Company label. "Shoot-em-up" toys appear to have been much more popular in America, where many competitors produced similar toys (using card as well as metal figures). The Beiser sets sold in the US often included a spring loaded "pop-gun" that fired a cork bullet. They were priced keenly to match the competition there.

James notes that the mounted officer on rearing horse sold with sets #148 and #149 was not stamped on the base and that the base on the later figure (with a date and



# BRITAINS NEW YORK STATE MILITIA - AN UNUSUAL VARIATION ON SET #149? *(Continued)*

copyright markings) was in fact too large to fit into the “Beiser” clips.

The other figures in the set comprised reworking of the running infantry figure used in Britains sets #96, 97 and 98, together with two figures at attention based on the body casting used in sets #111 and 113, but with appropriate heads and arms holding a ramrod for serving a cannon. All had new plain, unstamped rectangular bases that fitted the Beiser clips.

The American Soldiers in set #149 are depicted wearing dark blue jackets, pale blue trousers and dark blue kepis. The mounted officer wears the same attire, including the kepi.

The full set comprised the mounted officer; two gunners at attention with ramrods; a cannon; 9 men running, including an officer with furled flag (Stars and Stripes), officer with outstretched sword, bugler and the others at the slope or at the trail (13 pieces in total). Set #148 had the same composition.

Joe Wallis in his “Soldiers of Greater Britain” devotes a small section to Beiser figures after his discussion of sets #148 and #149. He notes that they produced many other sets (not all based solely on Britains figures). These included:

- A version of set #149 that included an officer on the rearing horse in similar uniform (dark blue jacket and pale blue trousers), but wearing a brownish, khaki coloured, slouch hat.
- Figures running in dark blue jackets but with matching dark blue trousers with dark blue kepis;
- Similar figures but wearing a sailor’s cap;
- Others wearing red jackets and pale blue trousers which have often been described as the “enemy” by collectors, although this may not have been Beiser’s intention as the labels on surviving Beiser boxed sets imply describe them as Regular Army (Red or Blue)!;
- Other figures, some in kepis, some wearing black slouch hats and occasionally to be found in spiked helmets, were also produced in various poses other than running.

The latter included a variety of sets with figures in khaki uniforms with slouch hats in the same colour (standard US army uniform as introduced at the start of the 20th Century). The labels on the few boxed sets of these Beiser figures that have survived describe those in khaki as “Volunteers”.

Many of the Beiser knockdown sets (marketed under the American Soldier Company name) included additional figures not designed by Britains. These were much more crudely sculpted, probably cast and painted by local US workers.

Correspondence with James Opie and Joe Wallis on the topic suggests that many of the Beiser figures were painted in the US. The paint match in American Soldier Company sets that use figures that are not Britains, as well as Britains castings, is often perfect. Given the numbering on the Beiser set list, it would not be surprising if there are plenty more sets yet to be discovered in different colourations.

Of course, there is also the possibility that Britains supplied filled and painted boxed sets, and then started sending uncompleted components as the American wholesalers and manufacturers tried to get the cost down. Joe Wallis reports conversations with Will Beierwaltes, who suggests that there is some evidence that both Britains and Heyde provided painted figures for Beiser and other makers/distributors in the 1905-1914 era.

Over the years I have acquired quite a few of these figures, especially on trips to the East Coast of the USA, where they are a little easier to find. This included a part set in the all dark blue uniforms. This group was based on Britains castings and painted in Britains style. Perhaps these were intended as Marines or possibly New York State Naval Militia? As noted above, the labels on 3 surviving Beiser boxes offer little assistance in identifying the units portrayed. Any reader who can throw further light on this topic is cordially invited to step forward!

Subsequently I have picked up other groups in auctions and on eBay. The first, as shown in Figure 2, were based on copies of the Britains castings, and painted in a very different style. This group included a mounted officer. They were described by the vendor as Beiser copies of Britain’s American soldiers from set #149, with a Britain’s mounted officer, and 6 figures at the slope,. The mounted officer’s head has been repaired as has the bugler’s. All the figures are in all dark blue uniforms.



**Figure 2: Figures made by Beiser based on copies of Britains castings and painted more crudely**

The second group were similar but with different heads (not sculpted by Britains) and painted as “Sailors”. This group also included an officer (which was definitely not sculpted by Britains, see Figure 3). The castings used for all these running figures are in fact copies based on the Britains running figure rather than original Britains castings.

## BRITAINS NEW YORK STATE MILITIA - AN UNUSUAL VARIATION ON SET #149? *(Continued)*



**Figure 3: Beiser US Navy ("Sailors") set**  
(note the clips still attached to two of the figures)

In 2018, in a US auction, I came across a variation I had not seen before. The group comprised running figures at the slope, painted in all grey uniforms and wearing black or very dark blue kepis. It also included a flag bearer and bugler. The uniform is more reminiscent of West Point Cadets than the Regular US Army.

Soon after, I acquired a matching officer on rearing horse that another buyer had purchased in the same auction. The mounted officer was riding a grey horse, which is the first time I had seen one painted other than black or brown. The running officer was carrying a furled Stars and Stripes flag (as shown on our cover), so they are clearly intended to portray US troops. All 9 figures have plain unstamped bases as used in Britains Beiser sets. The quality and style of the painting of the group shown in Figures 4 and 5 is high, on a par with that produced in both Britains London and Paris factories around this period.

Subsequently, and in the course of writing this article, another group appeared on eBay. This time with a gunner with ramrod, as well as two more mounted officers. All the other figures were at the slope rather than the trail (see Figure 6). Figure 7 shows some hollowcast figures by another maker in similar uniforms to those shown in Figures 5 and 6. Solid figures produced by makers such as Heyde and Noris are also to be found painted in a similar fashion (see Figures 8 and 9). The fact that many makers produced figures in the same grey uniforms, and that they are often found on the East Coast of the US, suggests that there may be a common theme.



**Figure 4: Britains New York State Militia - the 8 running Figures**



**Figure 5: Britains New York State Militia with the mounted officer leading the way**



**Figure 6: More figures found on eBay, July 2020**



**Figure 7: Other hollowcast figures in similar uniforms, including a gunner**



# BRITAINS NEW YORK STATE MILITIA - AN UNUSUAL VARIATION ON SET #149? *(Continued)*



Figure 8: New York State Militia by Heyde



Figure 9: New York State Militia larger scale figures by Heyde or Noris

Some quick historical research reveals that New York raised a number of volunteer regiments during the Civil War which fought on the side of the Union, but wearing grey uniforms. Figure 9 shows a soldier from Blenker's First German Rifles, New York 8th Regiment of Volunteer Infantry. After the Civil War a number of Militia units were created, including both Military and Navel units in New York State. Figure 10 shows a colonel of the 7th Regiment of the New York State Militia (NYSM), circa 1870. However, Figure 11, which depicts a member of the US Military Academy (West Point) circa 1882, shows that other units also wore grey uniforms. West Point of course is sited in New York State on the Hudson

River, perhaps there is some connection here which readers with a better knowledge of such matters can help us with? For the moment, my best guess is that the figures in Figures 3 -5 are intended to represent the NYSM, hence the title of this article albeit with a question mark at the end. I stand to be corrected!

Rob Wilson, July 2020.

Contact details: [r.a.wilson@warwick.ac.uk](mailto:r.a.wilson@warwick.ac.uk),

Phone +44 7824540984



Figure 10: Blenker's 1st German Rifles, New York State Volunteers, c. 1863 (paper soldier)



Figure 11: Uniform of the New York State Militia, Colonel of the 7th Regiment, circa 1870



Figure 12: US Military Academy (West point) circa 1882

# AUCTION PREVIEW



## THE PIELIN BROTHERS' EMPORIUM AUCTION

September 25th, 26th and 27th, 2020

The Pielin brothers [Dick 80 and Don 77] have been in the hobby of toy soldier collecting for over 50 years. They grew up on the northwest side of Chicago and began their collecting at an early age, mostly Britains zoo and farm animals. After pausing for college, they picked up where they left off.



Don's path went toward the traditional toy soldiers, with a specific interest in the little-collected and studied 3 inch "Dimestore" soldiers. Don was one of the very first collectors to refer to these American-made toy soldiers easily bought in any five-and-dime as "dimestore". He began to collect these figures in earnest, and realized that very little was known or written about them. He began to write a column on collecting "dimestore" soldiers and had it published in The Scabbard [it helps when your brother is the editor].

Dick choose an alternate path and began painting and collecting military miniatures becoming an active member of the Military Miniature Society of Illinois [MMSI]. He was eventually appointed the editor of the MMSI journal, The Scabbard, and served for over 45 years in that capacity. He never lost his passion for collecting toy soldiers, returning to the hobby with renewed enthusiasm while continuing with his miniatures. He tried collecting a variety of makers



Don and Dick Pielin

and types, from Marx Square-Base to plastic Britains and Starlux. He finally settled on the old French and English masters; Metayer, Ballada, Berdou, Stadden, Des Fontiane and Vanot. His portion of "The Emporium" always included some of these, along with some of the hand-painted military miniatures.



Bernard Vanot "Mounted Royalist Officer"



Mignot "The Vineyard" Diorama



Roger Berdou  
"Mounted MarÉchal Berthier"



# AUCTION PREVIEW *(Continued)*



Stadden "44th Foot Moyene Garde"



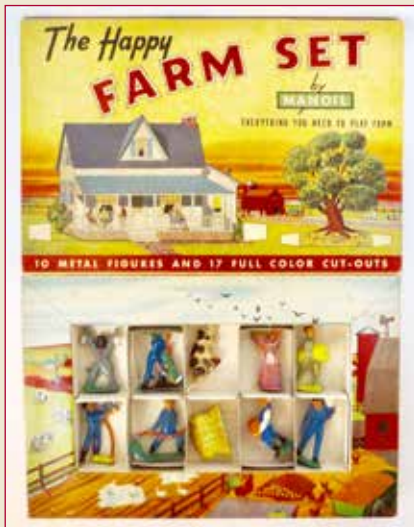
RARE Georges Fouille  
"Trumpeter 78th Regiment"



Tiffany Soldiers Outer Space Assortment



Bernard Vanot  
"King Louis XIII"



Manoil RARE "The Happy Farm" Boxed Set



Mignot #6303A Marchaude de Glaces



RARE Lincoln Logs  
Advertising Store Display



EG Taylor and Son Chimpanzee Tea Party Set



Morestone Tandem Bicycle with Side Car



Lucotte "The Bakery"



Johillco RARE Halloween Witch



French Hollowcast Navy White Jacket Assortment



Domage et Compagne RARE  
Medieval Knight



# AUCTION PREVIEW *(Continued)*



Ballada RARE Regiment of the Line Marching Band



VERY RARE Indian Chief  
Hiding Behind Horse



Bernard Vanot  
"Napoleon at his Desk" Vignette



Reynolds RARE Pirates Boxed Set



Vertunni "Charlemagne  
on Throne"



French Aluminum Traffic Police  
& Motorcycle Cops



Jouet Fondu RARE "L'Ecole" School Set



Britains VERY RARE Buck Rogers Complete Series



Heyde Miniature American Indian Encampment Set



Heyde EXCEEDINGLY RARE Baseball Figures



Metayer "1st Empire 3rd Dutch Grenadiers"



Heyde Spenkuch Indian Encampment



# AUCTION PREVIEW (Continued)



Lincoln Logs "OG Son of Fire" Collection



Roger Berdou Gardes  
d' Honneur Trumpeter 1813



Georges Munckle RARE  
Rodeo Cowboy



A. Barrett & Sons VERY RARE  
Spaceship Set



Lincoln Logs VERY RARE  
Cowboy on Rearing Horse



Mignot "Le Tour du France" Diorama



Des Fontaine "MarÉchal Bessieres  
1766-1833"

After a short period, Don with a few fellow collectors began publication of their very own toy soldier journal, "Old Toy Soldier Newsletter" [which is still in publication today known as *Old Toy Soldier*]. The "Newsletter" was a smashing success and led to the idea of having a national show, just for toy soldier collectors. The national show became a reality in 1980 when Don and a few partners began the "OTSN Soldier Show" [still going after 40 years]. It grew and grew and is now one of the largest in the country, if not the world. Don's collecting never stopped. His study of the "Dimestore" soldiers led to a complete, hardcover book on the subject, published in 2000.

Don continued to collect other subjects as well. He had a love of civilian figures so concentrated on this area of collecting, foregoing the soldiers. Farm, zoo, circus, sports, whatever struck his fancy, he went after them with a passion. British, French, Belgian, Argentine, wherever they were made, he wanted them. He expanded his area of interest when he began a serious study of the American toy soldier maker, J. Edward Jones. Over a period of many years, Don amassed a large and varied collection of Jones figures. Enough to require a large, hardcover book to explain this little-known maker of American toy soldiers. His book was published in 2012 and is still available.

The Pielin brothers decided to sell their collections so that today's collectors might enjoy them as much as they did.



Bre Day, Don Pielin, and Ray Haradin

View this auction and purchase catalogs on our website: [oldtoysoldierauctions.com](http://oldtoysoldierauctions.com)



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# A STUDY OF BARCLAY AND MANOIL RARITY AND VALUE

*By Stan Alekna*

Because it has been nine years since my OTS article on the rarest Barclay, Manoil and Grey Iron three-inch soldiers was published, I decided to revisit these rankings. Not surprisingly, I did not find much to change the ranking of the top twenty rarest figures of the three major Dimestore manufacturers. I placed B8, the Cuban flag bearer, at the top of Barclay's ranking and I dropped M48a from the Manoil ranking since no one I know has ever seen one.

However, in the process of reviewing the data I used to develop the rankings, I gained a new perspective on the relative rarity and prices of Barclay and Manoil Dimestores, that I thought would interest other Dimestore collectors.

I have maintained detailed records of my Dimestore sales via my mail order catalogs over the last thirty years, and through my silent auctions over the last two years. My data base also includes sales records that I exchanged with my good friend, the late Warren Mitchell, the largest Dimestore dealer of all time. The prices cited throughout this article are based on actual sales, not "asking prices" on Ebay. While values of common Dimestores have declined somewhat due to Ebay and other factors, I find that rare Dimestores in fine condition still bring top dollar prices today. But, the market is definitely shrinking.

I began my analysis by counting all Barclay items listed in O'Brien. Barclay sold over 700 figures, vehicles, cannons and other items, depending upon if one includes paint color and mold variations in the count.

I then listed every Barclay item, not just soldiers, that sold for \$200 or more; those that sold for \$100 to \$200; and those that sold for under \$100. My previous Top 20 rankings only considered three-inch soldiers.

Nearly every American Dimestore collector is seeking to acquire some or all of Barclay's full-sized soldiers including the following partial list of their rarest figures:

- B8 Cuban flagbearer ~ no price found
- B150 Legionnaire flagbearer ~ \$1,750
- B19 Tall advancing ~ \$725
- B75 Tall grenade thrower ~ \$700
- B139 Diver with an axe ~ \$600
- B137 Cadet painted as a wooden soldier ~ \$575
- B149 Legionnaire ~ \$475

When ranking Dimestores by rarity, there is a close correlation to scarcity and price, but that relationship is not 100%. For example, B137 is far rarer than B139, but sold for less. I have never seen a B137 and I have seen

three B139's in the last month.

Price can be established by what a collector is willing to pay to add a long sought-after item to his collection. That price will then become the new "market price" for the item if word of the sale becomes known throughout the dealer community.

When I listed all Barclay items sold by price, here's what I found:

- ~ Only twenty-one soldiers and military vehicles sold for \$200 or more and nearly all of them were in the top 20 of my previous ranking.
- ~ One hundred and six (106) Barclay's sold for \$100 to \$200. Red podfoot and midi figures accounted for 20% of this category.
- ~ The average price of Barclay's items that sold for less than \$100 was \$34.00.
- ~ Most surprisingly, I found most Barclay items that sold for over \$200 were non-military items. The following are photos of seventeen of these items and their prices. Nearly all were in 95% or better condition.

Note: "UNLISTED" means that the item was not listed in O'Brien's 3rd edition of  
COLLECTING AMERICAN TOY SOLDIERS



**UNLISTED BARCLAY BABY CRIB ~ \$850.00  
(Deduct \$100 if baby is missing)"**

When I performed the same analysis on Manoil's figures and vehicles, I found a very different profile of rarity and prices.

Manoil produced around 350 different figures, vehicles, airplanes and cannons, again, depending if one counts all paint and mold variations. This is half the number of items produced by Barclay.

# A STUDY OF BARCLAY AND MANOIL RARITY AND VALUE

## *(Continued)*



UNLISTED FIVE-PIECE SLUSH TRAIN w/ BATTERY POWERED HEADLIGHT ~ \$775.00"



ALL VEHICLES w/ BATTERY POWERED HEADLIGHTS: BV18 military ~ \$350.00; others at \$575 to \$625, each. Note: I scan about 1,500 Dimestores on Ebay every day and I have not seen a Barclay headlight vehicle in 7-8 years



BV38 FIRE ENGINE w/ CLIMBING FIREMAN ~ \$575.00



UNLISTED ZEPHYR TRAIN ~ \$475.00



BA5 ROCKET SHIP ~ \$412.00



B110a COOK w/ EGG TIMER ~ \$425.00  
(Add \$100 if in the original 3rd party box)



BA6 2nd STYLE ROCKET SHIP ~ \$400.00



# A STUDY OF BARCLAY AND MANOIL RARITY AND VALUE

## *(Continued)*



**CIRCUS WAGON w/ TIN LITO CAGE & FULLY CAST LION ~ \$400.00**  
(Add \$100 for team of plumed horses)



**CIRCUS WAGON w/ LION CAST INTO SIDE OF CAGE ~ \$ 375.00**  
(Add \$100 for team of plumed horses)



**HORSE DRAWN MILK WAGON ~ \$375.00**



**B197 SANTA SEATED w/ BAG OF TOYS ~ \$300.00**  
(Add \$175 for reindeer w/ antlers)



**BV153 FIRST BARCLAY CAR CARRIER w/ FOUR CARS ON TIN TRAILER ~ \$285.00**



**UNLISTED MOVING VAN ~ \$285**



**BV84 MILK BOTTLE TRUCK ~ \$275**

# A STUDY OF BARCLAY AND MANOIL RARITY AND VALUE

## (Continued)



**BV175 TWO-PIECE OIL TANKER ~ \$225**



**Bh, Bi, Bj BASEBALL PLAYERS ~ \$225 each**

The following are the Manoil's that sold for \$200 or more:

Nurse pushing a wounded soldier in a wheelchair;  
no O'Brien Number, only two known ~ \$750.00  
M113 Mechanic w/ prop away from head ~ \$600  
M44 Kneeling folding rifle ~ \$485  
M47 Standing folding rifle ~ \$475  
M61a Hostess in khaki ~ \$465  
M61 Hostess in white ~ \$375  
M88 Parachutist in gray ~ \$365  
M88a Parachutist in white ~ \$350  
M86 Paymaster ~ \$285  
M206 500 series wounded ~ \$255  
M205 500 series stretcher bearer ~ \$250  
M24 Sailor in blue; two known ~ \$230  
M121a Hot papa in gray ~ \$225  
M195 Marching, rifle at angle~ \$215

Once again, here is another example of price not reflecting rarity. I see an M113 on Ebay every two to three weeks, but I have not seen a gray or white M88 in several years.

The results were very different from Barclay:

- ~ All Manoil's items that sold for \$200 or more were Military figures. Most collectors consider the hostesses to be military figures.
- ~ No Manoil civilian or western figure and no civilian or military vehicle sold for \$200 or more, which is very different from the Barclay analysis. Two Manoil die cast fire engines, MV711 and MV712, that are listed in O'Brien, would probably go for \$425 or more, but I have never seen one.
- ~ Forty-six (46) Manoil items sold for \$100 to \$200.
- ~ The average price of Manoil items that sold for under \$100 was \$65.00, about double that of Barclay's prices in this category.

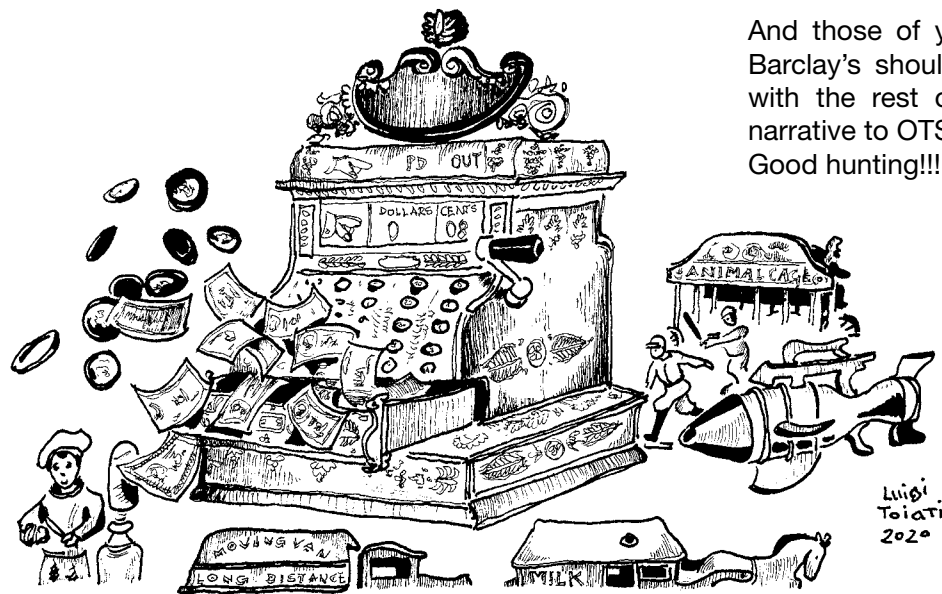
In summary, the study found that:

- ~ Barclay produced twice as many items as did Manoil.
- ~ Three percent of Barclay items sold for \$200 or more compared to Manoil's four percent.
- ~ Fifteen percent of Barclay's sold for \$100 to \$200 compared to Manoil's thirteen percent.
- ~ All Manoil items that sold for \$200 or more were military figures whereas Barclay had many high-value items that were non-military.
- ~ Manoil items that sell for under \$100 sell for double that of Barclay's, in the same category.

Based on the results of this study, Barclay collectors may want to expand their scope to include the non-military items that are more valuable and rarer than most of Barclay's soldier figures.

And those of you who have other, rare, non-military Barclay's should consider sharing your good fortune with the rest of us by sending photos and a brief narrative to OTS for publication.

Good hunting!!!



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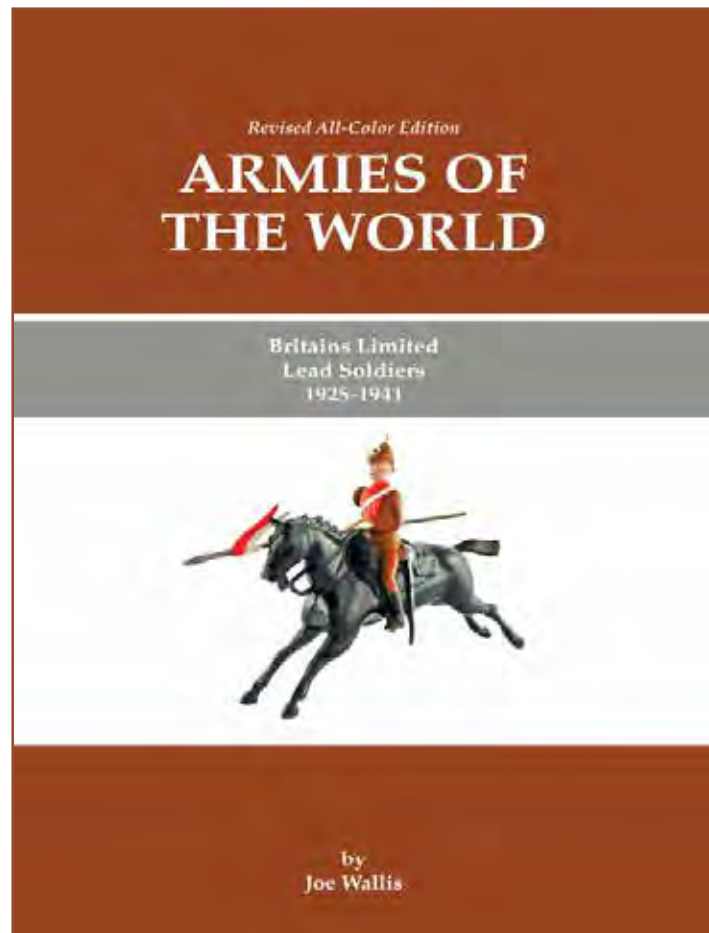
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- 3** Is hard cover instead of paperback.



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I also published the acclaimed *Regiments of All Nations*, which examines Britains Ltd. production between 1946 and 1966, and *Soldiers of Greater Britain, Britains Limited 1893-1924*. All my books employ the same easy-to-use format. My website is leadsoldierbooks.com. I list my books on Amazon.com (search on Joe Wallis and the titles of my books), but Amazon orders involve added postage cost and sales tax. Forward payment in U.S. dollars using checks drawn on a U.S. bank branch or a postal money order to: Joe Wallis, P.O. Box 3407, Arlington, Virginia 22203-3407.

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# A GRADING GUIDE FOR TOY SOLDIERS

By James D. Spina, Ph.D.



"A pair of sixes"

## Introduction

Toy soldiers have been in existence for thousands of years. They appear in Egyptian tombs and examples of small pre-historic figures have turned up in other archeological digs. Many of the readers of this article will have fond memories of toy soldiers as more recent treasured childhood possessions from the 1940s and 50s. For collectors of toy soldiers, it seems that countless words are already available on the subject. So why did this author decide to write another article?

## The Need for More Accurate Grading of Toy Soldiers

The focus is on the fact that while toy soldiers made from the mid-thirties through the early 1950s were designed to be toys and not things to be collected, they have become valuable.

As decades passed, the toys sold in the local five and dime gradually became sought after by those who played with them, lost them and then temporarily forgot them. But the pull of nostalgia is a strong emotion and things that cost a nickel or a dime long ago can now fetch hundreds of dollars if found in high grades of condition.

This article differs from others on the issue of grading these toys as valuable collectibles in specific terms rather than general, subjective descriptions. After all, collectors want to be treated fairly about putting out money for the toys they love. Especially when the sale is from the internet and photos and reputation of sellers are paramount factors for satisfied customers. Often, while one person rates a toy soldier as being in "excellent condition", another sees it as being in "good condition".

While this article sets new grading standards for Dime Store figures to begin to pave a better way for ensuring that grading errors do not happen, there is no reason preventing the concepts being applied to all types of painted soldiers.

Note: figure numbers are taken from O'Brian's classic book, *Collecting American-Made Toy Soldiers*.



"A Christmas Morning's Dream 1941".  
Life Magazine December 1941

## Overview of Existing Grading Systems for Collectibles

The following examples explain some grading systems now in use for other collectables. They are presented to show how subjective terms, highlighted in *italics*, have the potential to generate differences of opinion on their definitions. Please note that the examples are excerpts taken from fuller grading definitions and presented without judgment.

Some **electric trains** are graded at ten levels (C1 to C10). The mid-point (C5) is defined, in part, as having signs of heavy use with small scratches. A C5 train is graded as "good". A C6 train, a "very good" grade, has minor scratches but no mention of usage. A C7 train, "excellent" grade, may have minute scratches but no mention of usage appears. The C10 condition (mint) is straight forward and without subjective terms. The C10 train must be unblemished, brand new and unused. End of story, no passes given.

Many **comic book** dealers and collectors make use of a 10-point grading scale with descriptions from "poor" to "gem mint". The lowest grading level is 0.5 for "poor" to 10.0 for "gem mint". There are twenty-three grade levels in between those two extremes. A comic in "gem mint" is expected to show zero defects on 20 of 21 factors when a book is evaluated. The one area (#21) allowed to have *nearly imperceptible* defects is in the binding and printing processes where internal production variances may arise.

A 9.9 grade of "mint" is described as *near perfect* in every way.

# A GRADING GUIDE FOR TOY SOLDIERS *(Continued)*

A 9.4 grade of “near mint” is *nearly perfect* with only minor imperfections. It looks like it was *read once or twice*.

A 9.0 grade of “very fine/near mint” is *nearly perfect* with *outstanding eye appeal*.

The cover of the 9.0 comic book is *nearly flat* with almost *imperceptible wear*.

Other grading systems have addressed the problem of eliminating subjective terms for grading and made progress doing so.

When grading **coins**, such as an Indian Head Cent from the U.S. Mint made between 1859-1909, collectors will examine the highest point on the coin for evidence of wear. Each coin has the word “LIBERTY” in caps on the headband of the Indian maiden’s war bonnet. This is the high point of the obverse (“heads”) side of the coin.

The grades of “fair”, “about good” and “good” will not show any letters of the word “LIBERTY”. It will be worn smooth. The grade of “very good” must show any three letters of “LIBERTY”. To be considered “fine” or better all seven letters must show.



**Antique firearms** are graded primarily by the amount of the original finish that remains on the piece. For an 1873 Winchester (“the gun that won the West”) to be graded as “good to very good” the original blued finish remaining must be between zero to 30%.

For “fine” the original finish must fall between 30%-80%. Excellent grade guns will show over 80% while “factory new” requires 100%...100%, end of story, no passes.

Of course, other factors, such as completeness of original parts and damage to wood parts must be considered.

**Toy soldiers** will often be graded at 6 or 7 levels\* and described as follows:

“Mint”: Flawless

“Excellent”: No paint chips or defects but no mention of other flaws.

“Very Good”: *Minimum paint defects.*

“Good”: *Very few paint defects.*

“Fair”: *Acceptable amount of damage to the paint.*

“Poor”: *Loss of large proportion of the paint.*

(“Good / Very Good” may appear in some grading systems that includes a “Fine” grade level.)

A classic and indispensable book on collecting American toy soldiers lists subjective grading terms for most of the key condition levels. A more recent and highly respected text also carries subjective terms for grading such as “slight wear” and “noticeable wear” when describing paint loss.

**In the author’s opinion, loss of paint is the key element in grading all toy soldiers. i.e. How much original paint remains on the toy soldier?**

The “take away” from this grading discussion is that, while progress for grading collectibles has been made, it is still a problem for Dimestore soldiers.

## *A New Approach to Grading Dimestore Soldiers*

Given that the use of subjective terms for grading can lead to disputable results, a new approach is needed to strengthen the hobby. To begin the new approach, there needs to be agreement that percentage of original paint remaining on a figure should be the primary element used to grade each piece. Therefore, the high wear points of each figure need to be identified to produce an accurate range of paint percentage remaining.

The author recommends a six-level grading system for toy soldiers to employ the original paint approach.

Level 1: Zero\* to 50% of original paint remaining.

Level 2: More than 50%, up to 70%, original paint remaining.

Level 3: More than 70%, up to 90%, original paint remaining. (Most figures will be found in Levels 1, 2 or 3 after grading.)

Level 4: More than 90%, up to 95%, original paint present.

Level 5: More than 95%, up to 99%, original paint remaining.

Level 6: 100% original paint remaining.

There are some figures that are dramatic even with no original paint remaining and therefore will hold eye appeal. Here’s a good example: Grey Iron #105.





# A GRADING GUIDE FOR TOY SOLDIERS *(Continued)*

This rare Grey Iron figure stands as a work of art with or without paint and will display very well. Also, the Grey Iron #104: Nurse cradling wounded soldier and American Metal # AM 6: Soldier gassed or shot in neck are two others that are miniature works of art. (Of course, collectors prefer high grade examples whenever possible.)

## *How to Use the New System*

In order to introduce and illustrate the new grading system, it is helpful to see the range of grading Levels 1 to 5 on actual figures such as Manoil #127: shown below. Top row, 4 figures (left to right) grading Levels 1 – 4. Bottom single figure Level 5 with up to 99% original paint remaining. The paratroopers' hands, noses and parachute rip cords are some of the high wear points used for grading. Please see the arrows for highlighting missing paint.

Level 1 grade    Level 2 grade    Level 3 grade    Level 4 grade



Level 5 grade



The view from reverse side of the figures also allows for input to grading.

Again, from left to right: Level 1 grade to Level 4 grade. Some of the the high points are the boots of the paratrooper, along with the left arm and rip cord. Please see the arrows to identify those areas.

Level 1 grade    Level 2 grade    Level 3 grade    Level 4 grade



Level 5 grade



## *The Level 6 Grade - Very Easy to Grade - Very Hard to Find*

As you can see, there are built in ranges for the percentage of original paint remaining to be given one of the grading levels. This was done as a practical matter since it is very difficult to determine the exact percentage of original paint that remains on a figure.

Most common figures found today will fall into a 1, 2 or 3 grade level. Each of those grades has a range of 20 percentage points to determine the amount of original paint remaining.

Very, very few will be found in the Level 4 or 5 grade, where the ranges shrink dramatically to 5 percentage points or less.

This leaves the Level 6 grade, with no range of percentage of original paint remaining allowed. There must be 100%



# A GRADING GUIDE FOR TOY SOLDIERS (Continued)

of the original paint remaining. No amount of wishful thinking or creative wording will change that fact. That's why the Level 6 grade is easy to determine. There's an old saying, "No matter how many times you count the coins, you can't make a dollar out of 99 cents." Take a good look at this Grey Iron #G80, Legion Drum Major. Why is it a Level 5 and not a Level 6?

Answer: As starters, he has a chip on his right hand, another on his nose and one on his left cheek. Some seller might say "He is *minty*, for his age".

## *The Relationship Between Grading and Price*

The truth of the matter is that the grade of a figure will never change\* but the price will always be fluid. There are intangible factors other than grading that will determine price.

(\* assuming the current caretaker takes good care)

**Rarity** is one of those factors. A Level 1 graded Grey Iron #105 shown on page 28, will most likely bring more than a Grey Iron #80 shown on page 29 and graded as a Level 5.

On the other hand, **Desirability** or **Demand** may trump Rarity. A hollow base sailor figure that indicates an early Manoil may draw yawns on a dealer's table. This may result in bringing a lower than expected price because a collector may not care about hollow base figures.

**Eye Appeal** is another factor often overlooked. Some toy soldiers are staged in boring poses while others are small pieces of art. The Manoil "General" shown below is a great example of art in miniature. (#M185, Level 4 grade).



Look at that figure with his Peacemaker Colt Revolvers, three-star rank and grand statuesque presence. Wow! That's Eye Appeal!

## *A Term for Relating Tangible Factors, Other Than Objective Grading, to Price for Dime Store Figures: "Qualifiers"*

We need to borrow a concept from another system for evaluating collectibles in order to make the new proposed system complete. The folks who evaluate baseball cards use the term "Qualifiers" to complete a 1-10 grade

evaluation of a card in addition to the intangibles already mentioned, such as "Eye Appeal".

Some examples of "Qualifiers" are: **Stains** on cards, **Creases** in cards and **Trimming** of cards

A card may be given a grade of "8 with a "Qualifier" of being "Trimmed". In other words, it's graded an 8/10 but has an additional problem that will affect price. The "Qualifiers" are problems found with cards after they leave the manufacturing process of printing. i.e. caused by poor care, accident, good intentions or devious people.

Dime Store toy soldiers also have "**Qualifiers**" caused by poor care, accidents, good intentions or devious people.

Examples: repairs to, or replacement of, parts like rifle tips on infantry figures. Repainting is another "Qualifier" term. A missing part of the soldier's base or crack in the body are both common flaws that are encountered. These and many others will affect price. The figure may be graded a Level 5 on remaining original paint but qualifiers affecting price are mentioned. Here's an example:



Crescent shaped base fracture

Manoil #10 Officer Marching – Level 5 grade with "Qualifier" 2/3 of base remaining.

## *A Selection of Grading Sets to Guide the Process*

There are hundreds of different Dime Store figures that can be found in today's markets. As a practical matter, this makes it impossible to illustrate grading sets for all that are available. A "Grading Set" is defined as photos of five figures, each graded at one of the grading levels 1 – 5 found in the new system. The "Grading Sets" shown do not include a Level 6 figure. However, the photo at the very beginning of this article shows a "Pair of Sixes".

An example of a "Grading Set" to guide the collector is shown in the set of 4 photos for the Manoil paratrooper above. Some commonly encountered figures are presented in the grading examples that follow. The remainder of this article focuses on the "hard to find" figures in the market. Let's begin with the more ordinary figures posed in traditional ways.



# A GRADING GUIDE FOR TOY SOLDIERS (Continued)

Barclay Soldier Fifer (#B78)



L – R High points of wear are the fife, hands, both forearms and the right leg.



High points of wear on back include back of head, left shoulder and bottom of jacket

Note the casting flaw “Qualifier” on back of right arm that will reduce “Eye Appeal” and value.

Manoil (#M88)  
Parachute Jumper



L-R Level 1 grade Level 2 grade Level 3 grade Level 4 grade Level 5 grade

High points of wear appear on the top of the parachute, underside of both legs and nose.

High points of wear on back are the top of the parachute, parachute base and right arm



Barclay (# B53) Flag Bearer



L-R Level 1 grade Level 2 grade Level 3 grade Level 4 grade Level 5 grade

High wear points are flag chips, rim of cap, nose, left arm and right knee.

Note “Qualifiers” Sailor Left: hole in flag, repair to flag break: Sailor Right: hole in right eye. Major flaws that dramatically lower value.



High wear points on back are blouse shirt top, flag chips, right arm and left leg.

# A GRADING GUIDE FOR TOY SOLDIERS (Continued)



*The Challenges of Grading the Rare and Unusual*  
Most Barclay foreign officers (Japanese, Ethiopian, Chinese and Italian) present a grading problem because of rarity and rough treatment by those who played with them. Rarity may trump the value over original paint remaining on the figure. Foot soldiers may suffer less paint loss. Kids would often damage the “enemy” officers. It is nearly impossible to find figures grading at levels 5 and up. L/R: Typical Levels 1-5 shown below.



Faces may have paint loss exceeding the total figure's paint loss. Weapons also suffer.

*Rare Vehicles Example – The Barclay Searchlight Truck*  
This truck is very hard to find in any condition let alone being original and complete. The keys to grading are original searchlight, original white undamaged tires, body cracks and finally paint loss. Reproduction lights are

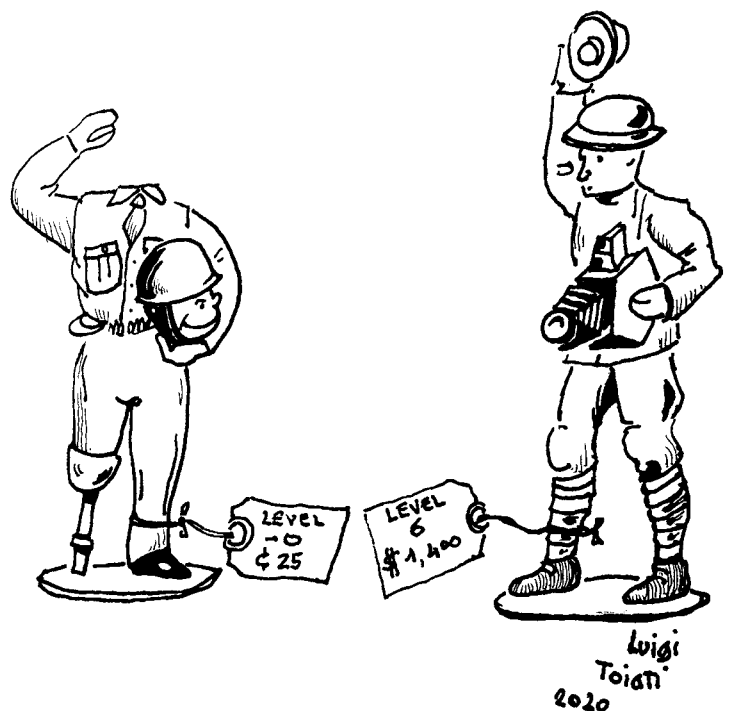
available but reduce the grade & value of the piece and its eye appeal. Any part that is original helps the value.



L/R Levels 1-4 (A) Reproduction searchlight/good tires, good paint (B) Replaced tin lens, improper light base, original light shell/poor tires, good paint (C) Replaced tin lens, improper light base, original light shell, fair tires, heavy front end paint loss (D) Reproduction searchlight, ex. tires, ex. paint/strong eye appeal.. Compare them to a second version in olive green:



Original searchlight with recessed lens, like new tires, minor paint loss, gun shorted. The pot metal of the searchlight becomes brittle and will fall apart. This one has no cracks and moves manually up and down. Level 5 Grade. Use this example to grade other vehicles.





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# NOAH'S ARK - TOY ARKS FROM THE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURIES FROM GERMANY

*By Gisbert Freber*



Rob Wilson's article in OTS Magazine, Vol. 43 No. 2 about the Pixyland Kew Noah's Ark ends with the note that other manufacturers have also produced small-scale arks for children. He mentions Elastolin and especially German wooden toy manufacturers. I would like to take up this idea here and present further examples of such arks from the 19th and early 20th centuries.

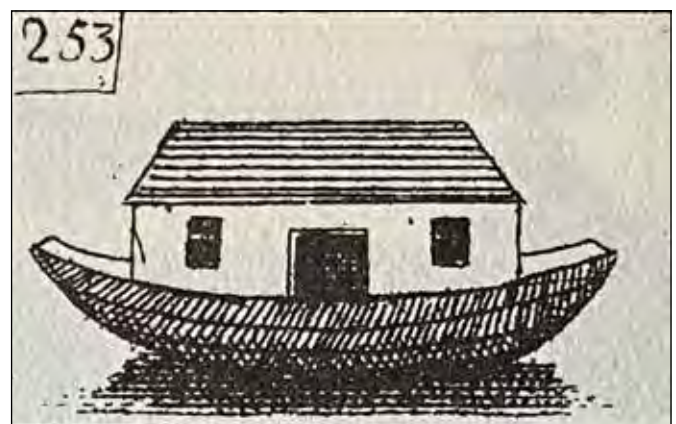
The tradition of the ark as a toy is certainly much older. For example, the French king Louis XXIII, born in 1601, is said to have played with a Noah's ark as a child.

Wooden toys originated from the Erzgebirge Mountains from the beginning of the 18th century. The city of Seiffen is synonymous with wooden toy figures. Toy production was originally a side-line for miners who worked in the mining of tin and silver. There were many forests in the mountains and, accordingly, wood was the material the miners worked with at home to make toys, especially in wintertime. Families often specialized in topics or individual work steps in a production line, while all family members, whether small or large, helped out.

By around 1764 the first wholesalers were established, who offered goods at the trade fairs in Leipzig and Dresden. In 1787 Semmeler, a distributor from

Olbernhau, reported that he had a branch in Hamburg and from there he sold on to Amsterdam, London, etc. It is known from the correspondence of the Sonneberg distributor, Lindner, that in 1830 he alone sold 17,000 dolls, 3,000 wooden toy horses, riders and soldiers, 1,752 children's guns, pistols and swords and hundreds of papier-mâché figures, etc, to a New Yorker wholesaler and shopkeeper.

The 1803 edition of the toy publisher Georg Hieronymus Bestelmeier's catalogue shows a toy ark without animals, although the accompanying description speaks of 50 or 100 finely painted associated figures.



Bestelmeier German wholesaler Catalogue with Toys - Edition from 1803

# NOAH'S ARK - TOY ARKS FROM THE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURIES FROM GERMANY *(Continued)*

From around the mid-19th century until the first decade of the 20th century, arks were probably the most common toy, both within Germany and sold as exports.



Ark made in the Erzgebirge around 1860



Figures in Detail - Scale was not a big deal in these days

In the Erzgebirge Mountains, wood was cheap or free of charge, and easily available and was usable for both the figures and their ark. Makers were thus not dependent on material suppliers. Only by the smallest division of labour could they be produced as mass toys by families working at home. Certain families built arks exclusively, others produced specific animals or carried out special work steps. The ingenious idea of using turned wood to make the so-called "hoop animals" also helped to enable mass production. Turned wooden hoops were processed on a lathe with two sides in profile. By later cutting the "hoop" into slices like a cake, an animal shape is visible in cross-section. Special care must be taken when cutting the profile, and once the "hoop" is sliced open, no correction can be made. The animals are subsequently further carved to provide a 3-d effect and painted in detail.



Wooden "hoop" for Mass Production of Animals, ca. 2000 - Originally made from 1900 onwards.

Around 1905, a separate product range was introduced: "Seiffen miniatures". These figures corresponded to a size of 32.5 mm. It was no coincidence that the manufacturers adopted the already standardized size used in Nuremberg Flat figures (Heinrichsen). The "hoop animals" are mostly on this same scale.

Arks were made in many different designs, not only in the Erzgebirge, but also in Thuringia or in the Val Gardena. Two examples from Nuremberg in the Hermann and Angelika Strauss collection are shown here.



Ark from the Val Gardena, ca. 1840 with chalked figures

Arks from the Grödner Valley were made of softwood and mostly left natural or chalked. The example shown, acquired in England in the 1970s, dates from approximately 1840. It has 70 mm size, hand-carved, unpainted, baroque-looking figures. The baboon head on the bow of the ship is interesting. A design drawing by the Moroder company from a book about Grödner toys shows a similar baboon head.



# NOAH'S ARK - TOY ARKS FROM THE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURIES FROM GERMANY *(Continued)*



**Design Drawing with a similar baboon head**

The next ark is 75 cm tall and probably comes from the Erzgebirge from around 1885. The figures are made of papier-mâché in excellent quality, lavishly covered with leather, fur and similar materials. They differ fundamentally from the rather simple papier-mâché figures from the Thuringian region.



**Early papier-mâché Figures ca. 1885**

The big elephant is 25cm long! This ark was acquired in the United States. A Nuremberg wholesaler catalogue from 1895 (Wahnschaffe's) shows a multi-story ship's ark with rooms, separated for the wild and the tame animals.



**Ark by Wahnschaffe, Wholesaler Catalogue from 1885**

The great success of arks as toys in the 19th century in the Anglo-Saxon world is mostly explained in the relevant literature by the fact that they were one of the few toys allowed on a Sunday for Christian children, simply because they originated in the Bible. Probably this particularly affected the Puritans, who had an uncompromising view of biblical history. With an ark a parent could explain the animal world and biblical history wonderfully. Another reason for the popularity was that unpacking and repacking was an important part of the game. The ark itself had to provide space enough for 8 people and up to 120 animals. A distinction can be made between board and ship types. The board type corresponded to a raft with a house structure built on top, while the ship's type ark had a real hull.

The known types of toys are like a ship with a house on top. The description in the Bible: "built a coffin-shaped ark" ... "for Noah, his wife, the 3 sons Shem, Ham and Japheth and their wives". So a full set should comprise 8 people and a pair of all the animals.

The ark is also described in a round form on the 4000-year-old clay tablets of the Sumerians and Babylonians of ancient Mesopotamia. I am not familiar with a round shape amongst toy arks. These are all based on the later biblical description. Only the earliest illustration in the Bestelmeier from 1803 looks somewhat rounded.

Noah's ark as a toy was not in practical terms an issue for the German Lead or Flat figure manufacturers. I only know of one set, the flat figures from Ramm presented here. This is despite the fact that flat figures as toys experienced a great boom as figurative toys during the same period. As an explanation, I can only imagine that the ark needed to house the figures was practically impossible to produce for the Lead and Flat Figure Makers. The production of an ark out of lead or tin sheet would have been very complex and therefore could not have been offered at an attractive price or quality. The practicality in use and as packaging for the figures could hardly have come close to that of wood.

In the Flat figure book by Ramm from Lüneburg, dating from approximately 1860, the series of figures without ark is shown in colour. (Reprint Hauschild Verlag 2002, page: 49) The same figures from the Alfred Sulzer Collection can be seen in this example.

# NOAH'S ARK - TOY ARKS FROM THE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURIES FROM GERMANY *(Continued)*



Flat figure castings from Ramm-Molds engraved ca. 1840

However, there are only 7 people: a woman is missing! It is not known why there is this reduced number of people, nor which of the sons decided not to take his wife with him! Maybe there was simply no space for another figure in the mould. There are 32 pairs of animals, but for the lion, the deer, the peacock and the chicken there were only 2 males! These should actually be extinct! How do you want to explain that to a child?

In later productions of arks from different materials and from different manufacturers, the number of people figures included has decreased, probably for economic reasons. Only Noah and his wife were always present!

Emil Pfeiffer founded a toy factory in Vienna in 1873 and manufactured composition figures and animals that were sold under the Tipple Topple brand. In his catalogue from 1914 the very rare ark shown here is number 16059, originally equipped with 4 people. However, Tipple Topple also made a table on which a lamb is sacrificed. I do not know if such a sacrificial table is from the wooden ark set. This was probably too complex to manufacture. This ark is 32 cm wide x 21 cm high. It is finely carved, made entirely of wood



Tipple Topple Ark ca. 1910

and, like the composition figures, carefully painted. It is known that Pfeiffer attached great importance to the quality of the painting and even hired Art Academy students for this.



Noah and his wife - Tipple Topple Detail

Otto and Max Hausser (O. & M. Hausser) started producing composition figures around 1910. The ark shown here from the 1930s was offered under the brand name Elastolin. It is 75 cm wide x 35 cm high and has a wooden body covered with composition.



Hausser - Elastolin Ark



Noah and his wife - Elastolin Detail



# NOAH'S ARK - TOY ARKS FROM THE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURIES FROM GERMANY *(Continued)*

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Wooden Ark from Erzgebirge, ca. 1980, Werner, Seiffen

The animals and figures are also made of composition with an internal wire frame for stabilization. Hausser took over the Tipple Tottle company in later years, but he never produced the ark shown in the picture above. In the tradition of arks from the Erzgebirge Mountains, Christian Werner in Seiffen today still produces an ark with “hoop-animals”.

The final picture shows a contemporary production of very small pewter figures that is reminiscent of the tradition of toys in matchboxes. However, these were made of wood in the Erzgebirge in the early 20th century.



Flat figures in a Matchbox - German, ca. 2010

Acknowledgements: Many thanks to Dr. Irving Finkel, London, (Author of *The Ark before Noah*), Alfred Sulzer, Zurich, and Hermann and Angelika Strauss, Nuremberg, for pictures and tips and last not least Jackie Wilson for Translation-Corrections.

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# A HISTORY OF PARATROOPERS VIA TOY SOLDIERS

*By Michael Langman*

## How I got interested in toy soldiers

As I child I did not collect toy paratroopers, probably because I wanted to grow up and be a real one; however, I became addicted following a 2017 trip to Paris where I came across the “Les Drapeaux de France” store and its massive collection of toy soldiers and figurines from all eras. Since then my collection has grown and includes over 500 paratroopers. What is interesting is every time I think “I now have all the paratroopers ever made”, I come across one I haven’t seen before and buy it, much to my wife’s chagrin.



These soldiers in 1980s-vintage 82nd Airborne “Class A” Uniforms and 1990s-vintage Desert Storm “Chocolate Chips” camouflage are representative of what I wore during my time in the US Army.

## What is a paratrooper?

A paratrooper is a military parachutist - an elite soldier who parachutes into combat, typically by surprise and deep into enemy territory to achieve strategic military objectives.



These dimestore soldiers are among the oldest known with parachutes but they are aviators and not paratroops.



Thomas Gunn (left) and Collectors Showcase (right) sets showing how airborne warfare often entails very close contact with the enemy.



# A HISTORY OF PARATROOPERS VIA TOY SOLDIERS *(Continued)*



Paratroopers like to show how tough they are by bragging about how much equipment they carry. Here is a line-up of airborne forces from various nations & eras "all chuted up" for battle.

## Italy

The Italians were the first to apply the concept of airborne warfare when the first-ever combat jump took place in August 1918. Lieutenant Alessandro Tandura dropped behind Austro-Hungarian lines on a reconnaissance and sabotage mission, thus making him the world's first paratrooper. Perhaps this makes sense since Leonardo da Vinci is credited as being the first known parachute designer in the fifteenth century!

Italians were also the first to form full parachute units, which conducted their first paratroop drop in 1927. Originally based in colonial Libya, these units were the forerunners of the famed Folgore Division formed in 1941, which saw ground combat in North Africa in WWII and still exists today



First paratrooper LT Tandura in his aircraft with static line and stowed parachute visible.



The Libyan battalion.

These were designed in Italy by military historian & author Angiolo Lenci, who researched and made the Tandura figure expressly for me, making it the most interesting and truly unique soldier in my entire collection.

## Germany in WWII

The Germans expanded airborne warfare doctrine and were the first to make extensive use of paratroopers ("Fallschirmjäger", or "parachute hunters") in combat. The Fallschirmjäger were the first to conduct an invasion by paratroop assault when they parachuted into Denmark in 1940, and the first to conduct large-scale mass airborne operations during the 1941 Battle of Crete with 16,000 paratroopers vertically enveloping and shocking their foe; however, Germany's high casualty rate caused it to never again conduct another mass parachute drop.



Composite Fallschirmjäger produced by Germany's Lineal in the 1940s.

## United Kingdom in WWII

Although Winston Churchill had first proposed the creation of an airborne capability during WWI, the advent of WWII spurred the formation of British forces, with the first airborne assault taking place when the Special Air Service jumped into Italy to blow up an aqueduct as part of Operation Colossus. Germany's use of paratroops in Crete catalyzed the formation of the UK's 1st Airborne Division which conducted large scale drops in Sicily, and the 6th Airborne Division which participated in the D-Day Normandy landings, Operation Market Garden in the Netherlands of "a bridge too far" fame, and Operation Varsity in Germany, the last large scale airborne operation of WWII.





# A HISTORY OF PARATROOPERS VIA TOY SOLDIERS *(Continued)*



Ceremonial & band sets of British airborne forces are popular among collectors. Above are pictures of W. Britains 1990 commemorative edition made for the 50th anniversary for 1st Parachute Regiment and a colorful band made by Ducal.



Another Britains set of British paratroopers (from Set #2010 Airborne Infantry).



Contemporary Thomas Gunn figures depict British paratroopers from Operation Market Garden.

## United States in WWII

The November 1942 Operation Torch in North Africa by the 509th Parachute Infantry Battalion marked the first American airborne mission. The use of paratroops by the US during WWII represents the apogee of large

scale airborne operations, with 13,100 US paratroops joining 8,500 British & Canadian troops on D-Day. Other large assaults include 20,000 paratroopers from the 82nd Airborne, 101st Airborne and British 1st Airborne Division for Operation Market Garden, and 16,000 allied paratroops for Operation Varsity; in total, thirteen combat jumps were made by US forces during WWII.



Nicholson Miniatures set made in 1991 of a Fallschirmjager confronting an 82nd Airborne fire team.



Contemporary King & Country set of 82nd Airborne troopers in Normandy.

## France in Vietnam

The French used paratroops extensively during their 1946–54 war against the Viet Minh. These soldiers, along with their French Foreign Legion counterparts (who today have their own parachute regiment) participated in numerous operations that ultimately ended with the fall of Dien Bien Phu. From there these soldiers deployed to North Africa to participate in the Algerian War.

# A HISTORY OF PARATROOPERS VIA TOY SOLDIERS *(Continued)*



Toy Soldiers made from other materials started to significantly replace lead soldiers in the 1950s & 1960s. Prolific French producer Starlux's collection of plastic paratroops (on page 25 above) and Quiralu's aluminum soldiers (immediately above ) are representative of that trend.

## Falklands

Although many military strategists questioned the effectiveness of airborne forces following the extensive use of heliborne "air assault" soldiers during the War in Vietnam, the participation of the British Parachute Regiment during the 1982 Falklands War against Argentina demonstrated that paratroopers still have a role to play on the battlefield.

## Desert Storm

Desert Storm reconfirmed the importance of airborne forces in rapid deployment and force projection operations, with the 82nd Airborne drawing a line in the sand (at the risk of being a speed-bump to Iraqi tanks) in Saudi Arabia; however, veterans of combat jumps in Grenada (1983) and Panama (1989) were disappointed that there were no parachute assaults in this war.

## Wars of the 21st Century

US paratroops returned to battle via airborne assault to seize enemy airfields in Afghanistan as part of Operation Enduring Freedom (2001) and Iraq for Operation Iraqi Freedom (2003). French forces also participated in the broader Global Wars On Terror, with the 11th Parachute Brigade and 2nd Paratroop Regiment of the Foreign Legion jumping into Mali in 2013 and 2018 respectively, making these the most recent known, unclassified jumps made in combat.



This colorful set produced by Ilfracombe shows British paratroops after their victory in the Battle of Goose Green.



Paratroops in Afghanistan made by Shanghai's Figarti Miniatures.



# A HISTORY OF PARATROOPERS VIA TOY SOLDIERS *(Continued)*



What's old is new - modern figures from France's CGB-Mignot, the oldest continuously operating toy soldier maker.

## Other Interesting Paratroopers

Other countries are just as proud of their paratroops as the Italians, Germans, British, Americans and French are of theirs.



Paratroops from Canada, Denmark, Israel and Zimbabwe.



Not every nation's airborne forces wear red (technically maroon) berets, as shown by these black-bereted Spanish and blue-bereted Russian paratroops.



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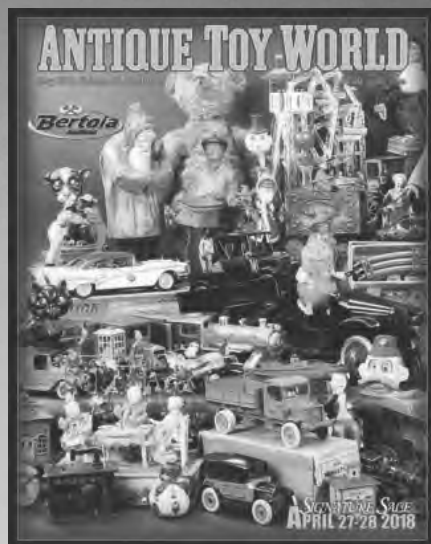
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# A NOSTALGIC ACCOUNT OF OVER 50 YEARS OF BRITAINS COLLECTING

By Joe Wallis

Some of you know me as the author of *Regiments of All Nations*, *Britains Ltd. Lead Soldiers 1946-66*; *Armies of the World*, *Britains Ltd. Lead Soldiers 1925-41*; and *Soldiers of Greater Britain*, *Britains Ltd. Lead Soldiers 1893-1924*, or through the articles I have written in the *Old Toy Soldier* magazine since 1976. My collection has been accumulated during over 50 years of collecting, including 13 trips to England since 1976. At this stage, much of my collecting is to find a box for a set, or to upgrade the condition of a set, but I can always research, write, and learn more about Britains.

I have to confess that the first toy soldiers I got when I was about five years old were not Britains. They were Crescent knights, cowboys and Indians along with a Johillco stage coach—all bought at the Western Auto store in Midland, Texas where I grew up. They only had toys at Christmas time. It was not until the early 1960s that Peyton's Bicycles and Toys started stocking a limited range of Britains 9000 Series "See-Thru" boxes, and I have been a keen collector ever since. I can still vividly remember the smell of the paint on a newly purchased set of Britains—it was almost addictive. My childhood collection consisted of five artillery pieces, eight mounted sets, eleven infantry sets, and one larger box (Set 2097 French Foreign Legion and Arabs). My first and favorite sets have always been Skinner's Horse (Set 47) and the Somerset Light Infantry (Set 17). I did not get an allowance, so I had to laboriously save up the \$2.25 for a set of Britains by searching for soda

pop bottles to get the three cents that stores paid when you turned in bottles to recycle, and by saving the five cents change from my school lunch money. Life was a lot different then—I can recall a glass bottle of Coca Cola (no cans back then) cost five cents when I was very young, and only a dime later. I remember the ice cream truck coming around in the summer and begging my mother for 6 cents to get a fudgesicle.

While I was growing up, it never occurred to me that there was a Britains catalog listing the products they were making. I can vividly recollect buying two ROAN boxes (Set 142 French Zouaves and Set 1631 Canadian Governor-General's Horse Guards) on a trip to a large toy shop in Lubbock, Texas. Inside one of those boxes was a little folded "numerical list of Britains best quality boxes of model soldiers" that ended at Set 2097, which I later learned dated it to about 1954 (see photograph). It just gave the set titles and the number of pieces without illustrations, so I spent many hours trying to imagine what their uniforms and poses were. Finally, I wrote to Britains in 1966 (not knowing that this would be their last year of producing the traditional hollow-cast and hand-painted lead soldier that they had initiated in 1893). I still have the letter I received back referring me to Reeves International as Britains did not sell directly. Reeves gave me the names of three or four department stores in Dallas, Fort Worth, and Houston—but by then the stock was already depleted.



# A NOSTALGIC ACCOUNT OF OVER 50 YEARS OF BRITAINS COLLECTING (Continued)

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Cat. No.	Description	Pieces per Box
2009	Belgian Grenadiers	8
2010	American Infantry	8
2011	Royal Air Force	22
2012	U.S. Marine Corps Band	21
2013	8th Troop	4
2014	U.S. Military Police	3
2015	Light Van & Driver	2
2016	Cannon Mounting	19
2017	25-pounder Gun, Howitzer	1
2018	Red Army, Guards Infantry	8
2019	Red Army, Cavalry	8
2020	Life Guards, Scutches	0
2021	Australian Infantry, Blood	8
2022	Australian Infantry, Khaki	8
2023	Red Army, Cavalry	8
2024	U.S. Infantry	8
2025	Cavalry	8
2026	Swedish Life Guards	8
2027	Swiss Grenadiers, Gds. & Black Watch	19
2028	8th Troop	1
2029	Clockwork Tank	1
2030	Covered Wagon Set	13
2031	Carton Set	12
2032	United States Air Corps	8
2033	Clockwork Van & Driver	2
2034	Arabs on Foot and Horse	5
2035	Lorry, Clockwork Trailer & Gun	14
2036	Uruguayan Military Cadets	4
2037	Anti-Aircraft Gun	15
2038	"1802" Condemned Cavalry	7
2039	"1802" Union Cavalry	6
2040	"1802" Union Artillery	3
2041	"1802" Condemned Artillery	3
2042	"1802" Union Infantry	7
2043	"1802" Condemned Infantry	7
2044	Wild West Display	54
2045	Seaboard Highlanders	17

Cat. No.	Description	Pieces per Box
2046	Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders	0
2047	100th Light Infantry	1
2048	11th M. The Queen	1
2049	Royal Canadian Mounted Police	1
2050	The Sovereigns Household	7
2051	"1802" Condemned Troops	12
2052	"1802" Union Troops	12
2053	"1802" Display	30
2054	Royal Marines (Present)	7
2055	King's Royal Rifle Corps	8
2056	Royal Air Force	8
2057	1st King's Dragoon Guards	5
2058	7th Queen's Own Hussars	5
2059	2nd Royal Lancers	5
2060	Royal Horse Artillery	8
2061	Leah Guards (Present)	7
2062	Royal Company of Archers	13
2063	Royal Navy	8
2064	Colchester Guards (Attention)	8
2065	Welch Guards (At Ease)	7
2066	Scots Guards Colours	5
2067	Royal Navy	23
2068	Queens Royal Regiment (Victoria)	10
2069	5th Dragoon Guards (No. 1 Dress)	8
2070	Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry	8
2071	Glosters (No. 1 Dress)	8
2072	Royal Irish Fusiliers (No. 1 Dress)	8
2073	1st Life Brigade (No. 1 Dress)	8
2074	Parachute Regt. (No. 1 Dress)	8
2075	Royal Berkshire Regt. Band (No. 1 Dress)	25
2076	State Open Landau with team of six Windsor Greys	11
2077	Glosters, Norfolk, Legion	14
2078	Drums and Pipe Band of the Irish Guards	12
2079	French Foreign Legion and Arabs	20

Then I went to college at Texas Christian University in Fort Worth. I found an advertisement in *Hobbies* magazine about 1969 by a collector in New York who was selling sets of Britains without boxes for \$20 each—probably a high price then, but I bought several sets such as 7th Hussars and 9th Lancers, and was very happy to get them. In 1973 I took a trip to Rochester, New York to visit a friend I had known in college and came across a shop that had a few toys—but they told me about a collector in Buffalo, New York who had a huge collection he was selling. I drove over and was thrilled to get Royal Horse Artillery, a Royal Naval landing party, the mountain battery, Egyptian camel corps, Gurkhas, and Arabs on camels. I also went to my first toy soldier show in March 1973 at Widener College in Chester, Pennsylvania on that same trip. They had about 40 tables exhibiting painted military miniatures and a flea market of just six tables in the basement of the building. I still have the Gordon Highlander mounted officer in Souvenir Box 2168 that I bought for \$20.

Cat. No.	Description	Pieces per Box	Cat. No.	Description	Pieces per Box
1	Life Guards	5	103	Boy Scout Signaller	5
2	Royal Horse Guards	5	104	Arabs on Horses	5
3	Black Watch	5	105	Italian Bersagliers	5
4	Somerset Light Infantry	8	106	Cavalry	5
5	9th Q.R. Lancers	5	107	Boy Scout Encampment	44
6	Band of the Life	5	108	11th Hussars	5
7	Mountain Artillery	14	109	Cavalry	5
8	Drums & Pipes of the Life	6	110	Arabs on Foot	5
9	Royal Scots Greys	5	111	Belgian Hussars	5
10	Royal Marines	5	112	Infantry, Service Dress	5
11	Royal Sussex Regiment	7	113	Greek Phrygians	5
12	Colchester Guard Band	21	114	1st K.G.V.O. Gurkha Rifles	5
13	Royal Horse Artillery	13	115	General Officers & Staff	8
14	Scots Greys, Grenadier Guards	13	116	Troopband Warriors	8
15	Scots Greys, Grenadier Guards	13	117	North American Indians	11
16	Life Guards, 4th Hussars	5	118	Cavalry	11
17	13th U.C.O. Lancers	5	119	Royal Scots	5
18	Presentation Box (British) Foot and Mounted Regts. and R. H. Artillery	67	120	Argentine Cavalry	4
19	Royal Welch Fusiliers	5	121	Uruguayan Cavalry	4
20	Scots Guards	7	122	Arabs on Camels, etc.	11
21	Middlesex Regiment	8	123	King's African Rifles	8
22	Gordon Highlanders	8	124	U.S. Marine Corps	5
23	Naval Landing Party & Gun	11	125	U.S. Cavalry	5
24	Scots Guards, Phrygians	7	126	U.S. Infantry Marines, Cadets	24
25	Colchester Guards	24	127	U.S. Infantry & Cavalry	12
26	Life Guards Band	11	128	N.A. Indians & Cowboys	10
27	Regimental Cavalry	11	129	West Point Cadets	8
28	Colchester Guards	8	130	Grenadier Guards, Overseas	8
29	French Fusiliers	5	131	Scots Guards Sentry & Box	2
30	French Zouaves	5	132	Life Guards (Cavalry)	5
31	R.A.M.C. Wagon	7	133	Life Guards & Scots Guards	5
32	R.A.S.C. Wagon	5	134	German Infantry	8
33	Zulus	8	135	Field Gun	1
34	North American Indians	7	136	U.S. Whitejackets	8
35	North American Indians	4	137	Yeomen of the Guard	6
36	North American Indians	4	138	Knights	9
37	North American Indians	4	139	Field Gun	1

Cat. No.	Description	Pieces per Box	Cat. No.	Description	Pieces per Box
140	4.7-in. Naval Gun, Mobile	1	1614	Infantry, Gas Masks, Action	24
141	18-in. Gun Howitzer	1	1615	Over-Guns, Horse Guards, Canada	5
142	18-in. Mobile Howitzer	1	1616	Jess. Pat's Canadian Light Infantry	8
143	Grenadier Guards	8	1617	Jess. Pat's Canadian Light Infantry	8
144	Royal Marines	16	1618	Over-Guns, Post Guards, Canada	8
145	Royal Marine Band	12	1619	Horse & Foot Guards, Canada	13
146	Field Gun	1	1620	Ramps, Fisher & Operator	2
147	U.S. Military Band	12	1621	Searchlight	1
148	16th Century Knights	16	1622	Knight with Sword	1
149	Grenadier Guards	12	1623	Knight with Lance (Champion)	1
150	Machine Gun Section	6	1624	Knight with Standard	1
151	16th Century Knights	16	1625	Knight with Lance (Heard)	1
152	16th Century Knights	16	1626	Knight on Foot	1
153	16th Century Knights	16	1627	French Foreign Legion	7
154	16th Century Knights	16	1628	2nd, Light A.A. Gun	1
155	16th Century Knights	16	1629	Mobile Light A.A. Gun	1
156	16th Century Knights	16	1630	Mobile Searchlight	1
157	16th Century Knights	16	1631	Royal Scots Greys Band	24
158	16th Century Knights	16	1632	Scots Guards Pipes and Drums	9
159	16th Century Knights	16	1633	Royal Army Medical Corps	1
160	16th Century Knights	16	1634	16th Century	1
161	16th Century Knights	16	1635	Artillery Under	1
162	16th Century Knights	16	1636	Predictor & Operator	2
163	16th Century Knights	16	1637	Right Finder & Operator	8
164	16th Century Knights	16	1638	Royal Artillery	2
165	16th Century Knights	16	1639	Spotting Clair & Spiller	2
166	16th Century Knights	16	1640	Royal Signals, Dispatch Riders	8
167	16th Century Knights	16	1641	Infantry, Battle Dress	18
168	16th Century Knights	16	1642	Infantry, Battle Dress	18
169	16th Century Knights	16	1643	Infantry, Battle Dress	18
170	16th Century Knights	16	1644	Infantry, Battle Dress	18
171	16th Century Knights	16	1645	Infantry, Battle Dress	18
172	16th Century Knights	16	1646	Infantry, Battle Dress	18
173	16th Century Knights	16	1647	Infantry, Battle Dress	18
174	16th Century Knights	16	1648	Infantry, Battle Dress	18
175	16th Century Knights	16	1649	Infantry, Battle Dress	18
176	16th Century Knights	16	1650	Infantry, Battle Dress	18
177	16th Century Knights	16	1651	Infantry, Battle Dress	18
178	16th Century Knights	16	1652	Infantry, Battle Dress	18
179	16th Century Knights	16	1653	Infantry, Battle Dress	18
180	16th Century Knights	16	1654	Infantry, Battle Dress	18
181	16th Century Knights	16	1655	Infantry, Battle Dress	18
182	16th Century Knights	16	1656	Infantry, Battle Dress	18
183	16th Century Knights	16	1657	Infantry, Battle Dress	18
184	16th Century Knights	16	1658	Infantry, Battle Dress	18
185	16th Century Knights	16	1659	Infantry, Battle Dress	18
186	16th Century Knights	16	1660	Infantry, Battle Dress	18
187	16th Century Knights	16	1661	Infantry, Battle Dress	18
188	16th Century Knights	16	1662	Infantry, Battle Dress	18
189	16th Century Knights	16	1663	Infantry, Battle Dress	18
190	16th Century Knights	16	1664	Infantry, Battle Dress	18
191	16th Century Knights	16	1665	Infantry, Battle Dress	18
192	16th Century Knights	16	1666	Infantry, Battle Dress	18
193	16th Century Knights	16	1667	Infantry, Battle Dress	18
194	16th Century Knights	16	1668	Infantry, Battle Dress	18
195	16th Century Knights	16	1669	Infantry, Battle Dress	18
196	16th Century Knights	16	1670	Infantry, Battle Dress	18
197	16th Century Knights	16	1671	Infantry, Battle Dress	18
198	16th Century Knights	16	1672	Infantry, Battle Dress	18
199	16th Century Knights	16	1673	Infantry, Battle Dress	18
200	16th Century Knights	16	1674	Infantry, Battle Dress	18

In 1973 I also discovered that Shamus Wade and Ged Haley were sending out mail order lists of toy soldiers from England, and that Phillips Auctioneers were holding several lead soldier auctions a year. What a thrill it was to get a parcel from overseas and to unpack it. In those days, collecting was much less costly—a 1970 list from Ged Haley that I later ran across was selling an R.A.F. monoplane for just \$30. However, while prices were lower, the challenge was finding Britains. There was no internet or eBay, and only the Miniature Figures Collectors of America (MFCA) Show near Philadelphia I mentioned earlier, plus a smaller show in Washington, D. C. put on by the National Capitol Military Collectors. Shows were dominated by painters and toy soldier collectors were only tolerated. In 1974 I moved to Chicago and met Gus Hansen. He was a major source of old toy soldiers back then, buying collections to sell from all over the U. S. and Canada. He was always careful when making appointments at his house to keep collectors from meeting each other as he wanted to be their only source for Britains.



## A NOSTALGIC ACCOUNT OF OVER 50 YEARS OF BRITAINS COLLECTING *(Continued)*

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However, there were a few shops around, including the Hobby Chest in Skokie, Illinois. I found out about the Military Miniatures Society of Illinois there and met Don Pielin and Steve Sommers at club meetings. In September 1976 five of us started the *Old Toy Soldier Newsletter (OTSN)*: Steve and Josie Sommers, Don Pielin, Roger Garfield, and me. We pooled about 150 names and addresses we had and thought that we could probably make a successful publication if we could get 300 subscribers. The response we got was much bigger than that, including Canadians and overseas collectors. I recall collating and stapling the issues ourselves—going around the dining table in Oak Park. Eventually we grew to 1,500 subscribers and the magazine became color instead of black-and-white. After 20 years we changed it from a bi-monthly to a quarterly journal. In 1981 we started the Chicago Show; which became an instant success and the largest toy soldier show anywhere. In 1983 we moved the show to a nice Hyatt hotel in Schaumburg, Illinois and it now consists of over 300 dealers on Sunday, and it is like a big convention. Selling begins as early as Wednesday before the show and sellers open their hotel rooms all day with an amazing variety of soldiers spread out on the beds and windowsills. If you haven't been, it is the ultimate experience in toy soldier collecting. In fact, every year at the end of the show, I always feel like Christmas is over for that year!

During the 1980s, I had lunch with Dennis Britain at the R.A.F. Club in London and he later invited me to his home for lunch. He proudly showed me the plaster master figure of the Life Guard that he thought was the very first figure created by his father (William Britain Junior) in 1893. I never had the heart to tell him that the model he was showing off was the larger 1897 second version—not the smaller Germanic first version. I also researched the Britains family history and found that William Britain Senior was born in 1831 not 1828, and died in 1907 not 1906. The family moved to 28 Lambton Road after 1874. However, in the 1891 census the house is listed as “unoccupied” and all of the family resided in other locations. So, the story about inventing the hollow-cast lead soldier “under a tree in the garden” at 28 Lambton Road may be true, but it fails to mention that the family had been successful enough with the mechanical toys invented by William Britain Senior and William Britain Junior during the 1870s and 1880s to have already moved to newer lodgings.

The entire enterprise was very Victorian. Even into the 1940s, pay day involved counting out cash into each employee's hand, and the work week included a half-day on Saturday. If you were up to 15 minutes late, you were docked an hour's pay; if it was more than 15

minutes, you were sent home without pay, and repeated tardiness got you fired. However, as documented by an article in the *North London Press* entitled “Britains Soldiers Are Ready for 1955 Call-up,” many employees worked at Britains for 45 or 50 years (see Volume 23, #4 of OTS.) A common means of being hired by Britains was to have relatives already employed there to vouch for you. To visualize that world, the Sherlock Holmes television series from the 1980s starring Jeremy Brett captures the look and feel of the beginning days of Britains. The firm was listed in the 1908 London telephone directory, and there is a photograph of the three oldest brothers who ran the firm (William, Alfred, and Fred) sitting in an early automobile about 1902 (see page 13 of my *Soldiers of Greater Britain* book).

Turning to the 1970s, the cost of old Britains began to rise, with a turning point being the auction of the Douglas Fairbanks Collection in London in 1977 when a Set 1622 Royal Marine Light Infantry band sold for \$1,400. Peter Johnson in London began building a large collection for Malcolm Forbes and his museum in Tangier, Morocco. Shops such as the Soldier Shop in New York City became well-established and recruited or revived the participation of many collectors in the hobby. The high inflation of the early 1980s stimulated many baby boomers who were now earning good incomes to invest in collectibles—so stamps, coins, trains, and Britains all shot up in price as a limited supply was sought by an increasing number of collectors. There was greater availability than ever because of more shows, shops, dealers' mail order sales lists, and more publicity about collecting. The *Old Toy Soldier* magazine and several books had an impact too because before then most collectors had no way of really knowing what the firm had made. In the 1960s, the British Model Soldier Society *Bulletin* had printed Len Richards' series of articles entitled “A history of Britain's lead soldiers, standard catalog items listed by number from 1893 to 1960.” Richards' *Old British Model Soldiers 1893-1918* was published in 1970 and intrigued many collectors with its 60 pages of black-and-white photos. In 1972 Almark reprinted the 1940 Britains catalog, which was a revelation to many collectors of the wide range Britains had made prewar.

I have written over 150 articles in the *Old Toy Soldier* magazine, beginning in 1976. We sold the magazine to Ray Haradin in 2002, but I kept on writing because I enjoy it. Some of the noteworthy articles I have written are: the “Britains Basics Series” on how to identify Britains sets (in Volumes 1-6 from 1976-1981), the “Filling in the Line” Series which discussed previously unknown noncatalogued sets being discovered one-by-one by collectors (Volumes 1-5), the “1941 F.A.O.

# A NOSTALGIC ACCOUNT OF OVER 50 YEARS OF BRITAINS COLLECTING *(Continued)*

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Set 9261 Skinner's Horse.

Schwarz catalog" (Volume 18, issue #4), "the Clyde Model Dockyard in Glasgow" (Volume 20, issue #1), Fred Whisstock's story and obituary (Volume 21, issue #3), "the Britains Family History" (Volume 25, issue #1), "Simkin Prints, a Source of Inspiration for Britains Ltd." (Volume 25, issue #3), "an Examination of the 1939 Hamley's Catalog" (Volume 31, issue #3, and "Gamages 1938 Christmas Bazaar Catalog" (Volume 32, issue #1).

In 1981 I published *Regiments of All Nations*, in 1985 James Opie published *Britain's Toy Soldiers 1893-1932*, and both my book *Armies of the World* and Opie's *Great Book of Britains* appeared in 1993. In 2011, I updated my ROAN book with 500 color photos, adding 150 pages with all of the information I had learned since 1981, and redid ROAN in hardcover. In 2017 I issued *Soldiers of Greater Britain, Britains Ltd. Lead Soldiers 1893-1924*, and in February 2020 I published a revised edition in hardcover of *Armies of the World* totaling 779 pages with 852 color photos.

A perception I often hear is that old Britains are too expensive to collect. Whenever I hear this from a collector at a show, I ask them: "what do you collect?"

and they usually tell me new Britains, King and Country, etc. Then I ask them how much they spend, and they tell me three or four thousand dollars per year! I respond: "you could be collecting old Britains for that sum." While the R.A.F. monoplane I mentioned as selling for \$30 in 1970 can sell now for \$3,000 or more that is a rare item and not typical. In fact, the average postwar Britains set is now in the \$80 to \$200 range for boxed sets in nice condition. When you think about it, that is very close to what a lot of current new production sets cost. I also like to point out that I have sold 7,600 copies of my ROAN book and 2,500 copies of my AOW book—and that does not begin to encompass all of the people who like Britains and have some stored away. There must be many Britains collections in china cabinets, closets, attics and basements all over England and North America still to be discovered.

These then are some of my experiences and observations of collecting old Britains for the last 50-plus years. I hope this article has been interesting and instructive for all those who appreciate the craftsmanship and historical detail represented by Britains since 1893.



Set 9143 Somerset Light Infantry in a See-Thru box.



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# BRITAINS LARGE DISPLAY BOXES PART 1

*By John Franklin*

## Introduction

I have been fortunate enough to be in the right place at the right time over the years to acquire about 25 large Britains double layered boxes for soldiers. However, of the 25, only five came with their original contents. Of these, 5 two came from shops, two from auction and one from a dealer. Of the 20 empty ones, nearly all came from dealers or private sales. The intention with the empty boxes was to use them to store some of the other sets I had, which originally came without a box. A large box with all the Austro-Hungarian sets looks splendid, as does another with various Indian Cavalry sets laid out in similar fashion.

Whilst this article focuses on a number of the Britains two layered boxes, primarily originally containing British Army Regiments, it does not include any information on the two largest Britains boxed, sets 131 and 132.<sup>1</sup> For clarification, this article does not report on two layered boxes in other areas of Britains production like the American Civil War, Cowboys & Indians, Farm, Zoo, etc. Another large box not covered in this article is set 2081, a three layered box, which contained a massive display for the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II in June 1953. All the figures and State coach in that box were available in other smaller sets in production at that time. Nor is Britains set 323 Display Box of the US Forces reported or the large Argentine display set (342). I have never seen the former set, either in actuality or photographed. Apologies to our US readers for the lack of any pictures or report.

One other point to note when talking about these Britains boxes, the pictures and reports here are all from the lead era, 1893 – 1967. In the latter

of these years of Britains lead solder production, some of the original set numbers of these large boxes were changed to numbers in the 9400 series. The reports herein though will be by the original set number but will include any other allied 9400 series sets I have.

So, we are really looking at the boxes for set numbers:

73  
93  
129  
130  
1267  
1350  
1407  
1477  
1555  
2085

The contents of all these boxes are reported in detail in books by Joe Wallis and James Opie. I do not propose to repeat all such details here. Where some particular detail is of interest I will include it herein. However, the contents of particular sets will be seen in the photographs, either as present when purchased or as subsequently collected to fill a fine empty box which invited such collection. I will try to echo a set's title as given in the various Britains catalogues, though a lot are of a general unspecific nature like 'Display of the British Army.' Sometimes the catalogue just says 'Large Presentation Box'.

The original intention was for any empty box to provide storage for boxless sets. However somewhere down the line I did acquire some soldiers which did or might have originated from a large two layered box. And, lo and behold, these small groups were then stored in the appropriate box. What that triggered was further action of course, with the thought "well, keep looking, there

might be other such small groups around, and maybe before long one might have a large two layered box with all its contents". Not necessarily totally matching but it would be fun trying, and also gave a bit of focus to the ferreting around at toy fairs and soldier shows! The starting point of interest in this article is what the boxes themselves looked like, but then showing contents as originally acquired or subsequently collected.

In a small way, these large boxes per se are a bit of a disappointment. Their labels are pretty minimal and a real contrast to many single rowed boxes which had their lids sporting great labels from Whisstock, printers type, Famous Regiments, Armies of the World, ROAN, etc, etc. And all had end labels describing the contents. Very few large boxes come with end labels. Usually these were post war. Labels for these large boxes are usually either: black, with some art work defining the British Army; or printers type, white labels. Both types of label are usually located in the centre of the lid. As for finding the set number of a particular set/box, again no prominence is given to advertising or identification. On the black labels, the set number can sometimes be found in a medallion, but almost indiscernible (making it very difficult to obtain a decent photograph showing label and set number). The white printers type labels are often graced, centre bottom, with a rubber stamped number about an inch long. Ughh! Come on Britains – you could do better! One wonders at their philosophy when compared to the many great labels on single row boxes. You might have thought these large boxes were at the top of Britains focus for PR and attention seeking – why not include a big label and lots of info about all the splendid regiments and contents included in the box?

---

*1. Editorial note: Watch this space. A new article on set 131 is currently in preparation and will be published next year. Also to pre-empt the author's later statement, another article on set 323 is also in progress. If any readers have information on these large display sets and also the Argentinian set (#342) please contact the editor.*

# BRITAINS LARGE DISPLAY BOXES PART 1 *(Continued)*

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A lot of the large boxes I acquired have seen better days with scuffs, bits of edges missing from lids, etc. But this reflects the price paid, never more than £30 - £40. With room for a gun team and 70 - 100 other troops, this is not bad value and an attractive way of displaying and storing figures in authentic boxes.

In due course, with a small number of the boxes in reasonable condition, I decided to take up the challenge of trying to find figures of the right era to replicate what the box with original contents would have been like. One or two examples are included here. One should bear in mind that about 95% or so of the contents of these boxes, (as often as not simply marketed as "Display Boxes"), had sets or figures that appeared in single row boxes, mostly focusing on the British Army. Generally, these are not uncommon figures but searching for style, detail and paint hue, from a particular decade or half decade of production, if you wanted the figures to look right in that box, that takes time.

## Setting the Scene

I have been interested in Britains large boxes for 50 years or more. As a young lad I got hooked on Britains soldiers in the 1940s and 1950s but the appearance of Britains soldiers in UK shops in those days was quite limited and intermittent till 1952 or 53, a) because of the war and then b) England had to export anything and everything to try to pay for the war. And of course, as a mere sprog, I was only aware of what Britains soldiers were available and produced by sending off to the firm for their latest catalogue. Shops had limited supplies, stemming from their own order selection to Britains and also Britains limited supplies to the UK market because of those needed exports. My narrow awareness of Britains soldiers range and availability continued up to the very late 1960s. This was when the first sales by professional auctioneers appeared

in London, with Polish Infantry, etc. being offered, 'Polish Infantry', what are these? I then twigged there was a whole new aspect to Britains toy soldiers, and over the next few years started to learn about the production and range of sets from before the war, especially those not available after the war.

So back to my early years, the catalogues from 1952, 1954, etc, presented large boxes for sale: sets 73, 1555, gun teams, etc, etc. But such presents or 'saved up for' purchases were beyond my own and my family's means. Indeed when I saw a single row box of the Royal Welsh Fusiliers in the window of the small hobby shop in Hull just before Christmas 1951 and said I would like those for Christmas, my parents made a unilateral decision that "I should have got over toy soldiers by now", and gave me a soccer ball instead!

I digress. It was only in 1967 that I bought my first large box, ignorant at that time that a treasure trove of prewar boxes were waiting to be retrieved from house lofts and attics, store cupboards, etc and sent to auction houses. That first large box (set 73, then masquerading as set 9407) was acquired in Paris from the Louis Vuitton store,. These were the last few sets and boxes at the end of Britains lead toys production. Unmarried, and having been to my brother's wedding on the continent, I came back through Paris. I had remembered from my school boy, hitch-hiking days going there in 1959. A shop, somewhere near the Arc de Triomphe, had boxes of soldiers in the windows. I was an impoverished schoolboy at the time, so purchases, at Louis Vuitton never mind anywhere else, were beyond me. I believe the sets I had seen back then were modern Mignot, but I thought they were very attractive (also not often seen in UK at that time). So 8 years later I found the shop again. On going in to the store, not only were there these lovely Mignot on the shelves

but Britains as well. And there was set 9407, priced at 100 French Francs (then equivalent to about £10 or \$24). So it had to be didn't it? I was single, no parents telling me what I could or could not have, and my car was round the corner so I could get it back to England.

So, large boxes have interested me for a fair while. Of course, we collectors are well aware that in the secondhand/pre-owned market while what you see as offered in the auction houses or dealers tables and is listed as "in original box", there is no guarantee they left the factory like that. As ever, caveat emptor! This article provides pictures of large Britains boxes, some of them with their original contents, others as assembled in the last 50 years.

There are only two sets, both bought from a shop, which I would say categorically left the factory with the figures as seen below. These are the set 9407 mentioned above and set 2085, One last story and then on to the pictures! My second attempt in the late 1960s to acquire the only other large box I was aware of at that time, set 1555, was fraught, and unsuccessful, and only satiated about 45 years later. In 1969, with Britains having ceased lead production a couple of years earlier, I advertised in the BMSS Bulletin for a 'secondhand' set 1555. I had no response or thought there was no response. It appears the telephone number that appeared in the advert was incorrect, probably my error (I was staying with friends at that time). Consequently, the prospective seller didn't get through to me. Years later I became acquainted with him. He told me of not being able to contact me and hence not able to effect the sale/purchase. In 2014 I eventually bought my Changing of the Guard set at auction, a late 9424 set, but still an interesting and fine display with a depiction on the lid of the daily event at Buckingham Palace. Patience pays!!



# BRITAINS LARGE DISPLAY BOXES PART 1 (Continued)

A lot of the large boxes being presented here have no set title on the box. Indeed even in the catalogues they have different list names at different times. Sometimes they were included under Large Presentation Boxes, sometimes under Displays and Types of the British Army. Where no set title is on the box the various sections below are by set number only. A few boxes have an end label, etc, and where this occurs this is given as the set title.

So, to the pictures of boxes, and some contents.

## 1. SET 73

This section covers both sets 73 and 9407, they are spread over about 70 years. I have two old set 73 wooden boxes, a fine set 73 example from about 1937, the "bought as new" 9407 box from Paris and three empty 9407 boxes.

First we have the 2 wooden boxes P 1 and P 2. They were made about 1900, came empty. I have acquired two components for one of them, P 1, the 1st version shafted limber RHA gun team and some later version Royal Welsh Fusiliers, but no colour bearer in attendance. Ordinarily these boxes fill the role originally set for them, home for other boxless sets. I do not know whether one style of box was produced before the other or whether Britains had two suppliers for these very first set 73 Display boxes.<sup>2</sup>

i) P 1 Hinged lid, tape to keep lid vertical when open (RHS). No backing cards, tissue in lieu, each cavalry place an individual box, all infantry positions slots in a card strip at their feet. Empty, awaiting contents! Quite battered, label almost indiscernible, black artwork, British Army. A bit of history none the less. Size 25in x 15in, set number top RH corner. No set title on box.



P 1a) Set 73 Hinged wooden box.



P 1b) Label from a similar box showing the set number clearly



P 1c) Set number 73, top RH corner of label



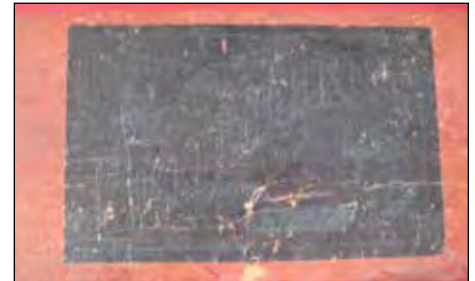
P 1d) Interior packaging and compartments for box in P 1a)

ii) P 2 Sliding lid, layout, internal compartments etc almost exactly the same as P 1d). Some repairs. On the underside of the lid is a set title Types of the British Army and a listing of the

contents (confirmation of it being set 73) and a small note at the bottom LH corner, not decipherable (Doz?). Some contents have been acquired subsequently. Label similar to P 1b) with a faint 73 in the murk near the centre of the label.



P 2a) Set 73 Sliding lid wooden box



P 2b) Label for box in P 2a) Set number almost visible



P 2c) Set number 73 visible under 'H A' in centre of BRITISH ARMY



P 2d) Internal compartmentation for box in P 2a). Some early contents acquired

2. Editorial note: Other research suggested that the hinged lid was used in the very earliest sets (c. 1897), with the sliding lid coming in a bit later (c. 1900).



# BRITAINS LARGE DISPLAY BOXES PART 1 (Continued)



P 2e) Inside lid label on underside of sliding lid of P 2a) box - The words read:-

## TYPES OF THE BRITISH ARMY

### CONTAINING

The Royal Horse Artillery  
and Life Guards, 17th Lancers,  
2nd Dragoons  
Royal Welsh Fusiliers  
Band of the Line  
The Gordon Highlanders and  
General Officer

Doz(?)

No 73

iii) The next 73 box P 3) is from about 1937, a fairly good example and it has survived well over the years. Totally empty on acquisition, but being in such good condition it was just asking for the constituent contents to be sought and acquired, P 3d). Wooden carcass, card lid, 26 in by 16 in, cavalry still have an individual box, this example had no inserts for the infantry. No set title on box.<sup>3</sup>



P 3a) Box for set 73 about 1937



P 3b) Printers black label for box in P 3a), damaged, no set title but set number visible



P 3c) Set 73 number top RH corner



P 3d) Set 73 containing subsequently collected contents<sup>4</sup>

iv) The fourth box in this series is set 9407 (P 4), as reported above. This was bought from the Paris shop in 1967 with original contents. This box lid has the Louis Vuitton label attached (P 4c). All contents present and representative of the last 10 - 15 years of Britains lead soldier production. Both this set 9407 and set 73 after the war, contain the unique

figure of the RHA officer at the trot with its red trouser stripe. The RHA replaced the RFA gun team used pre WW II. Set 8, the 7th Hussars, had a similar officer at times but with a gold trouser stripe. The other figures in this box not available in other sets were the full dress 17th Lancers, in pre-war set 73 boxes they were usually in tropical helmets.

3. Editorial note: John's set includes 2nd Life Guards on galloping horses with a trumpeter as issued in set 43. Although this is in line with the description in Joe Wallis's book, most of the sets I have seen have used the Life Guards on trotting horses as provided in set 1 (often without an officer) but with their sheepskin horse blankets painted in white rather than black to depict the 2nd rather than 1st Life Guards. James Opie notes that empty handed galloping 2nd Life Guards (without moustaches) were introduced into a number of the larger display sets around 1939/1940. By this date the set would normally include tie cards for the foot figures as well as the Royal Artillery.



# BRITAINS LARGE DISPLAY BOXES PART 1 (Continued)

The Infantry of the Line regiment was named here as The Norfolk Regiment, but the figures and painting were no different to those in set 76 The Middlesex Regiment. This set in 1967 was a fitting swan song to the 74 years of Britains lead toy soldier production. Box made out of card, 26 in by 16 in, all inserts present. Set label on lid end.



P 4a) Set 9407 original contents



P 4b) Set 9407 box lid



P 4c) Set bought from Louis Vuitton Paris 1967 – Store and End Label

## 2. Set 93

I have 3 set 93 boxes, two fairly worn and battered, with lids that have lost all their edges, still useful storage though.

The 3rd box is a reasonable example, probably late 1930s (see P 5). This box is also in good enough condition to warrant trying to find some original contents. After all, we are only looking for Coldstream Guards and Royal Horse Guards. The search has been fairly successful and presents a decent image of the original display. As regards assembling the contents, it was hard to find 47 reasonably closely matching Coldstream Guards and 24 Royal Horse Guards, in various tranches. It is odds on there will be some slight variation of hues within the uniform colours, as well as minor variations in belt thicknesses, button spacing, etc, etc. Having said that the assembled figures still look at home together here, rewarding the effort in seeking, finding and matching the contents to the box. Wooden carcass, card lid, 22 in by 15 in, just 3 inserts cards were present on acquisition. No set title on box.



P 5a) Box 93 late 1930s



P 5b) Printers black label for set 93.  
No set title

## 3. Set 129

The box for set 129 shown in P 6, and its contents, are a gem with much interest. 20 years or more ago I was offered 3 battered old large boxes by a dealer who was going through his stock room to dispose of stuff which had been around some time, not being sold and taking up valuable space. One of these boxes, of the



P 5c) Set 93 collected contents. Box came with 2 infantry and 1 cavalry insert cards



## BRITAINS LARGE DISPLAY BOXES PART 1 (Continued)

standard large size of 25 in by 17 in had its lid covered in wallpaper, but with lid edges present. The wallpaper covered the edges and the inside of the edges and onto the underside of the lid. Even in this state it was going to provide a lot of suitable soldier storage space.

Anyway, I thought I would experiment under the lid with a damp/wet cloth to see if the wall-paper would loosen and peel off. Well some came off without too much damage. The bottom line was with a lot of care and patience, over about a month, virtually all the wall-paper came off with only minor scuffs to the fine red box lid covering paper. The bonus was the black label was pretty much intact and, joy of joys, a small white label proclaiming the box to be set 129 was found, See P6b) below.

Well I didn't have any choice did I? The chase, the searching, the ferreting was on, the box was crying out for its contents. We know what these were, 14 each of the 5 different types of cavalry in the British Army, 4 of which were already in production in their single set boxes of 5 pieces each. The 5 regiments are the 11th Hussars, 12th Lancers, Scots Greys, 1st Dragoon Guards and the 2nd Life Guards. The 1st Dragoon Guards were the only regiment not appearing in any other set, so collecting the 14 each of the 4 easily available sets from various dealers, toy fairs and auctions was not a problem. In due course the 14 1st Dragoons were located. In a way I was fortunate, they all appeared before too many years had passed. *En fin* one has a fine box and contents. OK not every soldier in each group of 14 has the exact matching hue of the colours or width of the trouser stripes or belts, etc. But at the end of the day the 70 figures when laid out present a very acceptable, fine and great display. We are of course looking at a group of toys aren't we? I find the box and contents very attractive. The box has three original insert cards. No set title on the box. Wooden carcass, card lid, 26 in by 17 in.



P 6a) Box lid for set 129, no set title on box



P 6b) Printers black label for set 129, No set number on black label



P 6c) Contents collected for set 129

*To be continued...*





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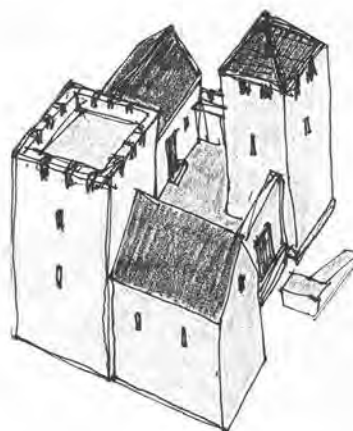
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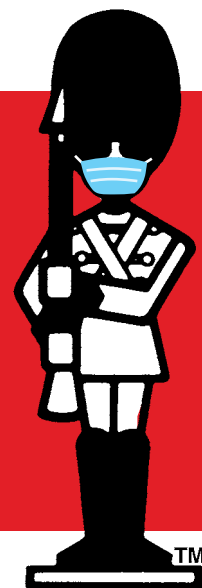
**September 25th, 26th, and 27th, 2020 - Friday, Saturday, and Sunday** Old Toy Soldier Auctions USA - The Lifetime Figure Collections of Don and Dick Pielin.  
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