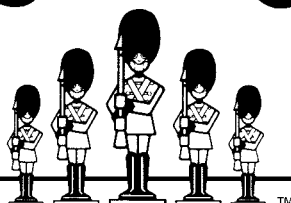


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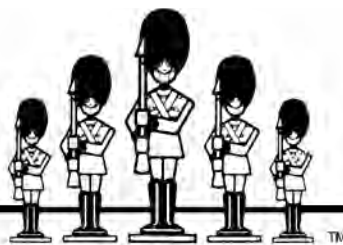
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ON THE COVER

Our cover features one of Peter Greenhill's
miniature masterpieces.

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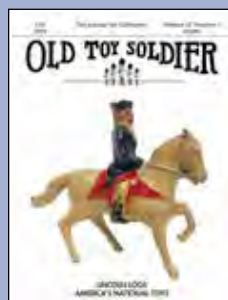
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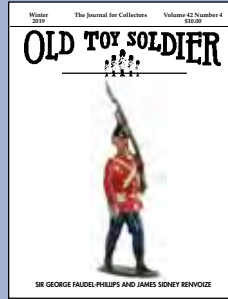
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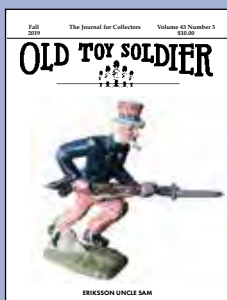
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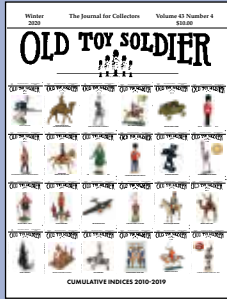
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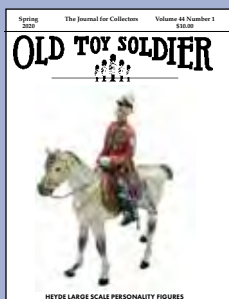


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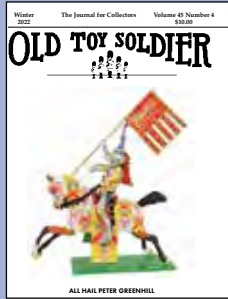
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EDITORIAL

They say time flies when you are enjoying yourself! It certainly seems to have flown by very quickly for me since I took over as Editor of the magazine back in 2019. This issue is the start of the third volume that I have been responsible for. Thanks to all the many people who have contributed articles and other materials, during what has been a difficult time for many people.

Hopefully things are now beginning to get back to something like normal, with many shows coming back to life.

Sadly, we have lost a few very good friends over the last couple of years, and our cover commemorates another significant passing. Many of our readers will be familiar with the work of Peter Greenhill. Peter took over from Ping and Courtenay, producing one of the most sought-after range of figures in the Hobby, concentrating on medieval knights. He will be sorely missed.



It was always the chivalry and heroics of the period, together with a fascination with the heraldry, that engaged Peter and his wife and partner Gilly, rather than the gore of war (which is generally absent from their figures). The meticulous way in which Peter and his predecessors depicted heraldic colour and detail is in marked contrast with the khaki and grey figures that characterise

modern wars, such as that covered by Bill Anderson in his follow-up piece on the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-05.

The vast range of topics, locations and periods covered by our hobby is well illustrated by some of the other articles in this issue, ranging from Luigi Toiati's "Celluloid dreams" to the fantasy / science fiction figures covered by Will Beierwaltes and Joe Wallis.

Hopefully, everyone will find something of interest. It has been great fun putting together the past 9 issues, and I look forward to producing many more. That of course depends on a continuing stream of good articles. We welcome contributions from new authors. So, if we have yet to cover your own specialities, why not try your own hand at writing something that enables you to share your own particular interest with other readers?



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OBITUARY PETER GREENHILL 1935 - 2021

Peter Greenhill was a pillar of the heraldic knight hobby. He died December 27, 2021 in Bournemouth, England.

After service in the British military, he became a fashion photographer (an inspiration for the photographer in the movie *Blow Up*), owner of a toy shop (Thingumummies) and figure maker. Peter originally started collecting Richard Courtenay figures and then obtained Courtenay's molds in the early 1970's. Courtenay, of course, is the watershed figure in the hobby (together with Roger Berdou and Josephine DesFontaines). Courtenay changed the underpinnings of the hobby from toys to art. Courtenay was first succeeded by Freddy Ping and then Peter with his iconic Courtenay/Greenhills.

Peter was not an inheritor but a master craftsman in his own right. He made his figures out of pewter, a material which holds paint far longer than lead. A Peter Greenhill from 1970's looks as bright today as when it was first painted. Peter refigured



many of Courtenay's original molds into unusual poses which have kept collectors guessing where various parts came from and where they went. He was a master of heraldry and his books will be referred to by generations to come. He knew and recorded all of the great feudal houses and knights of the 100 Year's War.

Peter's important books are Creating Miniature Knights, Heraldic Miniature Knights, and Heraldic Sketch Book.

Peter's personality was engaging and he had a wonderful dry sense of humor and an infectious laugh. Peter first became interested in heraldry in 1965 and loved the beauty of heraldry and the contrast between the vibrant colors of coats of arms and the silver of armor. His creations are greatly admired by collectors as shown by his prices over the years. In 1979, a fully caparisoned horse sold for £71.50p while in 1995 the same would sell for £750. Recently one sold at auction for £1100. A 14x increase! Indeed, the great model maker, Mario Venturri approached Peter to write a great book "with four hands".

He is survived by his wife (and modeling partner) Gilly and his sons. His books shall remain important references and Peter's figures will be prized for many years to come.

David Shults



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PAPER AND CELLULOID DREAMS: COMICS, MOVIES AND ITALIAN COMPOSITION FIGURES

By Luigi Toiati

Introduction

As a child, after doing my homework, I would rush to the local parish cinema where I would fill my imagination with wonderful adventure films, and my stomach with a panino con mortadella (bologna sandwich). Then at home I would re-enact all those plots with my little heroes, perhaps after reading a couple of comic books for inspiration.

My father's jobs were uncertain, but his natural artistic talent was true, so I had plenty of home-made oil-painted wooden castles, forts, Western villages and even the city of Troy's walls to play with my soldiers.

A true garden of Eden indeed, secluding myself from the misery around!

This article attempts to share this link between cinema, comics and toy soldiers that has coloured my own collecting and modelling.

Beginnings



"Toy Soldiers was my introduction to film. I certainly didn't think I was doing art by any stretch of the imagination"
(Tim Robbins)¹

Mussolini regarded the Italian people as children to be educated; consequently, comics and movies played a key role in the process of nationalisation of childhood, favouring in turn composition (and metal) toy soldier production.

This reflected Fascism's twofold nature², both traditional in the values – i.e. the predilection for images (comics and movies, or paper toy soldiers), with origins in a Catholic figurative culture; and innovative in communication: national political themes turned into adventure through mass media, and images made in turn three-dimensional through full-round toy soldiers, which enabled children to stage their favoured comics and movies, of the Regime's 'glories'.

The official ban on foreign comics (1934) and movies (1938) – except for *Topolino* (featuring Mickey Mouse) – enhanced the importance of the national ones. Comics were called "*cine racconti*", "*avventure illustrate*" (cine stories, illustrated adventures), etc., and later in the 1950s *fumetti*, due to the use of speech balloons resembling smoke (*fumo*).

Notice how the definition of the same thing, the comic, implies in the pre-war period a narrative expectation (stories, adventures); whereas in the post-war period it is limited to defining only the object, the container of the plot (*fumetto*=balloon). Semiotically speaking, with the later we are not only confronted with a metonymy (indicating a part for the whole), but with an intentional cancellation of the previous political narrative implications, in favour of a more neutral pedagogical - or simply entertainment - use of comics.

This is not the place to analyse the same phenomenon in adventure cinema. But, for example, as far as toy soldiers are concerned, in the post-war period askari and colonials were played with by children with reference to a mood of 'exotic adventure', no longer of 'colonial adventure'. And analogously, it will be years before children were informed that it wasn't the blue jackets that were the 'good guys', but the Indians... although, in my experience, this did not change the plots of their games much!

Italian pre-war comic characters were almost unknown abroad, apart from internationally known characters such as Davy Crockett, or Tarzan and Robin Hood, shared everywhere. Some foreign ones disappeared after a short coexistence (Flash Gordon, Mandrake, The Phantom), or were Italianised (Cino e Franco, alias "Tim Tyler Luck"). In an Italian comic strip, Buffalo Bill claims to be from Faenza, a town not far from Predappio, the Duce's native village!³

Early naïve comics in rhyming couplets (*Il Corriere dei Piccoli*, *Il Balilla*) were followed by politicised *fumetti* heroes such as Lucio l'Avanguardista and his biplane "Dux" (*Jumbo*, 1932), or Romano il Legionario, the fighter *par excellence* of many campaigns.

Adventure and war movies were not only the regime's sounding board, but also produced a new film narrative: *Aldebaran*, by Alessandro Blasetti (1935), *Luciano Serra Pilota* (1938) by Goffredo Alessandrini, and many others.

Despite or perhaps because of being used as propaganda, both comics and movies were indisputably a source of fantasy and play for children and, beyond any socio-political consideration, helped them recreate gallant battles, or ambushes in prairies, with fearless composition toy soldiers.

The African adventure

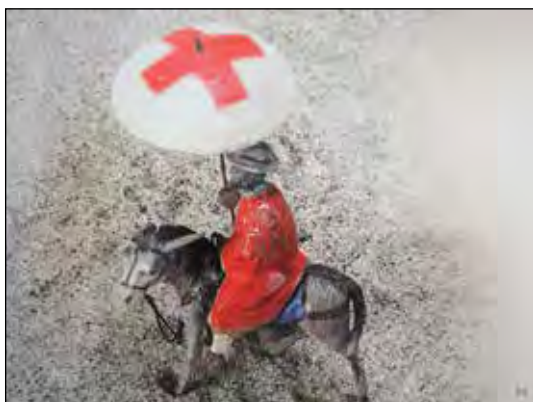
*"Come on, toy soldiers, deploy all together, once again
'defend our last oasis!'"*
(Gianni Maiotti)⁴

The Italian-Ethiopian war (1935-6) and the subsequent African campaign of World War II were an attempt to gain an Italian "place in the sun", divulged by both movies and documentaries

PAPER AND CELLULOID DREAMS: COMICS, MOVIES AND ITALIAN COMPOSITION FIGURES *(Continued)*

(*Il Cammino degli eroi* by Corrado d'Errico, 1935, *Sentinelle di bronzo* by Romolo Marcellini, 1937, *Giarabub* by Goffredo Alessandrini, 1942, etc.) and comics (*L'Avventuroso*, *Topolino*, and Hugo Pratt's post-war characters).⁵

The "Africa Blues" (longing for Africa) generated perhaps the most beautiful Italian composition and/or metal toy soldiers, either Italian metropolitan and colonial (Askari, Dubats), or Ethiopian foes (regulars and irregulars), including such characters as Mussolini, Generals Badoglio and Graziani, and the Negus. The latter was ironically depicted by **Confalonieri** as mounted on a donkey; the Negus' umbrella, surmounted by the Red Cross insignia, blatantly meant a cowardly defence from enemy air raids.



Confalonieri, Negus on a donkey, with umbrella with Red Cross sign (courtesy Sante Racchiusa)



Confalonieri Negus and umbrella bearer (courtesy Franco Paoletti)



Confalonieri General Badoglio (e-Bay)

Confalonieri, Salpa (which also produced canned pickles and preserves: national creativity!), **Fontanini, Valentino Landi (V.L.)**, **Rovello-Porro**, Antonini with his both **FIGIR** and **LGP**, etc. contributed to the "gold rush" of figures which followed, by producing *ad-hoc* troops which varied from 11.5 to 5cm, sometimes smaller, both in metal and composition, and lasted more than the real campaign. Usually, metal figures were in 54mm standard size, composition ones more like 7cm... with a few exceptions. Antonini recently also re-edited his colonial line, in metal.

In the beginning the appeal of these figures was certainly founded on patriotism, not to mention that colonialism was in vogue in all European nations at the time. But the real appeal of these figures, which followed at least throughout the 50s and 60s (when we lucky children were still playing with them), was undoubtedly the fascination with the exotic; the mood of the "Africa Blues" was growing, with the various films and comics of adventures in distant and unexplored lands, and our imagination galloped under the rays of a burning sun, among dunes and palm trees...



Askari - Signaller and Artillery on camels CONFALONIERI 1935 (courtesy Francesco Marchiandi)



Confalonieri, Abyssinian (Internet)



Confalonieri, Negus bodyguard (e-Bay)

Askari artillery or troopers in *burnous*, both mounted on camels, "*Penna di Falco*" riders with lance, Dubats, fierce Abyssinian irregulars against elegant multicoloured Libyan "*Savari*", or Italians in pith helmet and neck ties...

*"among oasis of happiness and infinite sand dunes
I chased them"*⁶

PAPER AND CELLULOID DREAMS: COMICS, MOVIES AND ITALIAN COMPOSITION FIGURES *(Continued)*



Colonial, FIGIR ca1939-40
(courtesy Francesco Marchiandi)



Ethiopian, FIGIR, ca 1940
(courtesy Francesco Marchiandi)



Xiloplasto rare canoe, 1955 ca. (Luigi Toiati)



Salpa Italian machine-gunner, Celloplasto Ethiopian riflemen
(courtesy Orazio di Mauro)



Xiloplasto, Pecos Bill and Calamity Jane (Luigi Toiati)

The Western and Canadian epic

"You live to be a nice, ripe old Mountie just like me.
You got that?"⁷

Post-war comics and films either derived from foreign ones or developed a national style. For example, the Italian westerns of the 1960s-70s, or evergreen national comics such as *Tex*, *Il Grande Blek*, *Capitan Miki*, etc. An irresistible source for all toy soldier makers was the American western movie and its offshoots.

Just to give a few examples, *Stagecoach* lit the fuse of cowboys, Indians ... and stagecoaches! *She Wore a Yellow Ribbon* enhanced the saga of the US Cavalry, and together with many others inspired lots of figures and accessories: Western villages or Conestoga wagons, Indian encampments, and every kind of fort.

Composition or plastic Pecos Bill, Calamity Jane (a.k.a. Little Sue), Geronimo, Buffalo Bill, Custer, Davy Crockett, and many other guys from comics now fought Indian braves or Mexican bandits, while Unionists and Confederates were at each other's throats.

In practice, between the 1950s and 1960s, no Italian brand escaped the allure of Indians and Cowboys, Unionists and Confederates, Davy Crockett and Trappers, or RCMP. All of these were produced in profusion, while composition or papier mâché gradually gave way to various plastic materials.



Xiloplasto ACW, original ranch door (Luigi Toiati)

Mounties had an impressive impact on children; I adored them! "The RCMP had arrived on Italian screens by 1940, with Gary Cooper in *Northwest Mounted Police* by Cecil B. De Mille. But the real boom was 1951, when Stewart Granger played in Andrew Marton's *The Wild North* ... and we knew at last that the Mounties also wore busbies. In the same year, Alan Ladd appeared in Raoul Walsh's *Saskatchewan*. And who knows how many others I have forgotten. All toy soldier makers "answered to the call"⁸. Someone wrote that there are well over 200 Hollywood movies featuring the RCMP!

PAPER AND CELLULOID DREAMS: COMICS, MOVIES AND ITALIAN COMPOSITION FIGURES *(Continued)*

Xiloplasto (my favourite brand) produced Mounties also in busbies, firing Winchesters and fighting mounted and on foot, led by an officer resolutely pointing his revolver, a running bugler and an ensign bearing a waving Canadian flag. All were well modelled and painted, with the brand's characteristic "secco painting", which created an effect of shade by dragging the paint by an almost dry brush. Resolute trappers led by Davy Crockett fought against fierce Mohawks with shaved heads and crested hair and had plenty of action.



Xiloplasto, Mounties vs. Mohawks (Luigi Toiati)



Xiloplasto, Davy Crockett and Trappers (Luigi Toiati)

Nardi and **FIGIR** among others enhanced the saga with sleigh and dogs or skiers and fighting figures.

Salpa and **Torgano** made nice Mounties too, while **Chialu** marketed his RCMP in polythene after 1960s, and **Isas** in its revolutionary rubber latex in the 1950s.



FIGIR Mounties sleigh (ph. Francesco Toiati)



Salpa Mounties (Luigi Toiati)



Torgano Mountie, plastic (e-bay)

From skewers to disintegrators

Like the West, Tortuga, and Le Marais, Mars and other space subjects were also the topic of post-war comics, books, movies, and consequently toy soldiers, the same maker often marketing both composition and plastic figures.

Swashbuckling novels, comics and movies whet the appetite of children for figures to play with⁹.

To mention but a few, *Ben Hur* of 1959 renewed the interest in chariots, gladiators and legionnaires; *Robin Hood*, featuring either Douglas Fairbanks (1922), Errol Flynn (1938) and others kept alive the hero, who appeared also as a comic hero (*Dardo Ed.*, 1961); pirate stories were introduced by both *Gli Albi dell'Intrepido* from 1942 and flamboyant novels

PAPER AND CELLULOID DREAMS: COMICS, MOVIES AND ITALIAN COMPOSITION FIGURES (Continued)

– including Emilio Salgari's (the most renowned Italian writer of action adventure swashbucklers and a pioneer of science fiction) – plus countless movies (*Treasure Island*, 1950, *The Crimson Pirate*, 1952, *H.M.S. Defiant*, 1962, *Captain Horatio Hornblower R.N.*, 1951, etc.).

Sci-fi "landed" in Italy in the early '50s thanks to *I Romanzi di Urania* (1952), the *Galaxy* (1958-84) novels, or comics such as *La Pattuglia del Cielo* by the artist Torelli (1958), and again to a legion of foreign movies (*The Day the Earth Stood Still*, 1951, *The War of the Worlds*, 1953, *Forbidden Planet*, 1956, etc.).

Musketeers were top, inspired either by Alexandre Dumas or swashbuckling novels such as *D'Artagnan contro [against] Cyrano* by Nerbini Ed., 1940, or by the unforgettable Gene Kelly in *The Three Musketeers* (1948), where I suffered my first crush on June Allyson!

Not to mention the numberless adventure or war movies and comics from 1950s to 1970s.

Here I can refer to just the tip of the iceberg of produced figures inspired by these issues.

Torgano made vinyl acetate Musketeers in the '60s, ten years later than both **Salpa's** and **Nardi's** splendid fencers in composition – some mounted, all very detailed and animated.

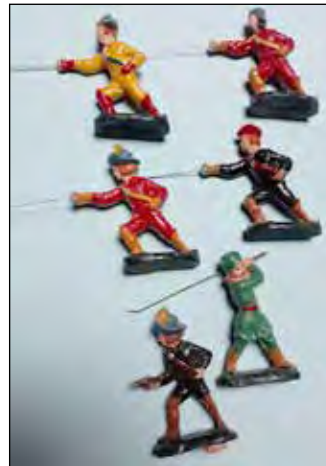
Rovello made a splendid Robin Hood series in composition, with an elegant Maid Marian and a Flynn-like moustachioed Robin, accompanied, among many other brands, by a colourful boxed series of our hero by **Dulcop**, in plastic, ca1960. **Landi**, **Nardi** and **Chialù** added men-at-arms in composition, plus Romans sometimes borrowed from Nativity: one of them, by **Rovello-Porro**, brandishing an anachronistic crossbow! **Torgano**, **Tibidabo**, and **Nardi** again, made both topics in plastic. Also, a beautiful series of Romans in PVC was produced by **Isas** in the 1960s, as well as some Aztecs - even holding rifles (!) - by **Torgano**.

Exotic adventures in African scenarios were performed by **Nardi** Foreign Legionnaires fighting against Arabs or by choice, frightening savages. In contrast to the African heat, this brand also produced Eskimos, or some wonderful Cossacks fighting - who knows against whom - in the snows of Siberia.

The beautiful and unbreakable 45mm plastic **Fontanini** pirates were very busy with spirited Africans, and those from **Torgano**, **Tibidabo**, and many others allowed children to re-enact the countless adventures of Emilio Salgari. **Dulcop** again added many more irons to the fire of our children's imagination at the turn of the 1960s and 1970s, with highly original series in plastic such as Zorro, the Battle of Austerlitz, and Tarzan.



Fratelli Nardi (Luigi Toiati)



Torgano, Pirates and other Salgari's characters (e-Bay)



Musketeers, left to right plastic Torgano, composition mounted Nardi, and a French Solido (Luigi Toiati)



Nardi Romans, plastic (Pinterest)



Fontanini (Luigi Toiati)

PAPER AND CELLULOID DREAMS: COMICS, MOVIES AND ITALIAN COMPOSITION FIGURES (Continued)

Spacemen were produced from the '50s with separate transparent helmets, in either coloured plastic or bakelite (**Coma, Texas** and many others), sometimes in composition (**Rovello**), or in a larger size in hollow-rubber (**ISAS**).

The latter lose their shape over time and are difficult to find intact today, but their remnants mark the distance between yesterday's spaceman naivete and today's obsessive scientism.

Such figures as **Coma's** (in 70mm and 30mm) were influenced by Buck Rogers' comic strips, others by science fiction films that arrived in Italy in abundance between the 1950s and 1960s. This brand also recycled its 30mm astronauts into the divers of the Nautilus submarine, in turn reproduced semi-flat on a smaller scale, in a board game inspired by the film *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea* (Richard Fleischer, 1954).

Rovello produced some frightful figures of Martians from *The War of the Worlds* (Byron Haskin, 1953), a movie which played a major part in the production of science fiction figures not only in Italy.

These are just a very few samples.

For readers interested in the sci-fi topic, I am writing a book on sci-fi and its figurines, for Pen & Sword Publishing, upcoming in 2022.



Rovello Martians, very rare (courtesy Orazio di Mauro)

Blues and Grays into Red (Shirt)s

The Italian Unity centenary (1961) was celebrated by such comics as *Gli Albi dell'Intrepido*, *Il Vittorioso* and others – *Il Corrierino dei Piccoli* also offered cut-out figures of the period – and was also inspired by such movies as *Viva l'Italia* by Roberto Rossellini (1961), even though the “Risorgimento” theme had recurred since at least the 1920s in comics, movies (1860 of 1934 by Alessandro Blasetti, etc.), and toy soldiers, and continued after that date.



CoMa 60mm and 45 mm spacemen, ca. 1960 (Luigi Toiati)



Isas rubber astronaut (Alphadrome)



Torgano, Flash Gordon spaceman (Worth Point)



Il Corrierino dei Piccoli (Pinterst)

It is incredible how we Italians persist in calling “Risorgimento” (Resurgence), or “Independence Wars” what European historians call the “Austrian-French War in Italy”! Even toy soldier makers were evidently mistaken when in 1959-60 they produced Garibaldi’s “Red Shirts” (*Garibaldini*) and Bersaglieri opposing Austrians and Bourbonists: perhaps, according to the history re-written by these know-it-all European

PAPER AND CELLULOID DREAMS: COMICS, MOVIES AND ITALIAN COMPOSITION FIGURES (Continued)

gentlemen, our troops were in the battlefield just for a picnic, or for offering some refreshment to the foreign combatants. You know, Italians are well known to be hospitable.

Be that as it may, the centenary of 1961 was represented by many makers: curiously, most of them made Garibaldini figures by repainting the ACW cavalymen's shirts red but keeping their gloves and braces.

Dora even repainted in red the top of former Fascist paratroopers' jumpsuits¹⁰.

To make up for it, **Chialù** produced besides Garibaldini on foot, splendid composition Bourbonists either mounted (Dragons and Royal Guard) or on foot (Line and Grenadiers), and Garibaldi's cavalymen, including the *ad hoc* produced "Death Lancers" of Masina of 1849. Such makers as **Salpa**, **Nardi**, **M. Rosa** and **Rovello-Porro** measured themselves against spirited Garibaldini in composition, led by the General and his lieutenant **Bixio**, all mounted and on foot, the latter maker leaving us some splendid Nizza Cavalleria horsemen too.



Chialù, Bourbon's Royal Guard, 1961 (e-Bay)



Confalonieri Chialù standard bearer of Garibaldini (e-Bay)



Salpa Garibaldini, firing far right Confalonieri (Luigi Toiati)

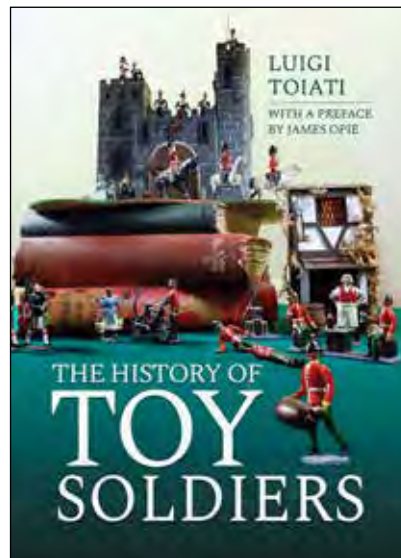


Xiloplasto Garibaldini, non-original base (courtesy Toys Collector, Internet)

Xiloplasto chose instead PVC to produce its Garibaldini, Bersaglieri and Austrians, mounted and on foot, including main characters plus officers, buglers, drummers and standard bearers. Their base was shaped like Italy, but unfortunately, being glued to the figure's feet, it is hard to find an intact figure today.



Xiloplasto, Garibaldini Trumpeter, original Italy-shaped base (e-bay)



The author:

Luigi Toiati, semiotician, collector, and toy soldier maker ("Garibaldi & Co. Toy Soldiers"), lives in Rome together with his wife Monica. He has written articles for *Toy Soldier and Model Figures*, *Old Toy Soldiers* and other magazines, and has recently published the book *The History of Toy Soldiers* by Pen & Swords (2019).

Notes:

- (1) Tim Robbins' (actor and director) quote on Internet
- (2) L. Mussini, *Eccetto Topolino*, Internet
- (3) Roberto Leone, *Il Fumetto Fascista*, etc., Internet
- (4) G. Maiotti, *Faccetta Nera*, Ed. Campione, 1994
- (5) Santi Racchiusa, *Soldatini Confalonieri*, *il Gioco della Storia*, Publisud, 2004

- (6) Andrea Cantucci, *Il Mal d'Africa del Fumetto Italiano*, Internet
- (7) *Death Hunt*, 1981, by Peter R. Hunt
- (8) L. Toiati, *Canadian Mounties in Italy!* (OTS, Vol. 20, No.2)
- (9) Rotary Club Firenze, *Fatti della Stessa Pasta*, undated
- (10) O. Di Mauro and F. Paoletti, *Soldatini Italiani*, Edizioni Lazzaro, 1994



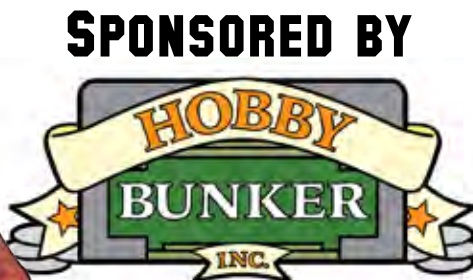
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ANOTHER BARCLAY VARIANT

By Stan Alekna

My article entitled **“BARCLAY’S FIRST CANNON”** was published in OTS, in Volume 26 #4 Winter 2003.

In that article, I described two variants of Barclay’s “BC1” cannon. One variant had a carriage with a square mesh design and the tang of the hitch on the top. The other variant of BC1 had a carriage with a diagonal or “X” design, with the tang of the hitch on the bottom, additional wheel spokes, and reinforcing hubs to provide additional support for the axle. Both had a tin protective shield.

Richard O’Brien assigned BC1 to the version with the diagonal mesh carriage, in his 4th edition. He was not aware of the variant with the square mesh carriage. My opinion at the time that I wrote the article was that the model with the fragile, square mesh carriage, was the first version of BC1, and that the model with the improved, stronger, diagonal pattern carriage, was the second version of BC1.

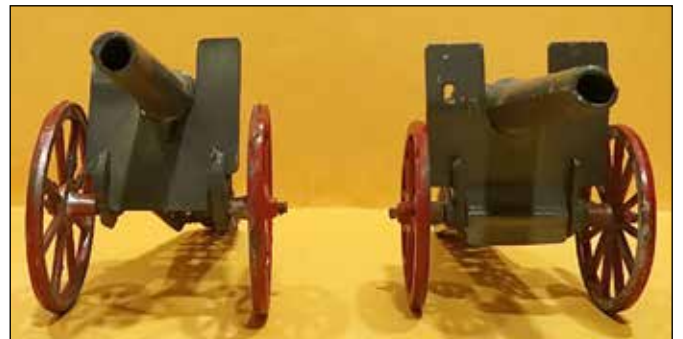
In a subsequent OTS article entitled **“A 21-GUN SALUTE to BARCLAY”**, Volume 28 #1 Spring 2004, I documented twenty-one unique Barclay cannons and variants. In the article, I took the liberty of labeling what I believed was the first version of BC1 with the square mesh carriage, as BC1, and re-numbering O’Brien’s BC1, with the diagonal mesh carriage, as BC1a, because I believed that it was the second version of this cannon. Little did I know that there was yet another variant of BC1 out there.

Recently, I acquired what appeared to be yet another variant of BC1 that I labeled as BC1b. I chose not to renumber the three versions of this cannon to reflect their sequence of introduction because the only purpose for the numbers is to provide a common basis for identification and communications. However, I now appreciate some of the difficulty Richard O’Brien experienced when assigning “O’Brien” numbers to newly discovered Dimstore variants, in successive editions of his reference books.



Barclay BC1b ~ Alekna’s number

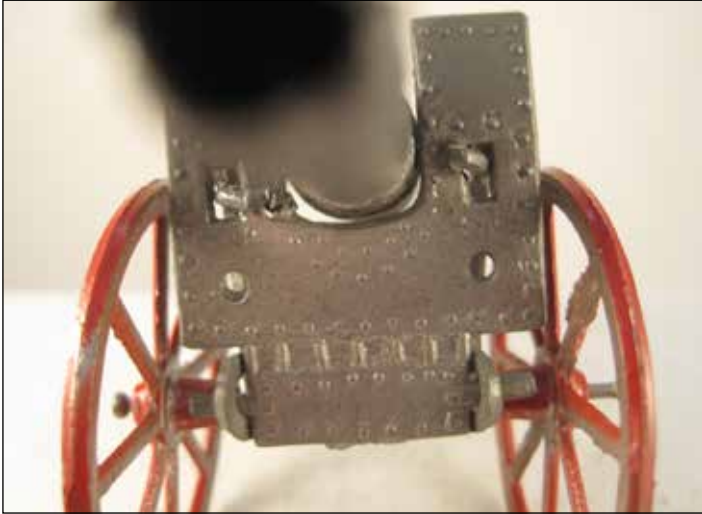
The square mesh carriage with the tang on top is very similar to BC1 except that BC1b has rivets cast into the carriage and hitch tang. It also has the same number of wheel spokes as BC1. But the most significant feature of this variant is that the protective shield is slush cast, with rivets around the perimeter, and it is attached to the carriage in a very complex manner involving cast pins at the bottom of the shield, and crimped tabs fastened through holes, at the top of the shield



Barclay BC1 and BC1a ~ using Alekna’s reference numbers ~ Photos courtesy of Karl Thuman

ANOTHER BARCLAY VARIANT

(Continued)



Barclay BC1b ~ Protective Shield

Although the cannon looked like an original Barclay to me, I wanted another opinion. I emailed several photos of the cannon to Ron Eccles, a well-known Dimestore expert and restorer, and one of the best makers of slush cast figures and Dimestore figure replacement parts. I asked for his opinion as to whether this cannon could have been “home-made”. Ron’s opinion was that, based on the detail in the castings,

and the complexity of assembly, he did not believe that any individual, including himself, could have made this piece. Ron felt that it was most likely a very early, limited production, Barclay.

Well, that clinched it for me. I was satisfied that this cannon was a genuine, initial version of Barclay’s first cannon. It probably had a very short production run because of the difficulty of assembly, and frequent breakage that likely occurred, when assembling the carriage, shield, and axle.

After making some design changes to the initial version, BC1b, Barclay moved to the second version, BC1, continuing the square mesh carriage, but without the rivets, and replacing the problematic slush cast shield with the much simpler tin shield.

The 3rd version, BC1a, followed with the stronger, diagonal pattern carriage, retention of the tin shield, increase in wheel spokes from eight to twelve, for added strength, and the addition of the axle support hubs.

The following table summarizes the differences between the three versions of Barclay’s earliest cannon:

Sequence Of Production	Alekna Refer. No.	O’Brien Refer. No.	Carriage Pattern	Hitch tang loc.	Protective Shield	Axle Support Hub	No. of Wheel Spokes
1 st version	BC1b	N/A	Square	Top	Slush Cast	No	8
2 nd version	BC1	N/A	Square	Top	Tin	No	8
3 rd version	BC1a	BC1	Diagonal	Bottom	Tin	Yes	12

Like other Dimestore mysteries, we will never know the absolute facts about these variants because they were produced so long ago and there are no known production records. But why would anyone maintain factory production records of small lead toys, and their variations, that retailed for 5 or 10 cents? The founders of Barclay could never have imagined that their earliest cannon would one day sell for \$150.00, or that their diver with an axe would bring \$600.00, or that their Legionnaire flag bearer would one day command \$1,800.00, when the average annual wage in the U.S. in 1930 was only \$1,368.00!

I find it refreshing, and somewhat amazing, that Dimestore variations can be discovered nearly one hundred years after the first Barclay’s were produced. If you have any suspected Dimestore variants, please take the time to share your information with the rest of us “Dimestore dinosaurs” by submitting an article to Old Toy Soldier.

LETTERS & READER'S MESSAGES

ZINNLAUBE Update - Russ Bednarek writes "One of the many reasons I look forward to the holiday season is the arrival of my issue of Zinnlaube magazine. By mid-December with no issue in hand, I contacted Ignacio Czeguhn of Zinnlaube regarding the status of the 2021 issue. Ignacio promptly replied citing that because of COVID the German Post had implemented more restrictions on items being sent to the US, resulting in the delay. A solution has been reached and Zinnlaube will be sent via Deutsche Post in January to US subscribers."

Russo-Japanese War - Will Beierwaltes got back to us with information on Russo-Japanese war figures by Feix figures. "I really enjoyed the extensive article in the last issue on toy soldiers of the Russo-Japanese war. However, the lack of any American figures struck me, so I thought I would send you this photo. It shows beautiful hollow-cast American-made toy soldiers of the Russo-Japanese war by William Feix of Brooklyn, New York. Feix, an Austrian immigrant, was a pioneer in bringing the European tradition of toy soldiers to America; especially soldiers of the Spanish-American war. He produced toy soldiers from 1903 to 1928."

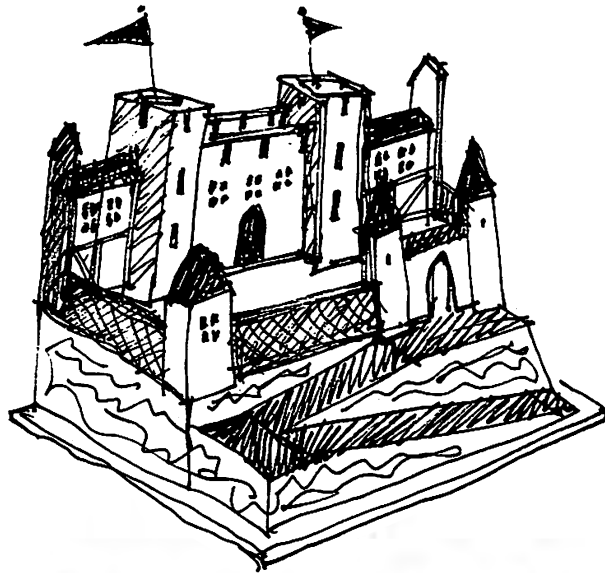


Word Search- On the Battlefield 25

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THE RUSSO-JAPANESE WAR, 1904-05: HISTORY IN MINIATURE, PART II

By Bill Anderson

g) Other Countries - the works of Holger Eriksson

After World War II, Curt Wennburg gained the services of Swedish designer Holger Eriksson. Taking advantage of an Irish Government subsidy, he set up a factory in Galway to produce toy soldiers designed by Eriksson under the name of Authenticast. Most of the figures were marked Eire or HE on the underside of the base. They created cast metal military toys and soldiers with greater action and detail than most makers of the time. A fire in 1950 put an end to the Irish factory. Production was then moved to South Africa where, using machinery and molds salvaged from the fire, it continued to produce the same 54mm soldiers and an additional line of 30mm figures

under the name of Swedish African Engineers or SAE (with Union of S. Africa or S. Africa stamped on the base of the solid cast figures). The initials SAE were also used on the box art. By May 1958 the company was producing 4000 figures a day, most being shipped to the USA.

From a huge range marketed under different brands and in various sizes, Russian and Japanese sets made up only a small percentage of what was being marketed at the time, with an even smaller number covering the 1904-05 conflict. There were some seven sets of Russians in 54mm scale covering the war. More sets were issued depicting troops up to the 1950s era. Japanese sets were mainly from the WW II period. In addition, there were three sets of Japanese Infantry

and two sets of Russian Infantry from the 1904-14 era in the orange-boxed 30mm SAE range.

Created in 1945 and by the addition of different and separate heads, four versions of the original figure advancing with "fluttering coat" were created. These were issued by both Authenticast and SAE. They included Siberian Infantry, Infantry of the Line and Imperial Guards. All were in 54mm scale and solidcast.

SAE also issued Russian Line Infantry - loading rifle and (from Set 173) Line Infantry Marching. Both were in 54mm scale and solid cast.

SAE used the same casting for a number of figures, changing the titles appropriately. These figures are in 54mm scale and solid cast. They are



Authenticast box art



Russian Infantry attacking with bayonet (fluttering coat)



SAE Russians



Authenticast Russian #951 and Siberian Infantry
Marching 1904 #952

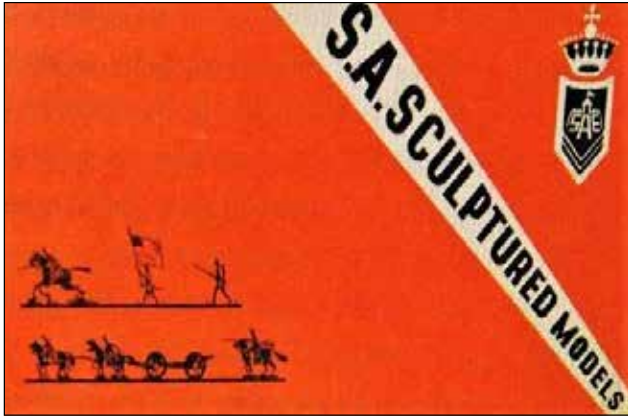


Authenticast Russian
Imperial Guard, 1904



SAE #173, Russian Line Infantry marching
and #171 advancing, 1905

THE RUSSO-JAPANESE WAR, 1904-05: HISTORY IN MINIATURE, PART II *(Continued)*



SAE 30mm range, box art



SAE Set # 4800, Japanese Infantry in action 1904-14 (30mm scale)

found marked as HE and SAE. The figure loading his rifle is obviously based on the Authenticast Set # 952, Russian Imperial Guard loading rifles, 1904. Again, these are 54mm solid casts.

SAE also made metal versions of their unpopular plastic injection molded figures.

h) American contributions - Potsdammer Zinnsoldaten

Potsdammer Zinnsoldaten was a range of figures produced by Joe Shimek of Monterey, California in the

Authenticast also issued a Russian Imperial Guard and Line Infantryman in khaki based on the same body casting as the SAE Line Infantryman (54mm, solid cast).



SAE Unlisted Artillery 30mm scale set from 1905 (courtesy Michael Bertin Heinlein)



Box label from the SAE Red Box single cavalry series from the early 1960s



Potsdammer Zinnsoldaten Russian Infantry- Siberian Rifles



Uncatalogued 54mm SAE Russian Cossack officer and other ranks from the Red Box cavalry metal series



Potsdammer Zinnsoldaten, Russian Infantry

THE RUSSO-JAPANESE WAR, 1904-05: HISTORY IN MINIATURE, PART II (Continued)

1980-90s. He was best known for his interpretation of Heyde-like figures, keeping alive that tradition and offering an immense range of attractively boxed sets. Some used original molds. Others were based on his own interpretations, complementing the originals. They were produced in 48mm and 55mm scales. This included a very nice set of Russian Infantry (Siberian Rifles) 1905 in winter dress, including an Officer and riflemen. Another set depicted Russian Infantry running at the trail with officer and drummer.

i) Figures in current production

A few makers are currently (2021) producing interesting figures from the 1904-05 conflict. Armies in Plastic is a designer and manufacturer of historically accurate toy soldiers depicting armies and battles from around the world. An inexpensive product, made of soft plastic, they come in packs, varying in numbers, ready to be painted. A set of infantry consists of 16 figures in 8 different poses. Cavalry are also represented, a set consists of 5 mounted figures.



Russian and Japanese infantrymen in similar winter dress

Team Miniatures is a company based in Guangdong Province China. They have been manufacturing since 2005 and have been supplying highly accurate historic miniatures in 60mm. scale ever since. They are available from their website or through dealerships worldwide. They are similar in style to the King and Country range.

j) End note

We end our story with an image from a contemporary American cartoon,

hailing the peacemaking efforts of President Theodore Roosevelt, who mediated an end to the war in 1905.



Contemporary image of Russian infantry in action



Armies in Plastic advertising material

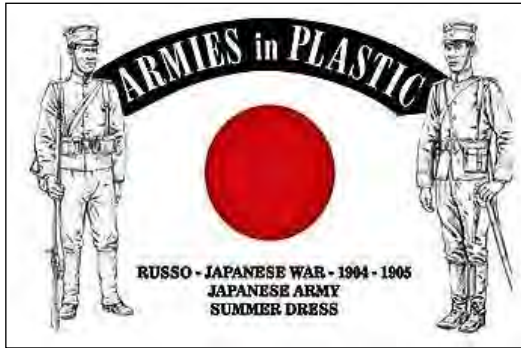


Armies in Plastic Russian Infantry



A rather glorified image of the Japanese dispatching the Russians

THE RUSSO-JAPANESE WAR, 1904-05: HISTORY IN MINIATURE, PART II *(Continued)*



Team Miniatures Advancing Japanese Officer
(RJWJ 6001)



Team Miniatures Marching trumpeter
(RJWJ 6002)



Armies in Plastic Japanese Infantry



Team Miniatures Russian, kneeling (RJWR 6002)



Team Miniatures Russian standing
(RJWR 6007)



Armies in Plastic Russian Cossacks box art



Team Miniatures wounded Japanese soldier (RJWJ 6011)



Team Miniatures logos



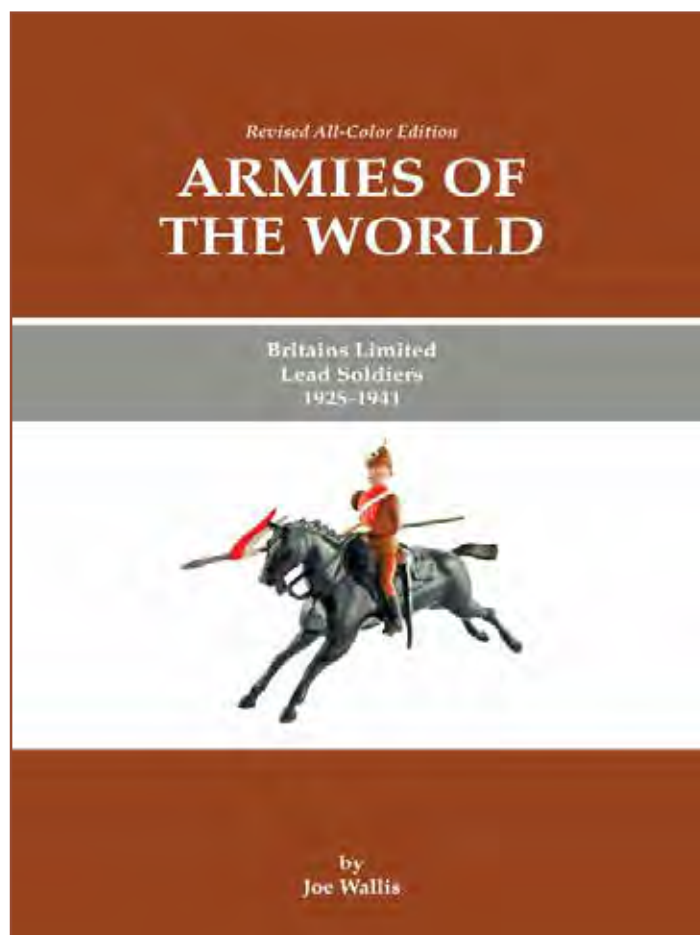
American cartoon (Let us have peace)

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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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ITALIAN COMPOSITION TOY SOLDIER BOOKS

Reviewed By Russ Bednarek



For this issue of *Old Toy Soldier* I have chosen two books that deal with a lesser known genre of the toy soldier production; Italian composition figures. Over-shadowed by the German giant firms of Lineol and Elastolin, a number of Italian makers produced figures that rivaled the German competitors in quality and imagination.

Italian Toy Soldiers-Composition and Plastic Production from 1930-1970 by Orazio Di Mauro and Franco Paoletti provides collectors with an informative examination of Italian toy soldier production. Several composition makers transitioned to plastic figures when plastic became popular due to the economic and production advantages when compared to composition. While the majority of the book focuses on composition figures, these plastic figures are also included for examination.

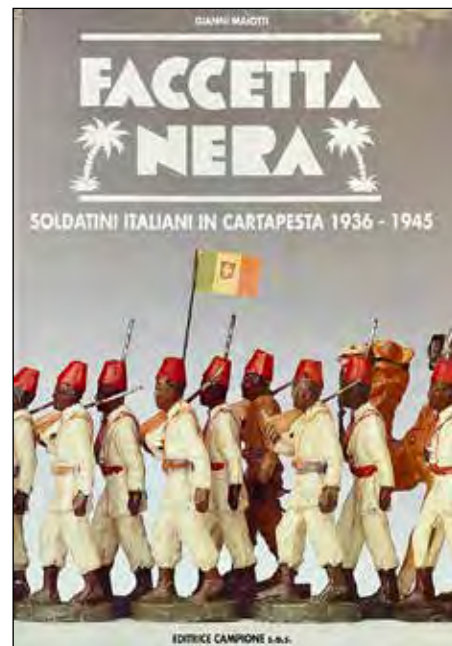
Information regarding company histories that produced composition figures is scarce and difficult to come by. There are several reasons for the lack of information. Many makers produced a small number of figures resulting in fewer examples to be found today. Another reason is that the majority of companies did not produce catalogs or sale lists of their

figures so there is in many cases no record of what they made or when they made their figures. Pirating occurred, further muddying the collecting waters of "who made this figure" when several similar examples are found with slight but noticeable differences. The final hurdle is whether the maker even put their trademark on the underside of the base. These marks were frequently changed, were altered or even periodically omitted for various reasons.

The Italian composition figures of the 1930's began as merely imitations of Lineol and Elastolin pieces. By the late 1940's the Italian makers, now with years of experience, became more creative, resulting in figures which could be easily recognized by company. Production methods improved and by this time each maker had perfected their own recipe of composition.

Recipes tended to be geographically specific, tending to take advantage of the raw materials abundant in the manufacturer's region. Due to the diversity of composition recipes, some makers were able to modify their production methods. An example of this is the wire armature frequently found in composition figures which was omitted by some makers if their recipe was strong enough to forgo this added step in production.

Italian Toy Soldiers explores the history and production of twelve composition (and if made, their



plastic figures) and four solely plastic companies. As each company appears in the book, a brief history of the company is provided followed by a more in depth examination of the figures they made. Then if applicable, black and white drawings are shown of the type(s) of base markings used. When known, dates are provided for the different trademarks. Color pictures with a corresponding descriptive text of the figures conclude the examination of the company. The descriptive text is always on the lefthand page, the color pictures of the figure on the right hand page, (Photo #1). Four rows of anywhere from five to eight figures per row are shown, allowing the reader to conveniently view anywhere from twenty to thirty-two figures per page. Numerous black and white photographs are scattered throughout the book further enhancing the reader's enjoyment.

A welcomed addition to any toy soldier book that is dedicated to the study of a single company or genre of toy soldiers are catalogs and sales lists. Fortunately for collectors the authors were able to include the reproduction of three company catalogs; Confalonieri, Xiloplasto and Nardi.

Italian Toy Soldiers is soft-bound with dual Italian/English text. Within

BOOK REVIEW (Continued)



Photo #1

its eight by twelve inch, one hundred fifty pages, almost one thousand composition and plastic toy soldiers are pictured with the vast majority of them in color. Informative, easy to read, and a joy to look at all the wonderful figures presented, *Italian Toy Soldiers* is a must for any composition collector.

The next book for review is *Faccetta Nera-Soldatini Italiani in Cartapesta 1936-1945* by Gianni Maiotti. The sole focus of this book is Italian composition toy soldiers of the Italian invasion of Ethiopia, 1935-36 and the East Africa campaign fought against the British, 1940-43. Fueled by Italy's expansionist policy, Italy invaded Ethiopia after a series of carefully prior planned incidents would "validate" their military action. The East Africa campaign was the result of the Axis threat to the Suez Canal and Egypt during World War II.

The invasion of Ethiopia was very popular with the Italian populace. The takeover of Ethiopia made the world take notice of Italy's military strength and provided revenge for Italy's embarrassing loss at the hands of the Ethiopians at the Battle of Adwa in 1895.

Italian toy soldier makers were quick to capitalize on the Ethiopian invasion by producing figures representing both sides. The different exotic types of forces involved in this conflict helped increase sales. The white robed Ethiopians provided a stark contrast to the Italians and their

exotic native forces; the turbaned Dubats and Eritrean Askaris. Cavalry used by the Ethiopians and Askaris was just as exotic as their infantry. Camel mounted Dubats and Askari camels hauling supplies and artillery pieces were made. The Italian army also provided several eye pleasing regiments for collectors. Figures of the MVSN or Black Shirts, the capon feather helmeted Bersaglieri and Alpine troops with their mule mounted artillery pieces all proved to be popular with collectors. Personality figures of Mussolini, General Graziani, Marshall Badoglio and others were also available.

The first chapter of *Faccetta Nera* is a two-page layout of the base marks for all the pieces shown in the book. The large black and white drawings are well done and many are self-explanatory. Having each base mark identified by a number or letter and a corresponding key would have been helpful.

The next chapter is a two-page, eight photograph survey of the differing heights of the figures.

From each maker the heights range from the 11.5cm of B.R.A. to the 5.5cm figures of Conalonieri. Curiously heights were not consistent within the production of a company.

Of the remaining six chapters, each is dedicated to a specific participant involved in the conflicts. These include figures of the Askari, Dubat, Libyans, Abyssinians, British and Italians.

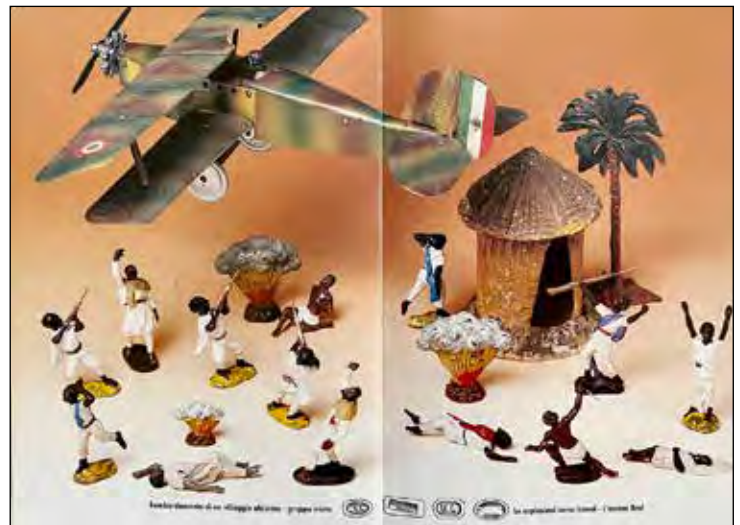


Photo #2

Figures are displayed in the book in three different manners. Frequently the figures are shown in a side-by-side manner and are identified by the symbol of their base mark shown beneath the figure. Another way is the figures are shown *en masse* and are identified with their base mark and text. The final method of display is a staged battle scene complete with not only figures but supported by scenery. A most impressive two-page battle of Abyssinians attacking a fort manned by Askaris is a highlight of the book. My favorite is the two-page battle scene of Abyssinians shooting at an Italian plane flying overhead, (Photo #2). The plane is a tintype made by the Italian company Bral and the explosions used are by Lineol.

Faccetta Nera is a hardcover forty-page treasure. The glossy eight by twelve inch page size allows the high quality color photographs to really maximize the reader's enjoyment. Text is minimal and is completely in Italian. A separate one-page English translation sheet was included with my copy. I highly recommend this book for Italian composition collectors or those interested in the invasion of Ethiopia, it is an informative visual treat.

Availability should not be a problem. A simple Google search revealed numerous venues and prices. I would suggest that when purchasing *Faccetta Nera* you inquire as to whether or not the one-page English translation is included.

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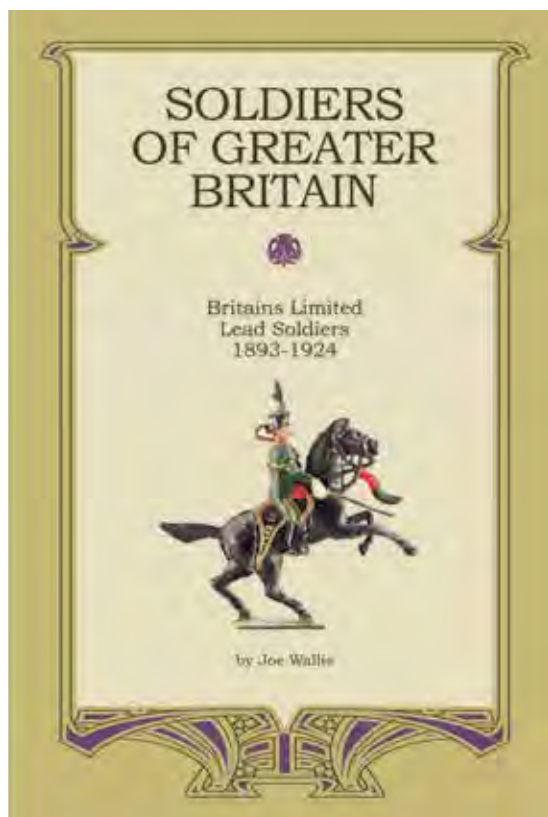


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SOLDIERS OF GREATER BRITAIN - JOE WALLIS



Soldiers of Greater Britain by Joe Wallis deals with the years between 1893 and 1924 when the distinctive style and quality that made Britains toy soldiers the most popular in the world was developed. This well researched 453-page book answers questions about "ancient" Britains figures, mechanical toys, the accuracy of their models, the sources of their designs, the smaller scale B Series, the Paris Office, and Whisstock's wonderful box labels. See www.leadsoldierbooks.com.

- Features 782 close-up color photographs placed throughout the text by the corresponding set descriptions;
- Provides color schemes, changes in sets, cross references to other sets with the same figures, and the years during which each item appeared prior to 1925; and
- Includes a Company History, a chapter of Identification Hints, a Glossary, Appendices listing sets made after 1924, and a Topic Index/Finding Aid.

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AN OBSERVATION ABOUT BUCK ROGERS FIGURES

By Joe Wallis

"And now for something completely different" (to quote Monty Python). I recently was given a batch of the six Buck Rogers figures made by Britains circa 1935 to sell on consignment. (For further coverage of these extremely rare items, see the entries for noncatalogued Sets 1415 and 1416 on pages 374-375 of my hardcover edition of *Armies of the World* published in 2020. Photographs from my book accompany this article.) When I examined the six Buck Rogers figures I observed something that I had never noticed before: all of the male figures including the Mekkano Man Robot had green bases, while

the two female figures (Ardala Valmar and Wilma Deering), always had brownish bases. I confirmed this by looking at the pieces in my



own collection, examples in other collections, as well as those shown in Norm Joplin's books, James Opie's *Great Book of Britains*, and various auction catalogs. The likely reason for this disparity in the painting of the bases is that the painters' samples in the so-called "Pink Room" at the Factory happened to commence with bases colored in this way and that became the prototype to follow during the short period about 1935 that these figures were produced.

It seems like there is no end to the study of Britains.

Buck Rogers, Wilma Deering,
Mekkano Man Robot



Killer Kane,
Ardala Valmar,
Dr. Huer

RECONNAISSANCE

Norman Joplin sent in an image of the largest known Britains 2nd Grade Display sets. This turned up in Germany of all places! The set number is 794A, containing 34 pieces. James Opie lists the set in his *Great Book of Britains* but shows no photo. His breakdown of the contents was slightly different to what is in this box. He suggests 6 mounted Indians and 28 foot Cowboys and Indians. Here we see that there are 3 Mounted Cowboys and 3 Mounted Indians which seems more logical.



Although the 2nd grade figures are common and not highly sought after by collectors, boxed examples, especially of the larger sets, are very hard to find. This example contains 34 cowboys and Indians, mostly fixed arm types.

Another large display appeared in the December OTS Auction. This contained Foot and Mounted Life Guards and Highlanders, plus a tent.



Filling in the line: Historical Miniatures



The two Historical Miniatures figures shown in the accompanying photos have not been recorded before. They depict Continental Army officers. Neither have been allocated an HM number.

The plume of one of the figures is missing, both figures came in a lot purchased from ETSY on line auctions.

Richard O'Brien first listed Historical Miniatures in his books *Collecting American Made Toy Soldiers*. Richard allocated a prefix of HM to

each figure found up until the publication of his third book in 1997.

Updated articles on Historical Miniatures were published in *Old Toy Soldier Magazine* as follows:

Old Toy Soldier Newsletter,
1989, Vol13 # 1,
by Richard O'Brien,
Bertal Brunn and Steve Balkin

OTS 2018, Vol42, #2,
by Norman Joplin.

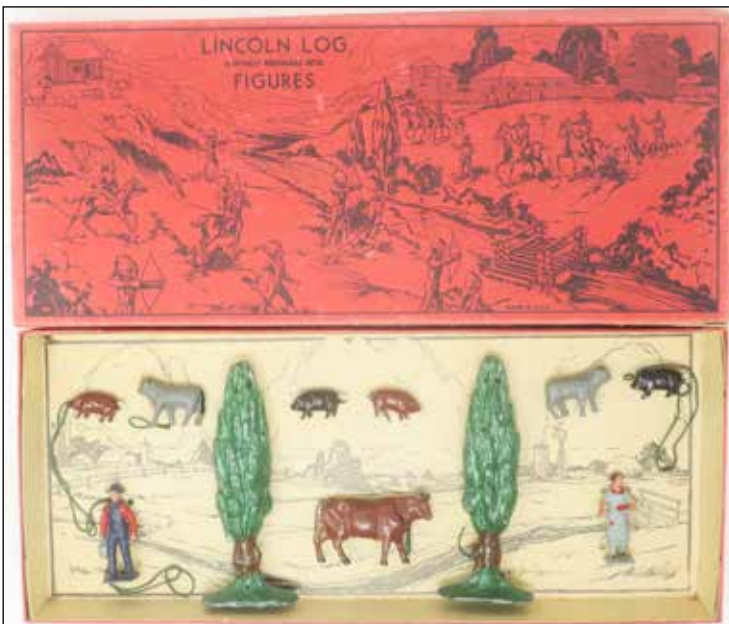
OTS 2020, Vol44, #3,
by Norman Joplin.



RECONNAISSANCE *(Continued)*

Lincoln Log

Lincoln Log: following up on the article by Norman Joplin on the figures marketed by this well-known American company, (OTS Magazine, Volume 42, #3, p 60-65) some interesting items appeared in the December 2021 OTS auction. These included a number of boxed sets, including three large displays, two of which included fabric tents.



Filling in the line: Toydell

Toydell was a British firm producing composition, gloss painted, souvenir figures. They were first featured in OTS 2012, Vol36, #2, in an article by Norman Joplin.

The factory was in Peckham London and the cowboy and Indian figures shown here had not previously been known, being a departure from the recognized range of London Ceremonial Souvenirs. The other image shows the figures being cast and assembled.



RECONNAISSANCE *(Continued)*

Rare BMC Gun Team blows away the opposition the at the December C&T auction.

Gun teams are always popular with collectors and some of the rarer sets by Britain's continue to command high prices in auction. Hollowcast gun teams by other makers are in fact often much harder to find. In their December 2021 sale, the UK auctions C&T offered such an item, made by BMC. Although familiar to collectors (because of the illustration in Andrew Rose's book) such sets appear on the market very rarely. This was reflected in the hammer price of just under £1000 (c. \$1400), despite a number of flaws. As auction cataloguer James Opie noted, this was the first time he had seen such a set in years!



Heyde Coronation Display Set

SAS Auctions in the UK presented a rare large, two layer British Army Display / Presentation set in standard no. 2 size (48mm scale). The box label shows: 'Engl. Standard Company No.991/992'. Probably released to commemorate the coronation of Edward VII or possibly George V, the box contains 61 foot and 29 mounted figures, including a royal personage as well as 14 standard bearers, with bandsmen and officers, generals and one Indian Army officer. Although missing a few figures and with some damaged, the set well exceeded its pre-sale estimate, being knocked down for a modest £1,700 (excluding buyer's commission).



FLASH GORDON HOME-CAST FIGURES FROM HOME FOUNDRY MANUFACTURING CO OF CHICAGO

By Will Beierwaltes

Many toy soldier collectors are familiar with the home-cast demi-round figures and space ships of Buck Rogers, produced to take advantage of the wildly popular comic strip characters, made from the home-cast moulds (as spelled in the catalog) manufactured by Rappaport Brothers of Chicago. Starting in 1933, they developed an extensive range of some 23 different characters and space ships, as detailed in the 2005 Old Toy Soldier article "Buck Rogers Casting Sets, Molds and Figures of the 25th Century"¹.

Based on the popularity and marketing bonanza of Buck Rogers, the King Features Syndicate wanted to compete with their own comic strip space hero. This fell to one of their resident comic artists, 24-year-old Alex Raymond. He created the character, Flash Gordon, a handsome blond Yale-educated athletic polo player whose initial exploits were based on the science fiction novel "When Worlds Collide" by Philip Wylie. King Features provided Raymond with an established but not very innovative or creative editor and writer, Don Moore^{2,3}, to help him develop an exciting storyline that would translate into comic art. The pair produced their first comics in January of 1934. Like Buck Rogers, Flash Gordon proved to be very popular. However, as described by Mark Young in his marvelous book "Blast Off"², Moore's story lines were not very original and the characters one-dimensional. However, the art work of Raymond on the strip was sensational, sensual and engrossing, eclipsing the limitations of the mediocre story lines and drawing you into a fantastic visual universe. After a successful 10-year tenure in which his artistic style evolved even more, Raymond left the strip in 1944 to join the Marines. He never returned to Flash Gordon, and this was the end of the first and original Flash Gordon. Those artists who followed him tried to duplicate his style with some success. The strip and character took on new life during and after the war, but it was now quite different. During World War II Flash became more patriotic in an earth-bound role with new writers and illustrators,



Figure 1. Flash Gordon as created by the original artist Alex Raymond.

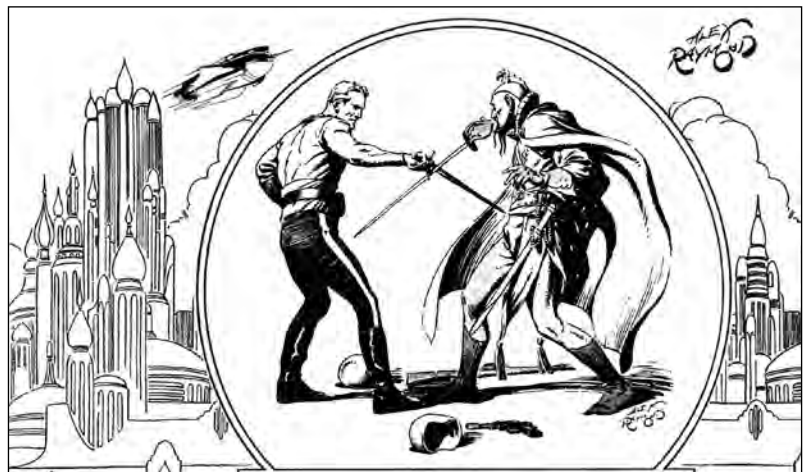


Figure 2. Flash duals Ming the Merciless.

FLASH GORDON HOME-CAST FIGURES FROM HOME FOUNDRY MANUFACTURING CO OF CHICAGO

(Continued)



Figure 3. Movie still from the 1936 Flash Gordon movie starring Buster Crabbe as Flash (shirtless), Jean Rogers as Dale Arden (left) and Charles Middleton as Ming the Merciless (right).

getting involved with the war effort, and then after the war was updated to reflect an evolving media world including a TV series, movies and more new story lines far beyond the original, with new characters, villains and distant worlds. However, for our interests, only the pre-war Flash is of importance.

Loosely following the premise of the Wylie book, Flash and his girlfriend Dale Arden and a (somewhat mad) scientist Dr. Hans Zarkov (not to be confused with Bucks' Wilma Deering and Dr. Huer) are sent on a spaceship invented by Zarkov to intercept the planet Mongo which is on a collision course with Earth. While they land on Mongo and avert the collision, they encounter the ruthless villain "Ming the Merciless," evil ruler of Mongo. Their adventures on Mongo, evading and conflicting with Ming, continue as the fodder for which the numerous story lines evolve. They discover Prince Barin, ruler of the forest kingdom of Arboria, Queen Fria who rules the ice kingdom of Frigia, Queen Desira who rules the jungle kingdom of Tropica, King Kala who rules the undersea kingdom of the Shark men, and Prince Vultan who rules the city of the Hawk Men³. They must deal with Ming, his beautiful and provocative but evil daughter Princess Aura, and Ming's legion of merciless Imperial Guard.

The big draw of having your own space hero was the licensing and spin-offs from the comic itself. While Flash Gordon was designed to



Figure 4. Cover art for the Home Foundry Mfg. Co. Inc. catalogs.



Figure 5. Box art by Alex Raymond for the Flash Gordon casting sets by Home Foundry Mfg.

FLASH GORDON HOME-CAST FIGURES FROM HOME FOUNDRY MANUFACTURING CO OF CHICAGO

(Continued)

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Flash Gordon Electric Casting Set (Mfg. No. DF45). Be sure to include this popular set in your order. Big "Three Figure" mold of Flash on horseback, Dale, and Soldier. Figures 2½ inches high. Melting stove is approved by the underwriters. Includes 12 pigs of casting metal, casting ladle, smoker and smoke liquid, 2 handles, 2 brushes, 4 different colors of paint, and clamp for mold. Packed in attractive four color box. Size, 19¼x11½x2½ inches. 2½ inches. No. 79N49. Each 1.96

Figure 6. First catalog release of the Flash Gordon casting set in 1937.



EF-FLASH GORDON

This popular electric casting set consists of a mould which casts three large figures 2½ in. high, of Flash Gordon, Vilma and Patrolman; non-slip (special feature) vise; electric upright casting ladle and base; 2 colored wooden handles; bottle of paint; camel's hair brush; 4 large pigs of casting metal, and sample figures cast from an EF mould. In an attractive cardboard box, 16x9¼ in., with 6-color lithographed cover. Economy packing for dealers—12 sets to corrugated carton. Weight 40 lbs.

Price, Each, \$1.95

DF-FLASH GORDON

Equipped with electric melting stove (approved by Underwriters); electric upright casting ladle and has strong colored wooden screw type handle; two-piece registering Home Foundry 3-figure mould with 2 strong colored wooden handles that screw into mould; non-slip (special feature) vise; Home Foundry smoking torch for blacking the moulds; 12 pigs of casting metal; 4 jars of different colors of paint and 2 brushes, all in attractive cardboard box, 19x11½x2½ in., with beautiful 6-color lithographed cover. Economy packing for dealers—8 sets to corrugated carton. Weight 40 lbs.

Price, Each, \$3.95

Figure 7. The two Flash Gordon Casting sets in the 1938 catalog, both with the same Alex Raymond box art (see illustration 5).

compete with Buck Rogers, he was notably late to the space toy licensing and merchandise game. They never came close to the bonanza that the Buck Rogers franchise had developed. The best Flash Gordon collectables of that pre-war era are those featuring the artwork of Raymond². There is a famous 1936 Flash Gordon Serial-Movie starring Olympic swimmer Buster Crabbe (who interestingly also was the star of the contemporary Buck Rogers and Tarzan movies). But for cash-strapped depression era kids, a highlight in 1937 was that the Chicago firm of Home Foundry Manufacturing Company, Inc. came out with moulds for casting Flash Gordon figures³. Like Rappaport Brothers, Home Foundry produced a large number of moulds and casting kits for kids to make their own soldiers, animals and other character pieces. No doubt, impressed by the popularity of the Buck Rogers Junior Caster sets and moulds, they apparently negotiated a deal with King Features to make Flash Gordon moulds and casting kits. The boxed casting sets featured sensational colorful Alex Raymond artwork, but the 50-54 mm figures were pretty much of

a disappointment compared to the box art. Whereas the Buck Rogers moulds did a really good job reproducing many of the comic characters consistent with the artwork¹, the Flash Gordon figures are hard to identify except for a pretty good Ming likeness. Unlike the extensive Rappaport Brothers

series, only two moulds with three figures in each are known to have been produced in the Flash Gordon series. The moulds are made of metal, which were to be held together with a metal "vice" clip and had screw-in wooden handles to keep little hands from being burned. The characters from the

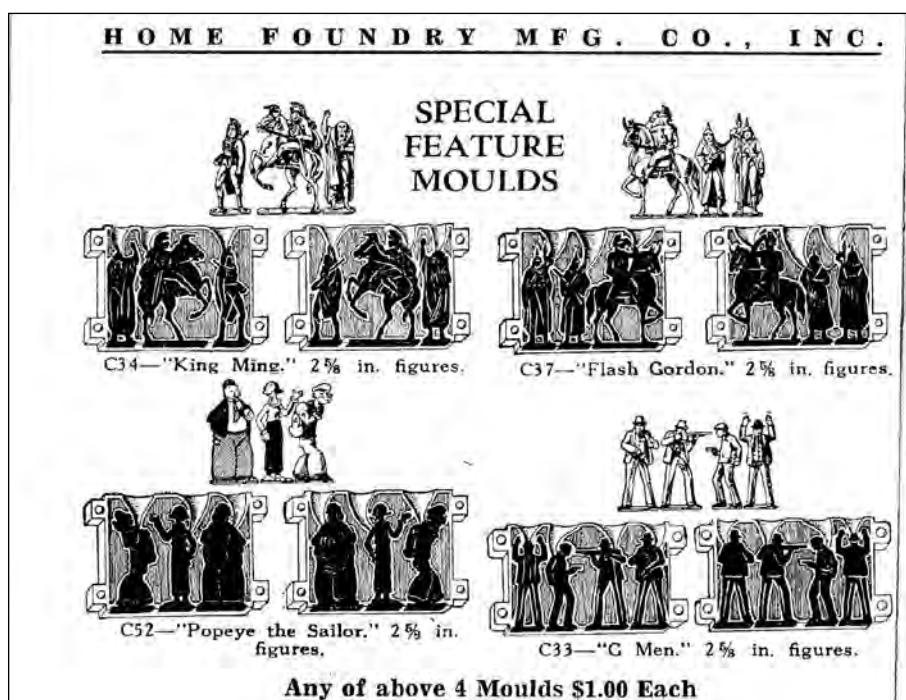


Figure 8. 1938 Catalog illustration of the Flash Gordon "Special feature Moulds"

FLASH GORDON HOME-CAST FIGURES FROM HOME FOUNDRY MANUFACTURING CO OF CHICAGO (Continued)



Figure 9. Figures from mould C34; “King Ming” (on the right) with two other figures generally thought to represent Flash on foot and mounted.

moulds seem to change in different catalog descriptions⁵, so it's pretty clear not even the Home Foundry folks knew who these figures were meant to represent. The two cataloged moulds included C34, “King Ming” which includes a mounted figure (probably representing Flash) on a rearing horse, firing a ray gun, a standing Ming the Merciless holding his right hand in the air, and a walking figure (probably also representing Flash) in skivvies over his tights, carrying a weapon, and adorned in a helmet and cape. The second mould is C37 which is the mould that came in the boxed caster sets. It contained a mounted figure saluting (supposed to be Flash but generally referred to by collectors as Prince Barin) and two foot figures in helmets and robes; one at present arms with a rifle-like ray gun and the other with a medieval pike. The catalog⁵ says this represents “Flash on horseback, Dale and soldier.” The figure holding the ray gun is a female, presumably Dale but could also be painted as a foot soldier (see figure 4). The 1938 catalog⁵ lists two “Flash

Gordon Electric Casting Sets.” They both featured the same fabulous box art of Alex Raymond (see figure 5) and both contained the C37 mould. Set “EF-Flash Gordon” says it contained the mould with figures of “Flash Gordon, Vilma (?) and Patrolman,” plus a vice, casting ladle and its oven base, two wooden handles, a single bottle of paint and a camel hair brush, plus 4 pigs of (lead) casting metal, all for the price of \$1.95⁵. A larger set; “DF-Flash Gordon” had all the same contents, plus a Home Foundry smoking torch to condition the metal moulds, 12 pigs of metal and 4 jars of paint with 2 brushes. This larger set cost \$3.95. The 2 metal moulds were also available separately in the “Special Feature” mould category as C34 and C37 at \$1.00 each, which was more expensive compared to \$0.95 for all the older “Standard” military moulds available singly (during the depression, a nickel meant a lot). The Home Foundry catalog expanded tremendously from the 1936 (with no Flash Gordon) to the 1938, offering the Flash Gordon Casting sets as well

as two Mickey Mouse casting sets, plus the special feature molds, as well as larger “Master CX moulds” at \$2 each. It also expanded into wood burning sets and tapping plaques and a sand pen. Other accessories such as the mould smoker was available separately for \$0.25⁵.

Home Foundry really missed the boat on these less than impressive castings. We have no idea who the “sculptor” of these figures was, but probably farmed out to an independent. Unlike the Buck Rogers castings, these poses are all very static and somewhat dull. Look at the center panel of figure 5 of the box art and you will see two mounted figures which are sort of like the mounted figures in the moulds. Unlike Rappaport, Home Foundry failed to make a rocket ship mold (unlike Louis Marx who, never missing a marketing opportunity, made a sensational wind-up tin-litho sparking Flash Gordon rocket). The figure in mold FG2 which is supposed to be Dale Arden certainly does not have much of the feminine allure of the comic character. And what a missed

FLASH GORDON HOME-CAST FIGURES FROM HOME FOUNDRY MANUFACTURING CO OF CHICAGO

(Continued)



Figure 10. Figures from mould C37; “Flash Gordon.” This is the mould that came in the casting sets as well as available singly. Contains a mounted Flash (or Prince Barin), Dale Arden (shown in Blue, with an alternative trooper painting in white) and one of Mings Imperial Guard troopers (in red).

opportunity not producing a mold for enchanting Princess Aura who would have surely rocketed sales to all curious and conflicted adolescent boys. Once again King Features failed to support the fabulous artistry of Alex Raymond with a first-class product. For collectors, the low frequency that these Flash Gordon figures, and even more so the moulds (which are the real collectable) turn up compared to the Buck Rogers versions suggests they were not nearly as successful commercially for all the reasons described above. They do, however now have a certain period charm to them and it's pretty easy to go about

collecting them if you only need to find 6 figures compared to the broader range of the 23 Buck Rogers castings (how many of you have the “Martian stratosphere patrol” set or have ever even seen the Princess Ardala casting?).

Like all of the home casting companies, Home Foundry Manufacturing shut down during the war, and like most, it did not recover. Rapaport Brothers, the one real survivor, bought up Home Foundry and did produce some molds using the Home Foundry trade name, but their catalog offerings no longer contained the Flash Gordon molds,

and even what they did produce disappeared by the 1960's with the new lead safety laws.

After the war, the only commercial Flash Gordon space figures were a carded set of 4 plastic space men with two space ships by Premier Products². Beyond that, Flash and company morphed into a wide range of 5” plastic “action figures” based on the movies and TV series, ushering in a new generation of Flash Gordon collectables for a new generation of collectors.

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ELASTOLIN DIORAMAS 1913-1960

This book is already the 2nd photo guide on Hauser/Elastolin show-room dioramas. Represented are many of never before published original photographs of dioramas built for Hauser/Elastolin in the period between 1913 and 1960. The documentation's themes are ranging from military scenes and political events via zoological highlights and Wild West topics to certain examples of the early post-war period. The editors were able to share their treasure of high quality old original black-and-white photographs with the readers community on quite a high-quality standard and added also some more recent photographic documentations. 112 pages, hardcover, 21 x 30 cm. Price 39.00 Euro plus postage: within Germany 3.00 Euro; 5.00 Euro within the EU; Non-EU and World the real shipping costs.

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SHOW REPORTS

THE LONDON TOY SOLDIER SHOW

By Harry Kemp

At last this long running show is back; two years ago this was the last show I attended before the Covid-19 closures. Glad to have a show to go to again after not going to Eurofigurines in October due to the costs of Covid tests needed before and after going to France, and missing the November Sandown show after putting my back out.

After a two hour rainy drive in the dark I arrive at 8am at Haverstock School in Chalk Farm, North London, which has been the venue of this show for a number of years. Masks are being very widely worn due to new rules in response to Omicron and sadly a number of stall holders and collectors have taken last minute decisions not to come. Nevertheless it's fantastic to see many fellow collectors, who all stop by to swap war stories and look through my trays.

Adrian Little and I are the only dealers primarily devoted to old toy soldiers today, (Andy Morant is at his regular Saturday Portabello Road stall) but there are a wide number of modern soldier dealers and the show is quite well attended considering the circumstances. Usually there are a few foreign dealers but recent increased travel restrictions are still making it too hard for them to come and the lack of foreign voices is notable.

Before the doors open I have a quick look around. The British Toy Soldier Company's stall has some lovely 54mm scale ships and a great German barrage balloon. Standing out on Steve Viccer's stall are some very colourful Elephants. Replica models have a lovely, every increasing, selection of well imagined reworkings of Britains figures, creating a range of sets Britains could have produced, but never did, similar to the philosophy behind William Hocker's figures.

Inevitably I spend most of my spare time talking to Adrian Little, who has a wide selection of vintage figures. His standout Britains item, is set 1340 Britains Miniature Archery, boxed, including one archer, two targets and extra paper targets (one archer and arrows missing). I have never seen this set in the flesh before and the large size archer is an amazing figure to see and handle. It must be in the top ten rarest of Britains' non military catalogued sets.

Two nice boxed gun teams are tempting, (Britains Set #39 and Set #144), but I resist the temptation. As always, Adrian has a nice selection of Heyde Nippes, an Elastolin Arctic set with dog sleds, and a lovely boxed set of large size flats, by Haffner or a similar maker, that must date to c1860.

My own two tables have my usual diverse selection of Britain's, Mignot, XR, Heyde, Elastolin, BMC, REKA, Hill, Jones, flats and other French and German makers. Quite a few figures of unknown manufacturer are included which always make good conversation pieces. I sell a bit of everything including a set of 12 Heyde 48mm 16th Lancers, which bring my total for the day to close to my 2019 takings, not too bad, all things considered. A big thank you must go to organisers of this show, Guideline Publications, as with all the Covid uncertainty it's a big achievement to put it on. Looking forward to many more shows in 2022.



SHOW REPORTS *(Continued)*



London Toy Soldier Show - Next Show: Saturday, 26 March 2022

Two years is a long time to go without a London Toy Soldier Show, but Guideline Publications finally welcomed collectors, traders and enthusiasts back to the Haverstock School in London on Saturday, 4 December 2021.

The world has changed so much since the last show was staged in December 2019 before the eruption of the Coronavirus pandemic. People have learned to take precautions to keep themselves and others around them safe. As a result, a two-year hiatus from large-scale collector gatherings in the UK's capital city was a necessary sacrifice. However, after signing up more than 60 traders and promoting the event through a range of channels, the team at Guideline Publications threw open the doors and the London Toy Soldier Show was back in business.

It was heartening to see so many familiar faces from the trader community on the day. Many were dashing around putting the final touches to their tables. The displays were superb, and it was great to see a mixture of exciting new releases and rare collectible sets and figures.

There was a bountiful supply of anti-viral hand sanitiser in the reception area too and all took their responsibility to protect visitors seriously. Although we missed some of the European traders, the show was still busy with a real buzz in the air as collectors again assembled under one roof. We look forward to welcoming you all back to the Haverstock School for the next show on Saturday, 26 March 2022.

For trader reservations and tickets stella@guidelinepublications.co.uk

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BRITAIN'S DISPLAY SET 2081, PART 2 - AN EARLY PROTOTYPE?

By Rob Wilson

Introduction

Set no 2081, "The Sovereign's Escort", was the largest set that Britain issued post WWII and the 2nd largest ever made (see Part 1 of this article, for further details, OTS V45, #3). It was brought out in some haste in 1953 to commemorate the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II. As followers of the excellent Netflix series "The Crown" will be aware, Elizabeth ascended to the throne in February 1952 after the sudden and unexpected death of her father George VI. The whole of the UK was thrown into hasty preparations to recognise this formally, with the date of the coronation being announced as the 2nd of June 1953.

Britains were keen to take advantage of the situation by marketing sets linked to the ceremonial nature of the occasion and, in particular, the procession planned around the use of the State Coach to carry Her Majesty to and from Westminster Abbey. Britains had already produced a nice model of the State coach back in 1937 to celebrate the expected coronation of Edward VIII. However, as described in an earlier article (OTS magazine, V33, #3:6-11), this had to be redesigned rapidly to reflect Edward's abdication before he was crowned and the succession of his brother George VI. George was to be accompanied in the coach by his wife Elizabeth (the new Queen Elizabeth II's mother). Further redesign was called for in 1953. In the redesigned 1937 version George was holding the sceptre, whereas this now had to be given to the new Queen instead.

Prior to WWII the State Coach had been made available in three sets. Set 1470 contained just the coach with its team of 8 horses, 4 of which were ridden by postillions. This set was sold fully assembled in a long box made of stout card. Set 1476 extended this to include the 18 yeomen of the guard, grooms and other attendants that provided the immediate escort to the

coach, marching alongside it on foot. The final set was the magnificent Set 1477. This further extended Set 1476 to include a mounted Household Cavalry escort of 14 Life Guards and Royal Horse Guards and 4 mounted General Staff Officers, together with 14 Coldstream Guards and 10 line infantry (from a Royal Regiment with blue facings). The latter foot figures were all at present arms, ready to line the route of the procession. Finally, there were 4 mounted policemen to keep the crowds of onlookers in order. The recent article by John Franklin in OTS magazine, (V44, #4:53-56) describes and illustrates Set 1477 in more detail.

It would have been a relatively simple task to rework the figures within the coach (to swap the sceptre) and reissue a post-war version of Set 1477. This is perhaps where the designers at Britains began. But at some point someone decided that something altogether grander was required! This eventually resulted in the production of a much larger range of brand new figures, including Set 2081. This included a number of sets of Infantry and Cavalry in review order, as well as a new Royal Horse Artillery set. The sets concerned were: Sets 2067 and

2071-2081. A number of other sets to complete the parade were issued in 1954, including Sets 2087-2093 and 2096.

In Part 1, I described all the examples of this set that I have managed to find that have been sold in public auctions over the past few decades. I also summarised what I was able to discern about their contents. Part 2 provides some further information, including some speculation about how my own set fits into the picture.

There are very few precise descriptions of the box used for Set #2081. Wallis, in his *Regiments of All Nations (ROAN)*, suggests its overall dimensions are 24"x 19" x 5". This seems to be consistent with the images of the boxes shown in the Phillips photo and the OTS 2017 set described in Part 1. The OTS 2014 and OTS 2021 as well as other sets all appear to be of similar size.

The photo of the OTS 2017 set is the most revealing. This shows three removable trays of similar size to those used as standard for Sets #1470, 1475 and 2067. These fitted on top of the bottom level which was divided into 12 compartments, the 4 in the centre



BRITAIN'S DISPLAY SET 2081, PART 2 - AN EARLY PROTOTYPE?

(Continued)

being somewhat wider but shallower than those on each side. The OTS 2021 set is probably identical, although only limited photographic evidence was presented in the auction catalog.

According to James Opie, no tie cards were provided for the main content of foot and cavalry pieces for Set #2081. These were simply wrapped in tissue. However, as the OTS 2017 photo shows this must have been quite a squeeze. Many pieces remain outside the box despite the lower compartments looking pretty full. There is no way that the number of figures quoted by Opie or Wallis could have been tied to cards and fitted in a box of this size.

The set described in this article appears to be an early attempt at Set 2081, (possibly a prototype). It was acquired as a "job lot" in the mid-1970s, at a local auction in the UK, simply described as "Britain's (sic) ceremonial figures". The figures came in not one but two original Britains red boxes, with Regiments of All Nations labels. The smaller box is the same size as the pre-war Set 1477, with a compartment large enough for a fully assembled State Coach and its 8 horses, plus a single mounted figure. A lift out tray with three rows provides enough space in each row for 14 foot figures or 7 mounted, with a similar layout below. Unfortunately, none of the original tie cards were present, so precisely what the contents might have been remains a matter of conjecture.

The second box is of the same overall dimensions but much deeper, with two lift out trays, one containing 4 and the other 5 rows. The base has 5 rows, making 14 rows in total, each capable of taking 7 cavalry or 14 foot figures as usually presented by Britains. Again, no original tie cards were present. In combination, with their 20 rows, the two boxes have the capacity (using standard tie cards) to house up to 280 foot OR 140 cavalry (+1 more in the compartment next to the coach), or some combination thereof. There

are obviously many permutations and combinations possible.

When originally purchased, the lot included over 80 cavalry figures and a similar number of Guards and Marines, with significantly more of the latter. A few were damaged. In addition, there was the pre-war style coach and complete sets of the Attendants (Set 1477) and Sovereign's Escort (Set 2067). My record keeping at the time was not as precise as it is now, and this was before personal computers became common place. I was just starting serious collecting and reference books on the subject were thin on the ground. Regiments of All Nations by Joe Wallis had yet to be published! So, although I was very pleased with my purchase, I did not really know what I had bought.

Subsequently, with the help of the works of Messrs. Wallis and Opie, I began to understand that what I had acquired was quite rare. Their writings also began to give me a clue as to what the complete Set #2081 might have looked like, so I began to look for pieces to complete the set, replacing the few missing items and those with significant damage. However, as indicated in Part 1 of this article, this proved to be not quite as straightforward as I first thought. Although the overall composition of the set is clear, the precise composition, and in particular the exact numbers of foot and mounted figures in each Regiment remains open to considerable speculation.

One of the few advantages of the lockdowns imposed by the reaction to Covid-19 is that it has given some of us time to complete projects that might otherwise have remained unfinished. The summer and autumn of 2020 provided the opportunity to finish my research on Set 2081 and undertake the repairs and gap filling necessary to complete the set. So, this brings us to "Take 10" of my attempts to describe the correct contents for Set 2081 (following on from "Takes 1-9" as

described in Part 1).

Set #2081 - Take 10:
(or should it be Take 1?!)

The lot I originally acquired in the 1970s comprised two large boxes and around 250 figures, a number of which were extraneous to the set. Both the boxes are 25" long and 16" wide. The larger one is 5" deep, with three removable trays. The trays in the larger box are all the same overall size, although two trays have 5 rows while the other has just 4 rows. The second box has an identical length and width but only depth for two layers. It is the same size as a standard pre-WWII Set #1477 box.

This suggests this might have been one of Britain's first attempts to expand the Coronation Display set from its pre-war contingent of 75 pieces to the much larger Display envisaged for Elizabeth. With the assembled coach (standard pre-war version, but with Elizabeth holding the sceptre), attendants and a normal selection of foot and mounted pieces contained in the pre-war 1477 size box, the larger 3-layer box is just right to accommodate the additional cavalry and foot figures needed to make up the display as illustrated in the Britain's *Pamphlet*!

Both the boxes have Regiments of All Nations labels on the front. There are no side labels. Unfortunately, as noted above, when purchased there were no tie cards present to help identify the possible composition when first sold.

Based on the normal configuration for Set 1477, a standard pre-war box has slots, compartments, tie cards for:

Bottom layer:

- Coach = 11/10
- Cavalry 7 + 1 = 8
- Foot 14*2 = 28

Top layer:

- Cavalry 7 * 2 = 14
- Foot 14 * 1 = 14

BRITAIN'S DISPLAY SET 2081, PART 2 - AN EARLY PROTOTYPE?

(Continued)

This makes 75/74 pieces in total. Assuming the Attendants go into this box, there is room left for 24 Irish Guards or Royal Marines.

So, how might the larger box have been filled if the original plan had been to use tie cards as usual. As noted above, there are 14 rows available in total, 10 shorter and 4 taller ones. I considered 4 possibilities:

Option A: 10 rows of 7 cavalry and just 4 rows of 14 on foot.

Option B: 9 rows of cavalry and 5 rows of foot.

Option C: 8 rows of cavalry and 6 rows of foot.

Option D: 7 rows of cavalry and 7 rows of foot.

Option A results in 13 rows of cavalry, making 70 + 22 (=92) cavalry and 7 rows of foot (making a total of 98, including those in the Set 1477 box), plus the coach 11/10, giving a grand total of 201/200 pieces.

Option B would result in 63 cavalry, plus the 22 included in the 1477 box, giving a total of 85 pieces. This leaves room for 70 more on foot, in addition to the 42 included in the 1477 box, making a total of 112 pieces. Adding in the coach (11/10 pieces) results in a grand total of 208/207 pieces.

Option C comprises 11 rows of cavalry (11*7 =77 pieces) plus the odd figure in the 1477 box and 9 rows of foot (making a total of 126 pieces, including those in the 1477 box), plus the coach 11/10, making 215/214 pieces in total.

Option D comprise just 10 rows of cavalry, in total resulting in 49 + 22 (=71) cavalry and 10 rows of foot (making a total of 140, including those in the 1477 box), plus the coach 11/10, making 222/221 pieces in total.

Option B appeared to me the most plausible and is consistent with the Britain's original publicity material, which quotes a total of 207 figures (counting the coach as 10 pieces).

Alternative options, maintaining the same number of rows, but getting up to Joe Wallis's cavalry total of 118, at the expense of those on foot, would diminish the total number of figures present even further.

In conclusion: the most plausible contents for an early Two-box version of Set 2081 is Option B. This is the closest to Britain's published Pamphlet suggestions, albeit well short of the total number of Household Cavalry specified therein.

Option B comprises in detail:

- Total cavalry 85, (40 HG, 38 LG, 7 SE):
 - Sovereign's Escort (7, in the 1477 box);
 - Other Cavalry, (15 in the 1477 box + 9 more rows of 7 in the 3 layer box);
- Total Foot, 112 pieces, including ASC, (3 rows of 14 in the 1477 box + 5 more rows of 14).

This makes 208/207 pieces in total, including the coach (11/10).

The final version of my set comprises:

- State Coach (Set 1470, 11/10 pieces);
- Attendants (Sets 1475, 18 pieces);
- Life Guards, (Set 1, including 3 officers, 35 pieces);
- Royal Horse Guards, (Set 2, including 4 officers, 43 pieces);
- Sovereign's Escort (SE, Set 2067), 7 pieces);
- Royal Marines at present arms, including 4 officers (Set 2071, 56 pieces);
- Irish Guards at present arms, including 3 officers (Set 2078, 38 pieces);

This compares with the information given in the Pamphlet (as described in Part 1 of this article):

- State Coach (11/10 pieces)
- Attendants to the State coach (18 pieces)
- 51 Life Guard Troopers and 4 officers (55 pieces)

- 51 Horse Guard Troopers and 3 officers (54 pieces)
- Sovereign's Escort (7 pieces)
- 31 Royal Marines, at present, with 3 officers (34 pieces)
- 31 Foot Guards, at present with 2 officers (33 pieces)

And with the items included in my original purchase (records incomplete!):

- State Coach 11/10 pieces
- Attendants (18 pieces)
- 80+ Life Guards and Horse Guards, including the Sovereign's Escort set
- About 50 Marines including officers
- About 30 Irish Guards including officers

All the foot figures have bases painted in the same dark ochre shade, as do the 4 Horse Guards officers on rearing horses. The cavalry figures are mounted on a mixture of the standard Life Guards horse and the later walking horse previously reserved for Dragoons. They have a mixture of falling and flowing plumes on their helmets. Most have the standard sword arms used pre-WWII rather than the later ones introduced post 1953. The coach is a standard pre-war style one, with gold side panels and wire traces, rather than the new H-clipped ones introduced post 1953. Elizabeth II, holding the sceptre, sits alongside her husband Prince Phillip.

The following images illustrate the set, both in and outside the 2 boxes. There is no doubt that it makes a splendid display. The first 5 photos show the pieces set out in line with the Britain's *Pamphlet*. The last 6 pictures show the set in the boxes. The tie cards have been replaced.

Corresponding with James Opie about the set, he was kind enough to add the following thoughts.

"I liked the way that you pointed out how similar the two coronation run-ups were in character, with the abdication and the untimely death of

BRITAIN'S DISPLAY SET 2081, PART 2 - AN EARLY PROTOTYPE?

(Continued)

Early Set 2081 Images



Figure 1: The Whole display



Figure 2: Whole display (2)



Figure 3: Whole display - detail (1)



Figure 4: Whole display - detail (2)



Figure 5: Whole display - detail (3)

BRITAIN'S DISPLAY SET 2081, PART 2 - AN EARLY PROTOTYPE? (Continued)



Figure 6: Coach close-up - Note old style wire traces and the all gold finish in contrast to the blue panels introduced in the post-war version



Figure 7: Elizabeth II with the sceptre in old style coach

George VI leading to a race to produce suitable models on time in each case - it certainly seems to have concentrated minds on both occasions.

It made me just go back and check how many sets I thought had been produced especially for the coronations. This turned out to be: 1937/8, thirty-eight items (I include the nine Canadian sets 1629-1637) of which ten, including the crown clip, were out and out souvenir items rather than regular 54mm sets, and twenty-three for 1953/4 including the remade horses for the miniature coach, the new occupants for the state coach, the Landau and the two new bands of the Berkshire Regiment and the Irish Guards.

The fortuitous find that you made with the proto-2081 set is totally fascinating. The sets of household cavalry 1 and 2 were being refurbished to match as well, though I haven't counted that above. The mixture of figures of these in your set goes to enhance the experimental nature of it, possibly despatched to a shop or collector who wanted to put on their coronation display early - maybe even the actual order that gave Britains the idea of bringing out such a set!"

If any of our readers have any more knowledge of this rare set, I would be delighted to hear about it so that we can add to this brief history.

Contact details:
r.a.wilson@warwick.ac.uk
US phone no. 631 644 5044



Figure 8: Box 1 - Lid with Regiments of All Nations label



Figure 9: Box 1 - Upper level

BRITAIN'S DISPLAY SET 2081, PART 2 - AN EARLY PROTOTYPE?

(Continued)



Figure 10: Box 1 - Lower level



Figure 11: Box 2 - Upper level



Figure 12: Box 2 - Middle level



Figure 13: Box 2 - Lower level

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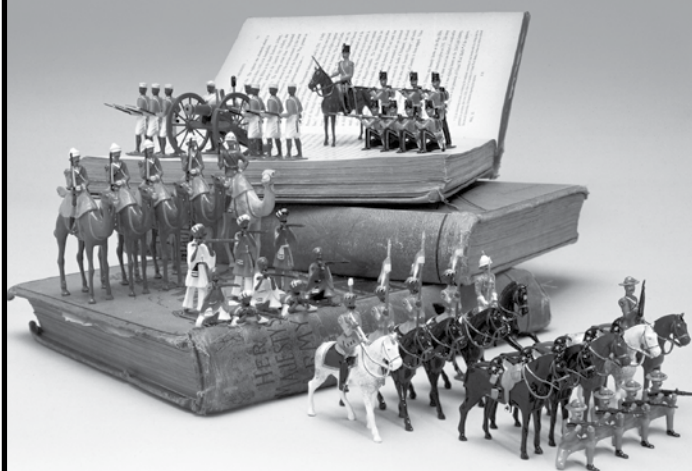
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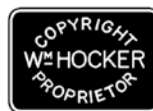
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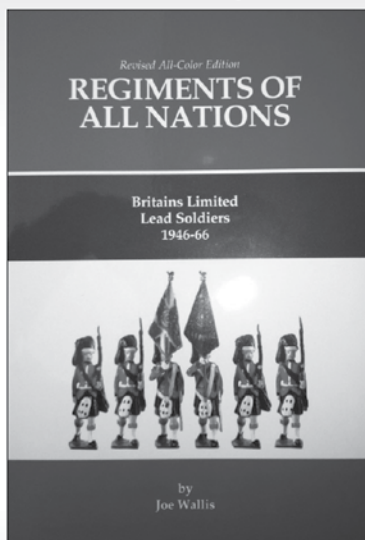
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BRITAIN'S AIRCRAFT REVISITED

By John Franklin

Britains produced a number of aircraft in their toy soldier range, not only fixed wing but rotary as well. All Britains aircraft were produced in the period between the first and second world wars. No aircraft were included in the standard range catalogue after the Second World War.²

Britains aircraft have been of interest to collectors for a long time. The second-hand market for Britains toys in the UK got off the ground in the early 1970s, with mail order dealers establishing themselves. One of the prominent forerunners was Shamus Wade. To persuade those owners in the wider population at that time to dispose of their Britains toy soldiers, he advertised in the broad ranging, UK second hand, trade magazine called *Exchange and Mart* (sales and wants). His advert sought Britains toy soldiers and 'especially Britains Aircraft.'

It is interesting to note that Britains, in their annual assessment/strategy of introducing new lines year by year to maintain collectors' interest and keep their sales up, introduced aircraft way ahead of motor transport, aircraft in 1931 first, lorries in 1934.

So in 1931 Britains produced 4 aircraft sets, catalogued as:

- Set 433 Monoplane with Pilot and Hanger
- Set 434 Monoplane with Pilot and Hanger, and 6 Aircraftsmen
- Set 435 USA Aviation Monoplane with Pilot and Hanger
- Set 436 USA Aviation Monoplane with Pilot and Hanger and 6 Aircraftsmen

All these 4 sets were first issued with square winged aircraft as in picture P1 which shows Set 433, the Royal Air Force version. My plane has lost the RAF roundels on the wings.

Picture P2 shows the second version type aircraft introduced in 1937 with the rounded wings, this one for set 435.

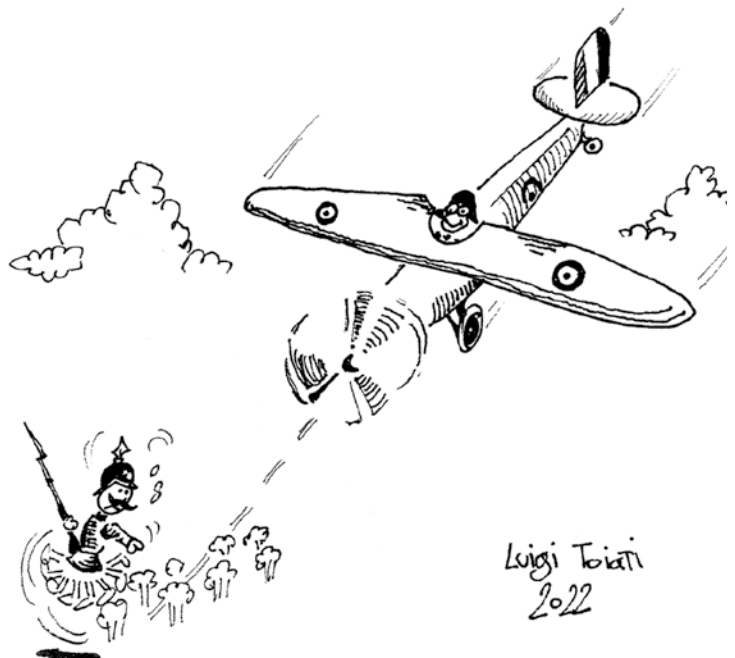


P1 Set 433 Monoplane for the Royal Air Force, first version



P2 Set 435 Monoplane for USA Aviation, second version

As well as showing the change in 1937 from square wings, as in P1, to rounded wings in P2, the two pictures also show the change to the engine from presumably a straight in line to a radial, and also a revised appropriate propeller. Not sure if the new engine reflects actual performance improvement of the time but it certainly enhances the model as a toy. On both versions there are two upper loops/holes, one in front of the wings and one in the tail fin, this allows for cotton or string to be tied, to suspend the model from on high above one's troops. The radial engines and changed propeller had been introduced two years earlier for the issue of the civilian autogiro,



BRITAIN'S AIRCRAFT REVISITED (Continued)

see below. As an enhanced front end it was only natural and appropriate to introduce them on the second version monoplanes simultaneously with the new rounded wings.

Set 434 was as set 433 but with 6 aircraftsmen as from set 240. The officers as in 240 were not part of set 434. Whilst the set description for the USA set 436 said 6 aircraftsmen, there was an attractive variation for this set in that a pilot in flying kit from set 332 and one in a sidcot suit from set 333 were included alongside 4 US airmen from set 334.

One of the most interesting associated aspects of these aircraft sets was the original box P3. The form of the box base allowed it to be transformed into an aircraft hanger. P4. The second point of real note about the box was its lid illustration as in P3. The style of this picture is pure Fred Whisstock but it does not carry his signature.³



P3 Box lid for Britains aircraft sets, this one for set 433

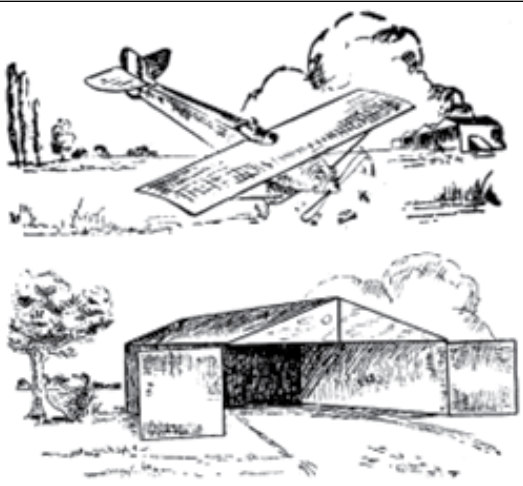


P4 Ingenious box base for Britains aircraft sets, transformable into an aircraft hanger. (The tags and slots for hanger assembly can be seen on the doors and the front of the roof.)

The ingenuity of the Britains product line developers is seen with the introduction of the Biplane sets 1521 and 1525 in 1937, with rounded wings and radial engine. P5 shows my example of a reproduction of the Britain's biplane produced by a clever UK model maker in the

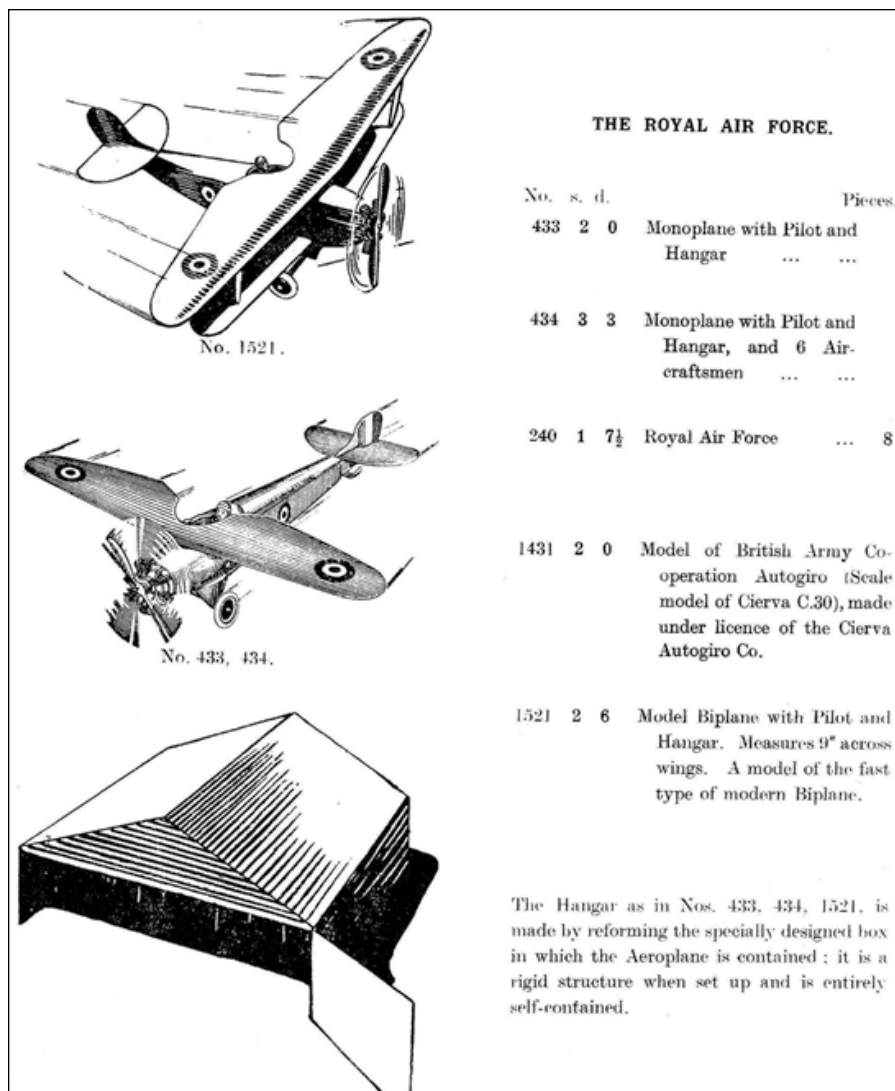


P5 Reproduction Britains Biplane set 1521

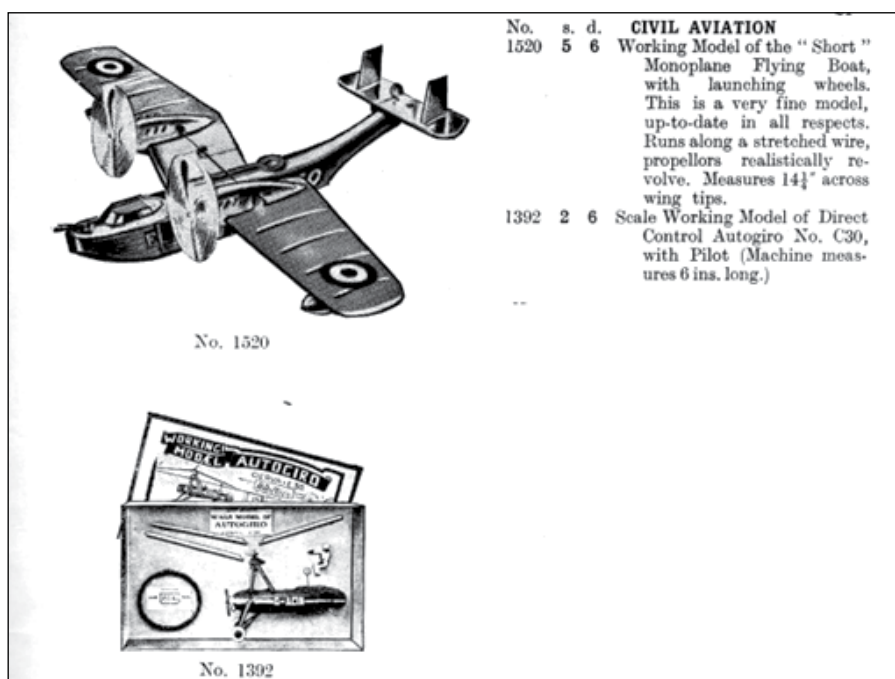
AVIATION				
No.	s.	d.		
433	1	10½	Monoplane with Pilot and Hangar.	
434	3	0	Monoplane with Pilot and Hangar, and 6 Aircraftsmen.	
240	1	7½	Royal Air Force.	

P6 Catalogue pencil sketch of square ended wings for the first version monoplanes.

BRITAIN'S AIRCRAFT REVISITED (Continued)



P7 Pencil sketches from the 1938 catalogue now showing rounded wing aircraft



P8 In the 1938 catalogue there is a photo of boxed set 1392 Civilian Autogiro and a pencil sketch of set 1520 the 'Short' Flying Boat.

1980s. It is identical to the Britains issue except for similar substitute wing struts. Original Britains biplanes are quite few and far between, probably 10 times rarer than monoplanes. Availing myself of this 1980s model maker's skills was seemingly the only way I might enjoy a biplane in my Royal Air Force home displays.

Catalogue Illustrations

Britains promoted their aircraft with typical sketches as for many other sets in their early catalogues and that for the Royal Air Force monoplane in sets 433 (and 434) is shown in P6. Also shown in the 1932 catalogue is how the box base transformed into a hangar as in P4. There were no illustrations in the 1932 catalogue for the USA sets 435 and 436.

With the change from square wings to rounded wings in 1937, new illustrations were in the 1938 catalogue as shown in P7. The radial engines can just be seen.

In picture P7 the hangar is now a different illustration to the 1932 catalogue. Also included in P7 is the Biplane set 1521. The 1938 catalogue now has illustrations for USA sets. They are exactly the same as shown in P7 but the Royal Air Force set numbers of 433, 434 and 1521 are replaced by 435, 436 and 1525 respectively.

Together with the war plane illustrations in the 1938 catalogue were the illustrations for civilian aircraft, set 1392 the Civilian Autogiro introduced 1935 and set 1520 the 'Short' Flying Boat introduced 1937. The Flying Boat carried the 'Short' tag since it was manufactured by the Short Aircraft Company based in Belfast, Northern Ireland.⁴

Autogiros

Britains introduced their Civilian Autogiro set 1392 in 1935 a year ahead of the Army Cooperation Autogiro set 1431. Whilst the civilian autogiro was

BRITAIN'S AIRCRAFT REVISITED *(Continued)*



P9 Britains set 1392 Civilian Autogiro



P10 Civilian autogiro set up on its wire. (Photo courtesy Christies)

illustrated in the catalogue, the army cooperation one was not. In a way this is understandable since the civilian model set was designed to be played with in the air via a wire supplied in the box see P8, with pulley wheels on the autogiro, which run on the wire. You would fix this at height in your playroom with a gentle slope and thus let your autogiro run down it, the rotor blades were supposed to rotate with the forward movement. The box lid shows this set up and it can just about be seen in P8. The box insert card has a label which records 'Scale Model AUTOGIRO Cierva C30' and the catalogue states 'Scale Working Model of Direct Control Autogiro No C30.'

A comment in passing, whilst the civilian autogiro is not very common the army cooperation autogiro is even less common, however the 'Short' flying boat is probably 10 – 100 times rarer than this, and is virtually never seen in the market.

P9 shows my Britains set no. 1392 which has a bit of history attached. At London BMSS meetings in the 1970s Shamus Wade, he of the trailblazer mail order ilk as introduced above, would tip out on his dealer table a shoe box or two full of battered/chipped, paint/arms missing etc, Britains figures, primarily for us makers/



P11 Britains set 1421 Army Cooperation Autogiro, no tail fin markings on this model

BRITAIN'S AIRCRAFT REVISITED *(Continued)*



P12 Army Cooperation Autogiro with blade angle control lever

restorers/repainters of the Society as source material. One evening Shamus brought aircraft bodies from autogiros, monoplanes etc. Just having got married I knew I would never be able to afford a complete autogiro and I thought for £5 (\$10) I might be able to do something with the autogiro body. In due course someone was making recast radial engines and propellers, someone else was making wing blades and I made a 4 strutted blade mounting (not that in P9) out of Britains thick fence posts. About 25 years later one of the commercial Britains spares makers (few around these days) was doing the proper blades mounting which is what is seen in P9. The 2 pulley wheels for running on a wire can just about be seen, one above the tail fin, original, and the other under the recast rotor blade mounting. Pilots seem much more common than the planes etc in the second hand market thus no trouble acquiring that in P9.

The civilian autogiro seen on its supplied wire is shown in P10 (picture courtesy Christies). The original 4 strutted blade mounting can also be seen here with its matching paint.

The Army Cooperation Autogiro set 1421, P11, now has no pulley wheels but what can be seen in P12 is the red/brown lever for the pilot to adjust the angle of the rotor blades (as in helicopters) to increase or decrease the lift should he so desire. Comment in passing, as we all know, with autogiros the blades are not powered.

While my army cooperation autogiro came with a white suited pilot, literature says he is normally brown suited. My model did not come from a large comprehensive Britains collection so I am inclined to think this pilot was sold as seen here.

One other aspect to set 1421, while the civilian autogiro came with its special box, with components laid out (P8) and illustrated lid, the box for set for 1421 was nothing other than a rectangular deep red covered compact production very similar to the post war Royal Engineers limbered wagon box. The blades came loose, as the civilian model, and thus the model was quite efficient for boxing, but no wire nor illustrated instructions accompanied this set so a compact box sufficed.

Britains also produced the US Army Cooperation Autogiro set 1899 which was similar to set 1421 but the RAF roundels on the fuselage P12, are replaced by the US star roundels as on the wings in P2, and had US horizontal stripes on the rear tail fin.

1 Editor's Note: There have been a number of articles on Britain's aircraft published previously in the magazine. See, for example, OTS Magazine, Volume 34, #3, p55-57, Volume 28, #2, pp28-30, Volume 18, #1, pp8-11, and Volume 1, #2, pp8-9.

2 Editor's Note: This is not quite accurate. There were various limited runs in late 1940s, including many special colour variations of the monoplane (see OTS Magazine, Volume 35, #1, p 19). More recently, Britains produced fine models of a Sopwith Camel and a Fokker Dr1 in the late 1990s.

3 Editor's note: Consultation with Joe Wallis on this matter lead to the following quote: "I don't know with absolute certainty, but the aircraft set box labels are not signed and the last new design he (Fred Whistock) did was for Set #400, so I would say not by Fred". John points out that the Aircraft sets came out soon after Set 400, so Whistock might have designed them, but for some reason Britains decided to curtail his signature. The Fort box illustrations also look like his work as well, as well as the Parade series box lids. These, as well as the Aircraft boxes, came out in the 12 months after Set 400 was introduced.

4 Editor's Note: The Short flying boat was intended for military operations. The only one ever built acted as a test bed for what later appeared as the Short Sunderland, 4 engine flying boat. This saw much service in WWII and was also developed into a Civilian passenger plane.

AUCTION REVIEW

OLD TOY SOLDIER
AUCTIONS USA

AUCTION #68

A Snow White Holiday

Saturday, December 11th, 2021

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AUCTIONS USA



Lot 2049 Josiane Desfontaines Kettle Drummer \$4,700



Lot 1009 Britains rare Set #31 Britains b-sized Cowboys \$1,400



Lot 2047 Exceptional Roger Berdou Kettle Drummer \$4,100



Lot 1096 Britains Prototype Toy Town Toytown Figures \$4,600



Lot 1255 Britains Herald Military Display Set \$475



Lot 1006 Britains Set #27 Band of the Line \$550



Lot 1091 Britains Set #3118 Extremely Rare Picture Pack \$3,100

AUCTION REVIEW (Continued)



Lot 2043 Baldet Mounted
Bertrand du Guesclin \$700



Lot 1196 Britains Set #1659 Snow White Cottage \$9,000



Lot 2070 4th Dragoon
Cavalry Helmet with
Stand \$800



Lot 2032 Very Rare Krause US Infantry Standing Firing \$4,100



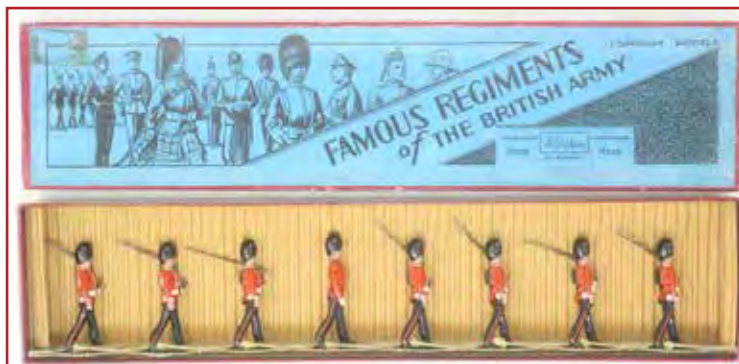
Lot 2064 Large Marklin Field Gun \$850



Lot 1347 Taylor and Barrett (T & B) Water Cart \$425



Lot 1194 Britains Set #1654 Snow White & the 7 Dwarves \$1,300



Lot 1054 Britains Set #1559 Famous Regiments Lancashire \$600



Lot 1185 Britains Set #4Z Pre-war Zoo Display \$1,600

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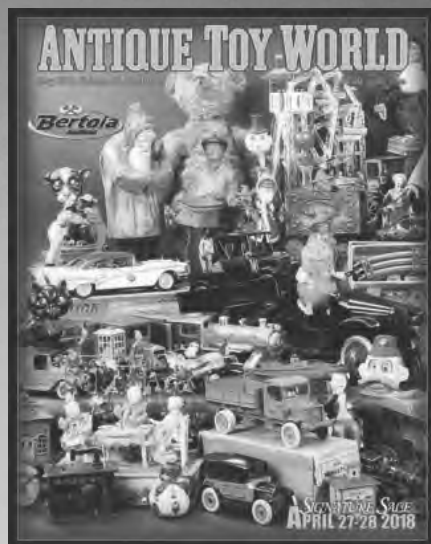
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May 1, 2022 - Sunday - The Gettysburg Toy Soldier Show, The Eisenhower Hotel and Conference Center, Gettysburg, PA. For info.: Steve Connell 734-455-0724, or Rod Chapman 740-924-2531, or Rick Keller 765-430-6289.

May 21st & 22nd, 2022 - Saturday and Sunday - Texas Toy Soldier Show. The Menger Hotel, San Antonio, Texas (next to the Alamo!) Martin Vasquez (martinvasquez1836@yahoo.com) 210-757-3463

May 22nd, 2022 - Sunday - The Ohio Toy Soldier Show, The Galaxy Restaurant and Banquet Center, Wadsworth, OH. For info: Steve Connell 734-455-0724, or Rod Chapman 740-924-2532, or Rick Keller 765-430-6289.

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