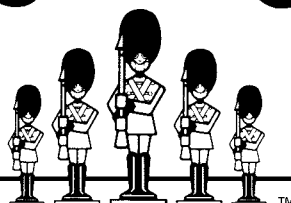


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The Journal for Collectors

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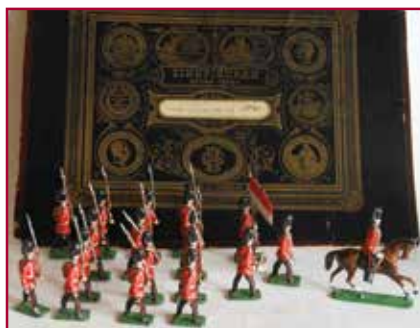
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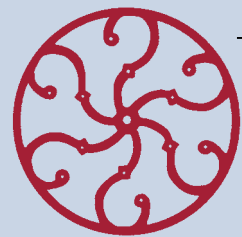
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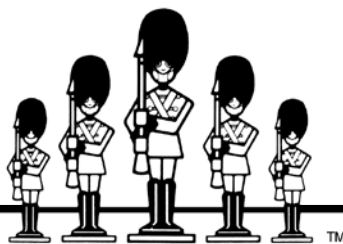
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**IN THIS ISSUE**

**VOLUME 38 NUMBER 3 - FALL 2014**

**ARTICLES**

OBITUARY - SHAMUS OTWAY DAVENPORT WADE

22ND APRIL 1928 – 13TH AUGUST 2014

*A personal tribute, by James Opie..... 8-9*

REMEMBERING SHAMUS WADE

*By Norman Joplin ..... 11*

THE RIGHT CARS FOR BARCLAY'S TRANSPORTS

*By Stan Alekna ..... 14-15*

BEFORE THE TIN ARMY OF THE POTOMAC  
EARLY GERMAN-MADE, AMERICAN-THEMED  
TOY SOLDIER SETS

*By Earl Jorgensen ..... 18-25*

SMALL WARRIORS RECREATE BIG BATTLES AT  
PENNSYLVANIA TOY SOLDIER MUSEUM

*By Henry I. Kurtz ..... 36-37*

ID MODEL TANK TO "OLD TOY STYLE"  
A COMMANDANT MINIATURES CONVERSION

*By Ed Poole ..... 46-49*

FILLING THE LINE -  
BRITAINS SETS 1754, 1418 & 1421

*By Rob Wilson ..... 55-57*

**FEATURES**

Hobby News.....7-8, 10

Auction Preview.....38-39, 40

Book Review & CD Review ..... 28-29, 50-51

Show Reports.....41-45

Toy Soldier Market Place ..... 63

Toy Soldier Show and Auction Calendar ..... 64

Advertisers Index..... 65, 66

Subscriptions/Advertising ..... 67, 68

**ON THE COVER**

Before The Tin Army of the Potomac

Photograph courtesy of Earl Jorgensen

# VOLUME 34



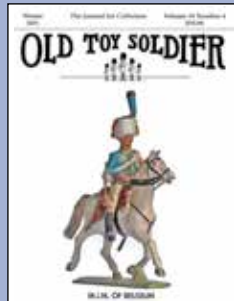
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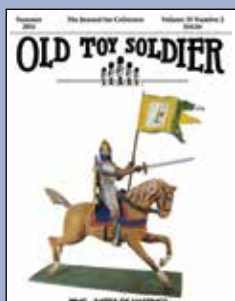


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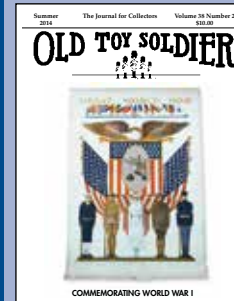


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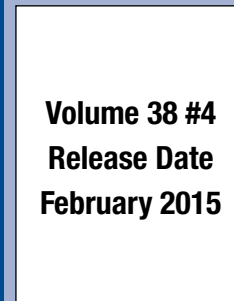
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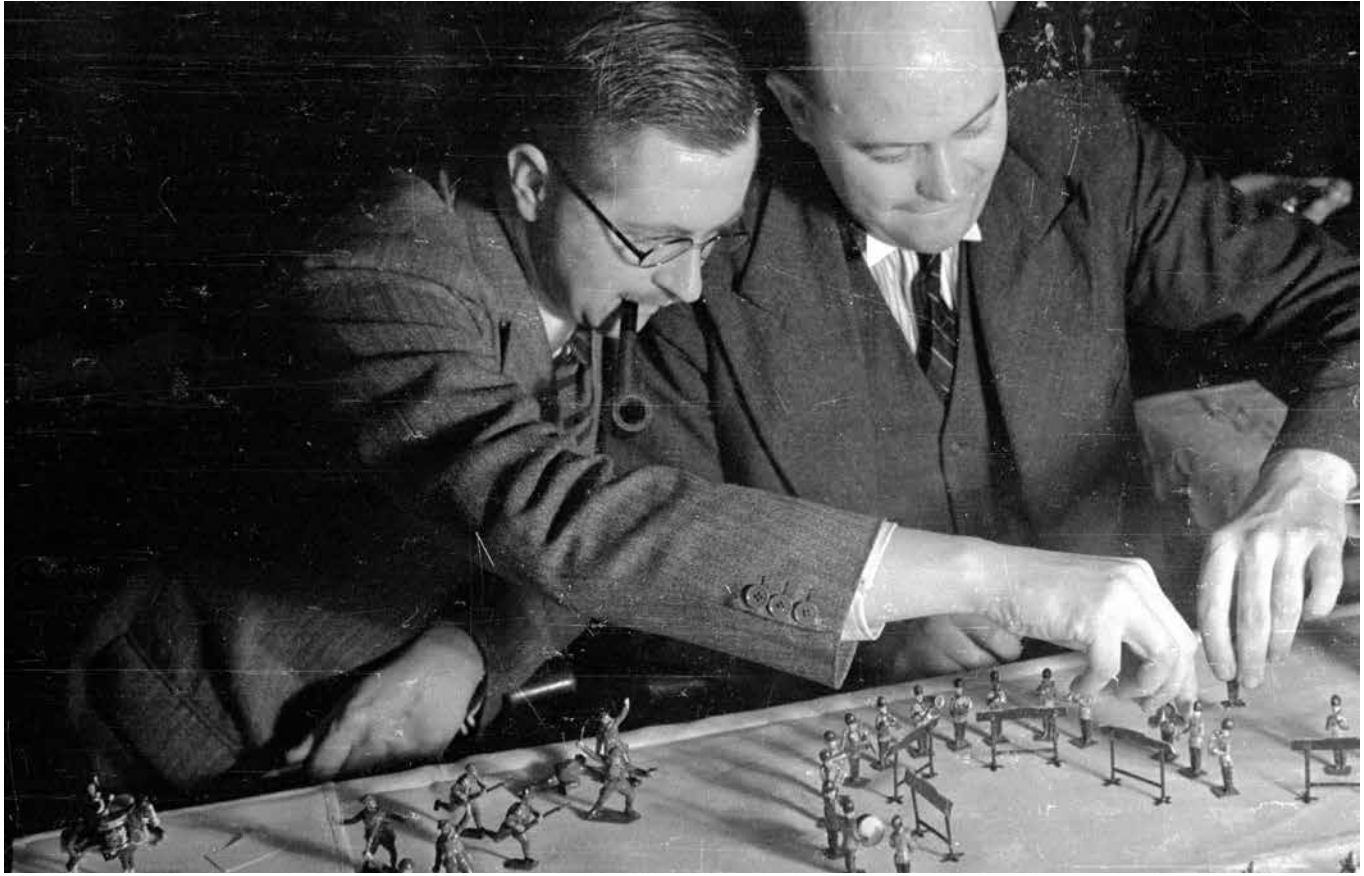
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## LEONARD W RICHARDS - A CONFIRMED PICTURE

*By Stephen Dance, President & Archivist of the British Model Soldier Society*



Gerti Deutsch / Getty Images

With so many beautiful books now available on model soldiers, it is, perhaps, easy to forget the key contribution made by the early pioneers of collecting. One of the greatest of these was L W Richards, "Len" to a favoured few, "Mr Richards" to most. A former President (1963) and Treasurer (1964-70), he was made a Fellow of the Society in 1968. He was one of the original 18 who attended a meeting at the Rendezvous Restaurant in London's Soho on Saturday 6 July 1935. By the end of that meeting the British Society of Collectors of Model Soldiers had been formed. This title would subsequently be shortened to the name we recognise today - the British Model Soldier Society.

From the very start, Mr Richards began writing about the history of the hollowcast figures produced by Britains, and posing questions. From 1960 to 1965, the BMSS Bulletin featured a very detailed series of articles in which he charted the lead figure production of Britains Ltd, by set number in sequence. At the time, this was an extraordinary achievement in terms of original research, which provided a sound bedrock for the later research of James Opie and others. But Mr Richards did not focus on Britains alone; he wrote

about competitors such as Hill, Renvoize and BMC. And he wrote about the major foreign firms Mignot and Heyde. He was a well known attendee at BMSS meetings, often hauling bulging suitcases of figures. And then there were the sales held at his home at Barking in Essex. Ralph Bowring told me that when something was sold he would often disappear into his loft to retrieve it.

In 1970, his book "Old British Model Soldiers 1893-1918" appeared under the imprint of the Arms & Armour Press. This was the first book to take a serious look at commercial model soldier production by Britains and their competitors. Mr Richards was also one of the first - probably the first - to conduct further investigation of registered designs in official records. He was one of the British collectors who featured prominently in John Garratt's "Model Soldiers For the Connoisseur" (1972), but there was no picture of this large but, evidently, shy man.

His book had not featured a portrait photograph and things were compounded when, following the death of Mr Richards in 1980, Phillips of London sold his collection by auction on 12 and 13 August 1981. In my

## HOBBY NEWS (Cont.)

experience, catalogues for single owner collections almost always include a picture of the owner. Not so here! Nor was there a photograph with the obituary published in BMSS Bulletin 1/1981. When I took on the role of Society Archivist I decided early on I would make it a priority to find a confirmed picture of this most influential of collectors, before he was lost to posterity. Although I had corresponded with him in the 1970s when I was still at school, I had personally never met him. Finding an image of him was to prove harder than I expected.

While many people had known him, no one had a picture, and some were even doubtful they would recognise him so many years on. Even James Opie, who had known him well, didn't have a photograph of him. But I persisted and I finally came across a photograph taken at a Society meeting before the war, when we were still the British Society of Collectors of Model Soldiers. A reliable source identified L W Richards. While I had confidence in my informant, I thought it wise to seek a second, independent opinion from someone who also knew him well. I now have that confirmation and am confident we have a picture of L W Richards.

The photograph is reproduced here, by permission of Getty Images. Mr Richards is the balding gentleman on the right of the picture as you look at it. He is seen arranging a display of Heyde musicians with some Britains also in the picture. This shot was taken at the Masons Arms Public House in London's Maddox Street, the then venue for the monthly London meetings of the BSCMS. One of a series of images used in the Picture Post article "Hearth Rug Re-armament", published 11 March 1939, not long before Europe would be plunged into the chaos of the Second World War.

Having identified him, it is now possible to spot Mr Richards in the Pathe newsreel coverage of a 1939 meeting of the BSCMS. For those of you with Internet access, this can be found by googling British Pathe DVDs and typing model soldiers into the subject bar. It is one of the clips of old newsreel which then come up.

(This item originally appeared in the Bulletin of the British Model Soldier Society, issue Number 3 of 2014. Reproduced here by permission of the Editor)

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### OBITUARY ~ SHAMUS OTWAY DAVENPORT WADE 22ND APRIL 1928 – 13TH AUGUST 2014

*A personal tribute, by James Opie*

*The Irishman who became the world's leading dealer in toy soldiers*

His father was Major Roland Wade of the Inniskilling Dragoons, and he served in the Royal Engineers in Malaya, so he had an impeccable pedigree for what was to come.

It wasn't long after starting seriously to collect toy soldiers that Shamus set up shop in his spare time as a dealer. From 1962 to 1964, every Saturday Shamus was in a minuscule but prominent corner of a gallery at the roadside of the Portobello Road. It was there that as an impecunious teenager I started collecting much of my 'Highland Square' of Camerons from the threepenny bargain box that he kept underneath his chair. For me, Portobello Road has never been quite the same since he left, in spite of the undoubted glories of Shamus' successors, Peter Flateau and Andy Morant.

Shamus was one of the knowledgeable people who encouraged me to widen my collecting field from plastic and embrace British toy soldiers right back to



1893. I remember riding pillion on his scooter when I was invited to see his collection when he lived in Holland Park. In those days he knew a lot more than I did about toy soldiers, and, for instance, could tell a plug shoulder Scots Grey where I could not.

*Continued on next page*



## **OBITUARY ~ SHAMUS OTWAY DAVENPORT WADE (Cont.)**

In 1964, Shamus' career as an advertising copywriter took him (back) to Dublin. In 1966, however, he took a brave decision to devote himself to toy soldier dealing full time. As Dublin had far fewer of the world's toy soldier collectors passing through than the Portobello Road, Shamus built up his dealing activities with postal lists. These were the years when he became famous for old toy soldiers on a world-wide scale. It was also when he had a large hand in developing the Irish Model Soldier Society.

He was no stranger to London, however, particularly when the series of specialist toy soldier auctions was started by Richard Lane, first at Knight Frank and Rutley, then swiftly moving to Phillips Son and Neale. He was one of the most prominent people there, sitting near the front and dominating proceedings when bidding by keeping his hand up until others had fallen by the wayside or the price had 'gone silly'.

He was notoriously nonchalant about packaging, much preferring, in the early days, not to keep the boxes, including on the occasion when he trashed a box 131 after an auction in Sussex. One of his legacies to toy soldier collecting is his immortal description of Britains 1960s window boxes as 'cellophane fronted monstrosities'. Any collector who has tried to undo one and put it together again intact will know exactly what he meant.

When the Wades returned from Ireland in 1973, they moved into a 'temporary' home in Acton, but once the back yard had become a sanctuary for garden gnomes it became obvious that they were there to stay. This haven had to be stoutly defended from all the mail order customers who had never come to Ireland but often arrived in London, sometimes, it seemed, for the sole purpose of imposing themselves and disrupting the smooth flow of the business. However, for a privileged few, a visit to 'the source', became an occasional treat of the most spectacular kind.

One of the most attractive features of Shamus as a dealer was his complete integrity. The most difficult aspect of trading in toy soldiers is discerning when a figure was repaired or retouched. He was utterly honest about describing or rejecting anything that he felt was not original, and from this became totally trusted by every customer on his worldwide list of correspondents. There may still be those who built a good part of their collections with Shamus, who knew him better than I did.

The series of 'New Toy Soldiers' for which Shamus was to become famous was started in 1974, commissioned from Jan and Frank Scroby. The objective of the Nostalgia series was to re-create in miniature as many as possible of the forces recruited locally from the quarter of the world's population that belonged to the British Empire. The Scrobies complained bitterly that Shamus was a hard taskmaster, but Shamus insisted that every detail of the uniforms that he had so painstakingly researched should be included in the models.

Shamus' lists, which had always been not only erudite but educational, pointing out things that particularly took his own fancy, now expanded into a periodical treatise on the more obscure fighting forces of the British Empire.

The Nostalgia series became one of the most renowned collectables of the toy soldier collector scene, and was certainly the best focused. Today, it is enjoying a considerable revival in popularity, as collectors discover that it is only possible to put together one of perhaps sixty-five complete sets that were ever issued. The number issued of each unit modeled varied considerably, as Shamus used a true limited edition system of taking orders in advance, and having only that number manufactured, after which the moulds were destroyed.

In 1989, Shamus inaugurated the Commonwealth Forces History Trust, the better to pursue his most preferred field of research. For the last decades of his life he tracked down source material for what he hoped to become a series of books detailing the thousands of military and policing units that kept the empire functioning so well.

As a collector, he found himself able to complete an excellent and satisfying array well before prices became too exorbitant. His tastes were wide, encompassing Britains, Hill, Heyde and Ping, among many others. When two years ago he felt that the time had finally come to pass his favourites on through auction, he had the satisfaction that many other collectors valued his figures as highly as he had. His custodianship of many of them had lasted for half a century.

There are none who would dispute that Shamus was an outstanding contributor to the enjoyment of military toys and models, living on for us as the larger than life character that he always was.

## OBITUARY ~ WILLIAM E. THOMPSON

Toy soldier collector and maker, who made generations of Arizona TV viewers smile and laugh via his popular children's show, died at age 82 in Phoenix, AZ July 23, 2014. Bill was born in New York City Dec. 18, 1931. He graduated from Bronxville High School, then attended DePauw University. He was an artist, boxer, history buff, writer, creative genius and local legend in Arizona. Bill made people laugh for 36 years after creating *The Wallace and Ladmo Show*. The popular show aired on KPHO-TV in Phoenix from 1954 to 1989. It was the longest running, locally produced children's program in U.S. broadcasting history. Bill's lifelong passion for collecting toy soldiers began 1936, when he received a set as a Christmas gift as a child. Each week that followed he would head to the local Woolworth's in Bronxville or to nearby New York City to add to his collection. Bill eventually began to sculpt, cast, paint and sell toy soldiers. He even created his own line, Gorton Toy Soldiers, with his friend Andy Masich, a museum curator.

More recently Bill produced the Historical Toy Soldiers line with friend Ned Norris. Bill was a true history nut, especially when it came to the Civil War. He amassed American Civil War soldiers, re-enacted battles, collected uniforms and weapons, and made numerous films, including "The Battle of Cannonball Junction." As time passed, Bill's collection grew from his own output and sets collected from around the world, including some rarities. Visiting his hobby room



was like traveling through history. Bill's incredible knowledge of history and obsession with accuracy made his collection truly one of a kind.

Though Bill is now gone, he is not forgotten as a large part of him lives on in his massive, lifelong collection of toy soldiers. His family has enlisted longtime friend Pam Yelverton of Bruntons Barracks in Prescott, Az to help find a new home for the collection. If interested please call Pam at 928-717-1698 or Dave Thompson at 602-810-1617





# REMEMBERING SHAMUS WADE

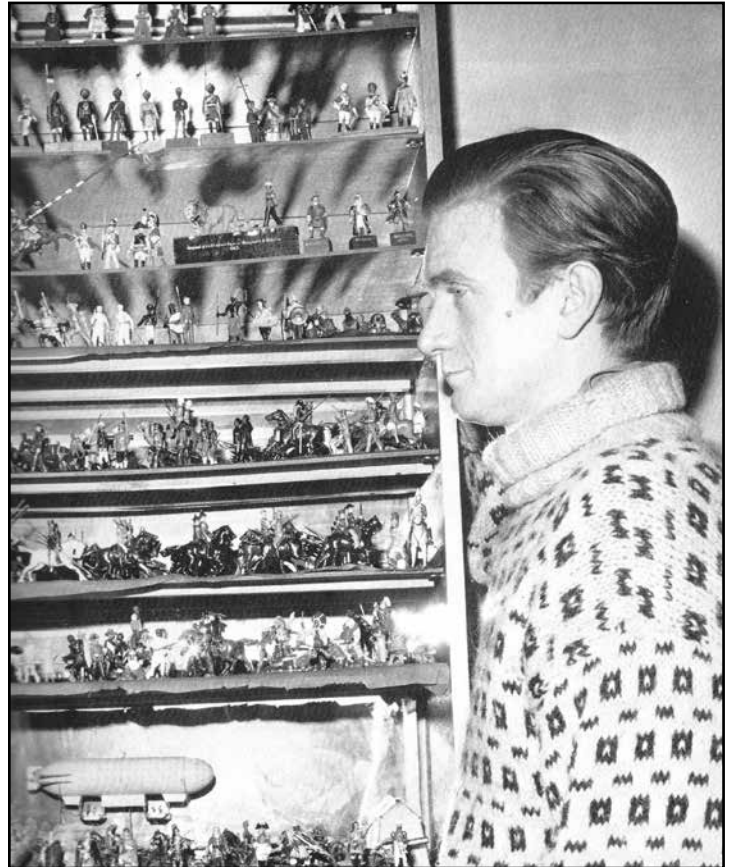
*By Norman Joplin*

Upon learning of the death of Shamus Wade I called his wife Flavia to offer my condolences and asked what arrangements had been made for the composition of an obituary.

Flavia told me that James Opie (See Hobby News) had offered to write an obituary and that several British National Newspapers would carry the families obituary. Flavia however suggested perhaps I could offer some alternative insight into Shamus and requested that I "tell about the man warts and all".

My first contact through mail with Shamus started when reading an advertisement in the Exchange and Mart an advertising paper which was issued weekly in the UK during the 1980s. Like many hundreds of other collectors I wrote for the lists and was installed on Shamus's toy soldier and figure sales list. Shamus had a number of conditions of business and he executed them strictly to the letter. All lists were mailed out on the same day to allow everyone an equal chance of gaining the item they wanted, all items had to be paid for in advance, First come first serve. Telephone orders were not welcome as the norm. Failure to carry through with a purchase meant immediate dismissal forever from receiving further lists, and if you received 3 lists without making a purchase you were also eliminated. I believe he later relaxed that policy in exchange for having collectors pay for the lists in advance. These sales lists were the first attempt at producing toy soldier sales lists by mail, everything meticulously described and priced. If the item(s) that you ordered were already sold a refund would be sent along with anything you were successful in winning.

My orders were frequent, as at that time I was concentrating on the "Richards" idea of trying to collect one of each of everything by manufactures other than Britains. Euphoria set in with each successful purchase, however the disappointment of missing a particular item because I did not order quickly enough was a real downer. When Shamus decided to cease issuing lists, I took the daunting step and approached him to ask if his client list was for sale, which turned out to be a real experience -- More about that in February issue of OTS and also about the fascination that Shamus had with Johillco.



**Shamus as pictured in Garratt's  
*Model Soldiers for the Connoisseur* By Garratt**



**Shamus obviously in jovial mood.**

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# THE RIGHT CARS FOR BARCLAY'S TRANSPORTS

*By Stan Alekna*

I still get a fair number of questions about which model of Barclay's little cars are the correct ones for each of Barclay's auto transports. My OTS article on the transports of over ten years ago needed to be updated with the more current numbering of the cars, so here it is.

There is little mystery or confusion on the configuration of Barclay's first transport, BV153. There were 2-BV10 slush cast sedans (2" long) and 2-BV132 slush cast coupes (2-3/16" long). This is far and away the rarest of the transports and its cars are equally hard to find.



**BV153**

But after that, it gets fairly confusing and I continually see transports at shows and auctions with the wrong model cars. The various cars for the later model transports are pictured and described below.



**BV170**



**BV171**



**BV172**



**BV173**



**BV108 Metal**



**BV108A Metal**



**BV108 Plastic**



**BV108A Plastic**

The highest BV number in Richard O'Brien's 3rd edition was BV167. With Richard's concurrence, I assigned "O'Brien" numbers to the previously unnumbered and/or unlisted little cars. O'Brien's BV108 only referred to the sedan so I added BV108a to refer to that model coupe. The newly assigned numbers were used in the 4th edition of Collecting Toy Cars and Trucks.

O'Brien/Alekna NUMBERS	TYPE OF CASTING	BODY STYLE	LENGTH IN INCHES	TYPE OF WHEELS
BV170	Slush	Sedan	1-5/8	Metal
BV171	Slush	Coupe	1-5/8	Metal
BV172	Die	Sedan	1-5/8	Metal
BV173	Die	Coupe	1-1/2	Metal
BV108	Die	Sedan	1-1/2	Metal
BV108a	Die	Coupe	1-1/2	Metal
BV108	Die	Sedan	1-1/2	Plastic
BV108a	Die	Coupe	1-1/2	Plastic

# THE RIGHT CARS FOR BARCLAY'S TRANSPORTS (Cont.)

The correct autos for the later transports are pictured and described below.



BV152



BV11



BV157 BV75



BV114



BV107A BV107B Photo credit to Howard Melton

O'Brien No. Transport	Correct autos
BV152	BV170 (smaller BV10), BV171 (smaller BV132)
BV114	BV170, BV171
BV11	BV172, BV173
BV75	BV172, BV173; then later, BV108, BV108a w/ metal wheels
BV157	BV172, BV173; then later, BV108, BV108a w/ metal wheels
BV107A	2-level trailer; BV108, BV108a w/ plastic wheels
BV107B	Single level trailer; BV108, BV108a w/ plastic wheels

Note that in the photo of BV157, the two autos on the lower level of the trailer are BV108 and BV108a with metal wheels. BV157 should have either 2-BV172's and 2-BV173's or 2-BV108's and 2-BV108a's, with metal wheels.

Hopefully, this will clear up some confusion for Barclay vehicle collectors; but for now, you have to pull all of the transports out of your display case and determine which have the correct cars and which require replacements. I will try to have a lot of Barclay's little cars on my next mail order list.

Stan Alekna; 732 Aspen Lane; Lebanon, PA 17042; Phone: 717-228-2361  
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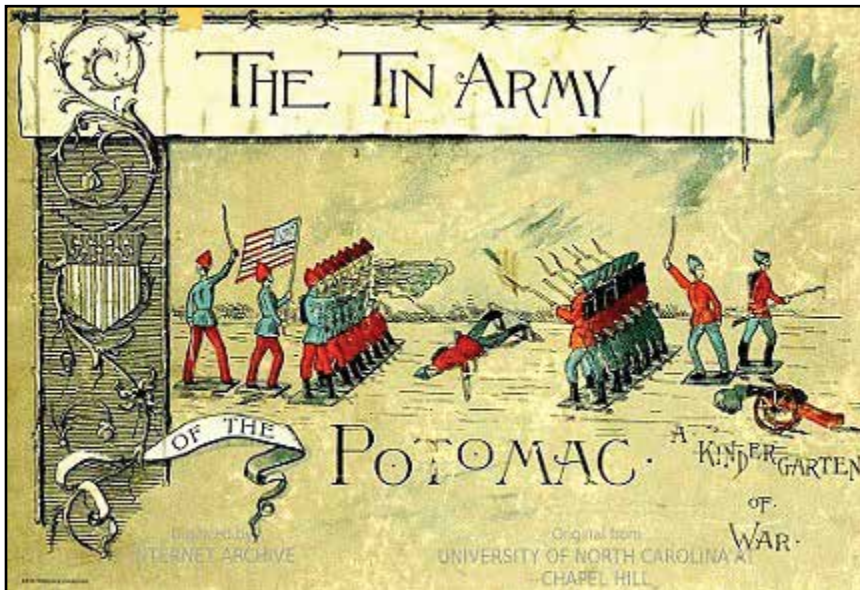
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# BEFORE THE TIN ARMY OF THE POTOMAC EARLY GERMAN-MADE, AMERICAN-THEMED TOY SOLDIER SETS

By Earl Jorgensen



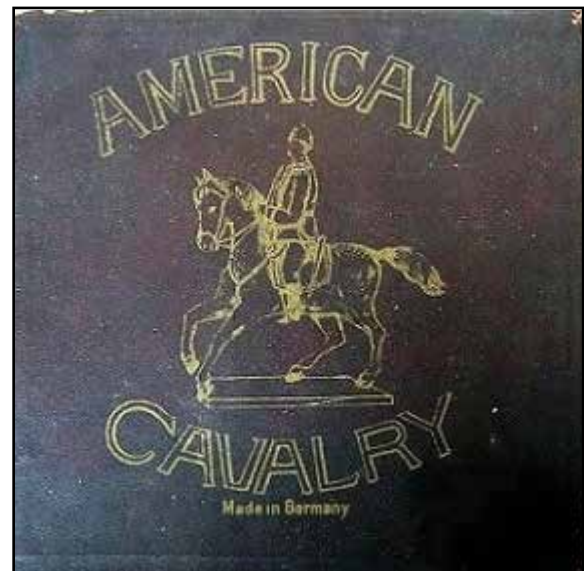
The cover illustration from the *Tin Army of the Potomac* by noted illustrator J.F. Goodridge. The illustrations provide an excellent visual reference to the variety of toy soldiers available in the United States during the late 1880's. (Public Domain, digitized by the Internet Archive.)

What exactly is the Tin Army of the Potomac? *The Tin Army of the Potomac: or, A Kindergarten of War* is a children's book written in 1888 by William Howe Downes, a highly regarded art historian, a successful author (*John S. Sargent, His Life and Work; The Life and Works of Winslow Homer*) and an early war-game enthusiast with a large collection of toy soldiers. The book is based on the experience of teaching his young son about the American Civil War and the fundamentals of warfare by using toy soldiers to recreate the battles fought by the Army of the Potomac during the "Great war between the North and the South."<sup>1</sup> Although the text focuses primarily on troop deployments and how to create topographic battlefield features, it also provides a rare view of the variety and types of toy soldiers available in the United States during the late 19th century.

"He learned how war is made from playing with tin soldiers, the kind that are bought in toy stores.... Most of these soldiers come from Germany. Infantry, cavalry and artillery are to be had in neat boxes with all their arms and equipments – guns, swords, flags, cannons, tents and even fires already smoking....When a new box of soldiers arrived as



An illustration from the book depicting a cavalryman with a seat peg and a plug-in head. Note the wire stirrup placed at the toe of the boot.



A box label from set of American Cavalry produced by the firm of Conrad Schildknecht & Sons, circa 1870's.

Christmas or birthday reinforcements, they were added to the Union Army, and when a soldier was broken or soiled, he was given to 'The Rebels' thus both armies grew large....Jackson's men are solid, heavy lead veterans, most of whom have lost their heads but keep on fighting just as well without them....The Union army are not all alike. Sherman's men are in the position of taking aim. Thomas's men are marching (and keeping step excellently) with their muskets over their shoulders. Hancock's men are charging with bayonets and Sedgwick's men are almost the same attitude as Thomas's



## BEFORE THE TIN ARMY OF THE POTOMAC (Cont.)



A rare set of early German-made 70mm flats depicting the American Infantry in regulation 1858 full dress uniform, circa 1860-1865. (Undetermined maker, possibly Ramm)

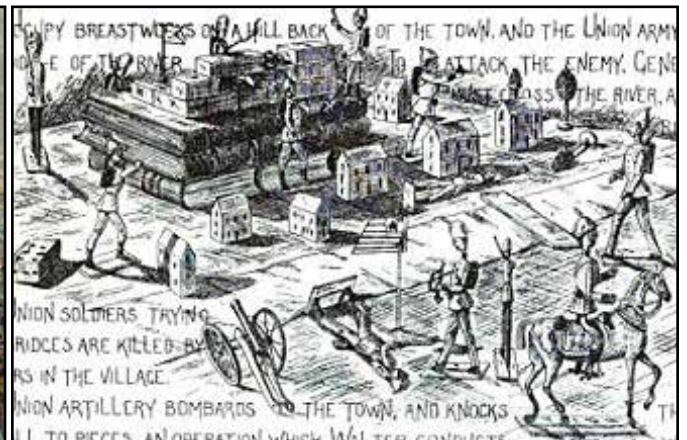
though their uniforms are different. The cavalry are a motley crew of several sizes and styles.... As for the Confederate Army, it is made up from the somewhat worn remnants of former Union divisions. Lee's men were really rather ragged."<sup>2</sup>

Based on the above excerpts and the illustrations from the book, it appears that the Tin Army of the Potomac truly was, as described in the author's own words, "a ragged bunch of varying sizes and nationalities."<sup>3</sup> It was an assemblage of toy soldiers ranging from traditional tin flats to full three-dimensional solid cast figures. By the mid-1880's German-made sets of toy soldiers were readily available in toy shops throughout the United States. According to the standards of the day, orders from foreign countries were assembled by the manufacture with "soldiers of the country

for which they are ordered....in assortments which we think fittest and most favorable for the market of the country of destination."<sup>4</sup> Orders destined for the United States would contain a majority of sets depicting American-themed military subjects along with a lesser number of sets depicting similar events occurring in foreign lands. When William Howe Downes assembled his Tin Army of the Potomac he had a wide variety of figures from which to choose which makes one wonder if it would have also been possible to assemble a similar toy tin army during the time of the actual conflict and if so, what would it have looked like? The answer to the first question is a definitive yes. There is a body of evidence supporting the fact that German-made sets of tin toy soldiers were available in America well before the first shots of the Civil War were fired.



An 1867 hand colored lithograph print of the Battle of Gettysburg (Public Domain, Library of Congress)



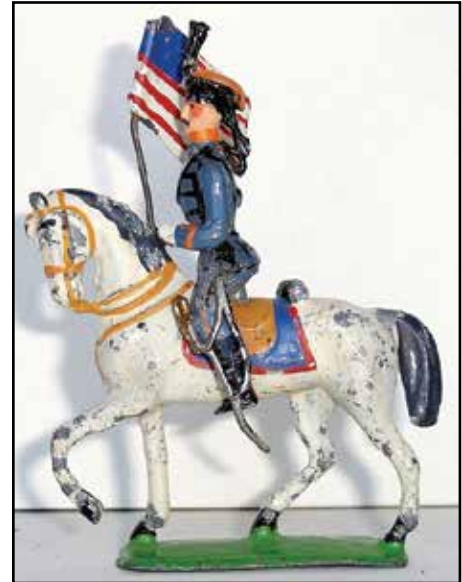
An illustration from the book depicting a make-shift battlefield and a ragged bunch of figures of varying sizes.



## BEFORE THE TIN ARMY OF THE POTOMAC (Cont.)



A group of 40mm semi-round figures depicting the Mexican-American War of 1846-1848, circa 1880's. (Undetermined maker)



An example of German-made American Calvary, circa 1870-1880's.

On July 14, 1853, the Exhibition of the Industry of All Nations officially opened to the general public in the City of New York. For the next sixteen months over one million visitors viewed the production of over four thousand exhibitors representing twenty-three nations and colonies. Found in the list of exhibitors are the firms of Friedrich Wilhelm Gerlach and Gerhard Sohlke both of whom had also participated in the 1851 London Crystal Palace Exhibition of All Nations from which the firm of Sohlke was awarded a prize medal for a small but select assortment of pewter figures. Also listed is the firm of Christoph Ammon which had previously been awarded a prize medal for well molded and very carefully

executed figures<sup>5</sup> during the 1840 Nuremberg General Industry Exhibition. Participation in an international exhibition, especially one located on another continent, must have required a huge financial investment. The fact that all three of the firms had previously participated in such events suggests that such exhibitions provided a unique business opportunity to display their wares to a huge number of potential new customers. It also suggests that all three firms were already actively exporting figures to American retailers. Evidence supporting this theory can be found in the partial remains of a simple paper sticker with a New York City address found on the box label of a very early set of German-made tin soldiers.



An assortment of German-made American Infantry figures, circa 1870's - 1880's. (Undetermined makers)



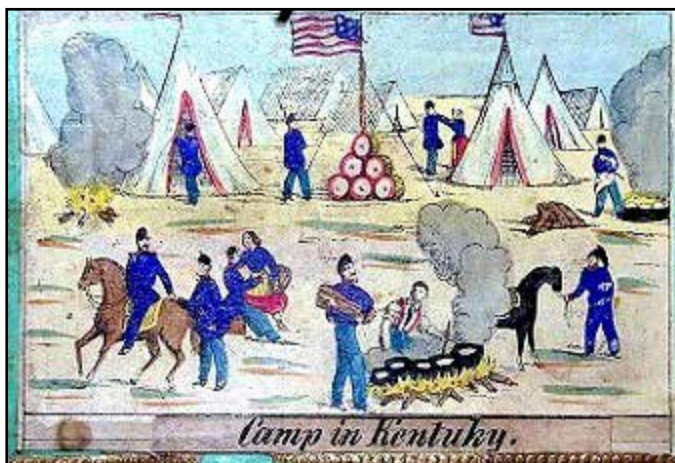
## BEFORE THE TIN ARMY OF THE POTOMAC (Cont.)



(above) The box label of the Inkjerman set displaying the New York City import sticker and (below) the Import sticker.



Figures from the Inkjerman set representing the British & Russian Armies.



A very early example of a German-made American-themed toy soldier set titled the *Camp in Kentucky*, circa 1860. (Undetermined maker)

The partial remnant of a black and gold embossed paper sticker was located on the lid of a small, paper covered slide-top wooden box displaying a beautiful hand-colored illustration of a 19th century battle scene with the words *Schlacht von Inkjerman*, *Battle of Inkjerman* and *Bataille de Inkjerman* which occurred on Nov. 5, 1854 during the Siege of Sevastopol. The box contained several 50mm flat figures representing British and Russian soldiers, a pea shooting cannon and instructions presented in both English and French. A variation of the set was also produced for the German market titled *THE SHAM FIGHT*. Both sets have been attributed to the firm of Johann Haffner, circa 1855.<sup>6</sup> The firm also produced similar sets depicting the other battles fought during the campaign.

The sticker reads as follows: *GR-----K & Co., I-----TERS, 30 MAIDEN LANE, NEW-YORK.* According to the *1861 New York City Directory*, the property located at 30 Maiden Lane was occupied by the firm of Groesbeeck & Co., an import business. Additional research indicates that the firm had occupied the 30 Maiden Lane location from 1811 through 1868. While little else is known about the company, it is clear that it had a great deal of local competition. The *1830 New York City Directory* lists more than a dozen firms specializing in the importation of toys.

By the 1830's agents representing both large German toy exporters and individual German toy manufacturers regularly traveled to the United States with price lists and boxes of samples to illustrate the variety and quality of their toys. Likewise, agents representing American import companies regularly traveled to Germany seeking new sources of high quality, inexpensive toys. It is likely that such travel brought the first German-made mass-produced tin toy figures into the United States. Based on known surviving sets, it appears that the earliest examples of tin figures produced specifically for the American marketplace date from the late 1840's.

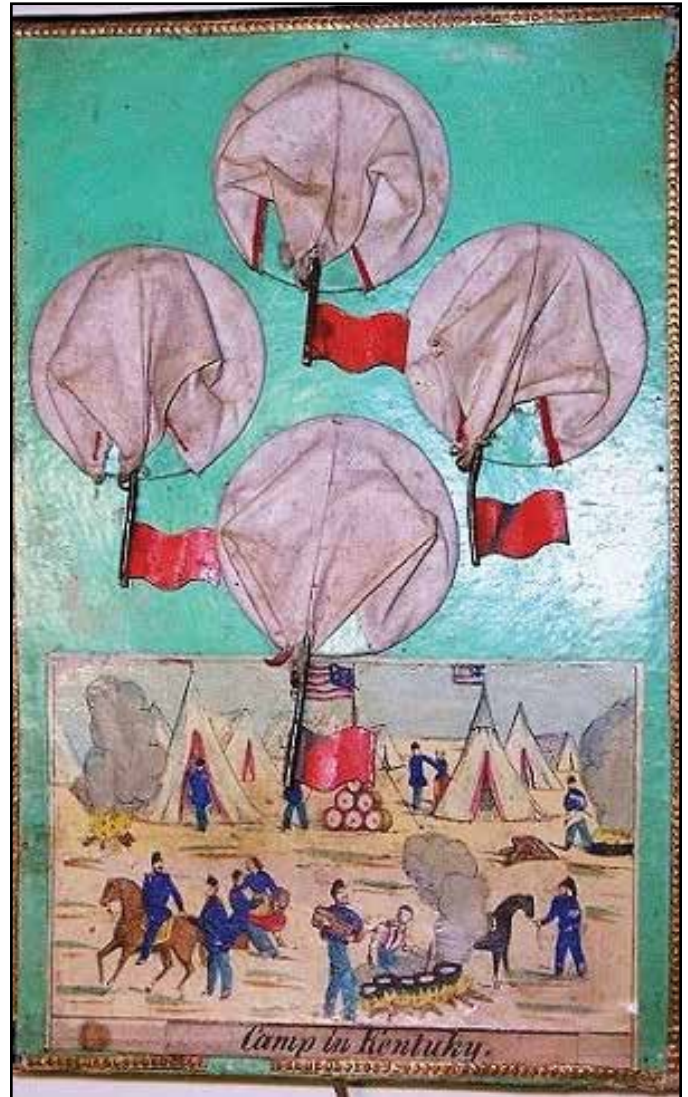
One of the earliest known examples of a German-made American military-themed toy soldier set is quite unique in that it combines a traditional *zinnfiguren* set with the basic sense of movement provided by a mechanical toy. The oversized box top does not lift or slide open but simply provides a surface space for both the label and four permanently attached cloth tents. A small opening located at the



## BEFORE THE TIN ARMY OF THE POTOMAC (Cont.)



The oversized surface of the *Camp in Kentucky* box with the tents in raised position (above) and in lowered position (right).



front side of the box provides just enough space for a much smaller box containing the actual figures to slide in and out and a short length of silk ribbon which operates a pull-tab device used to raise and lower the tents. The unmarked label displays a rather primitive hand colored illustration of a mid-19th century American military encampment with a banner which reads *Camp in Kentucky*. Given the complexity of the box, the addition of the mechanical pull mechanism and the extra time required for final assembly, the set must have been costly to produce and expensive to buy.

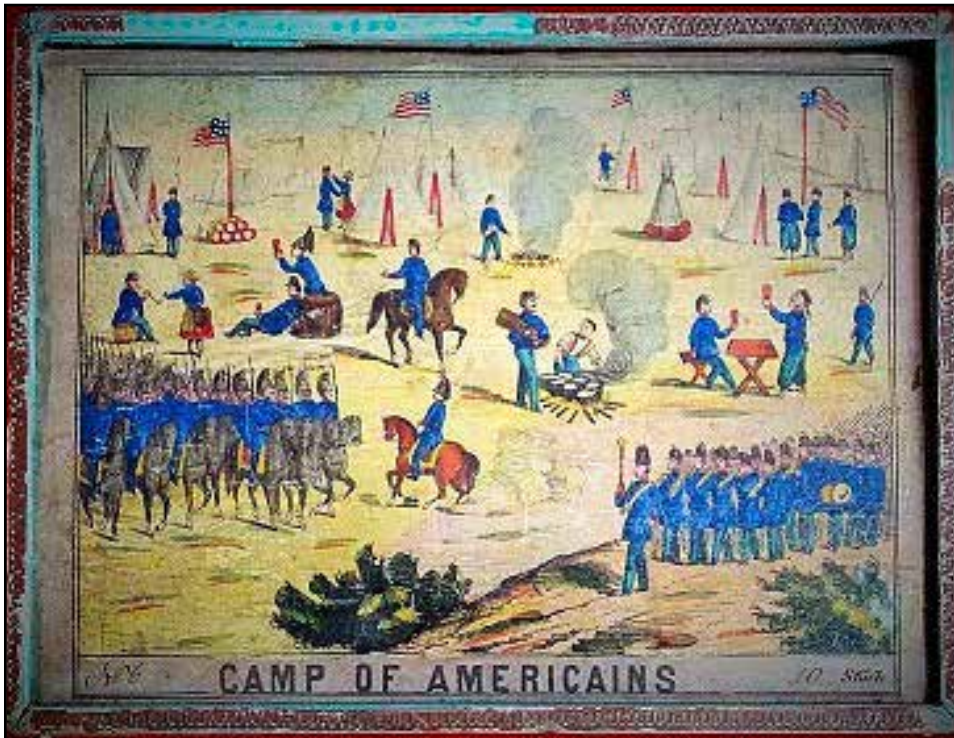
What exactly does the *Camp in Kentucky* set represent? Historic records indicate that such an encampment occurred in Kentucky during the Mexican-American War (1846-1848). On May 13, 1846, President James K. Polk issued a call for 50,000 volunteer soldiers to supplement the existing American military forces for the newly declared war with Mexico. Individual states and territories were each assigned a volunteer quota "so as to make each feel an interest in the war."<sup>7</sup> The volunteers from Kentucky first gathered at Louisville where they were equipped, organized into two companies of mounted infantry and after two weeks of military training were provided with a small Bible before departing camp. Kentucky

provided over 2,500 such volunteers during the war. It is very likely that similar sets representing camps held in other states were also produced. The set was likely produced circa 1848-1850 by an undetermined maker.

A second American military encampment set of a similar vintage was discovered in an image archive posted on the website of an antique toy shop located in Amsterdam.<sup>8</sup> The set is packaged in a more traditional paper covered, slide topped wooden box displaying a similar hand colored lithographed label picturing a 19th century American Army encampment along with a banner which reads *Camp of Americans*. Although the label bears no maker's mark it does provide information regarding the set's configuration and its contents (30 pieces) which indicates that it was produced in several variations. As with the



## BEFORE THE TIN ARMY OF THE POTOMAC (Cont.)



(left) The box label from the *Camp of Americains* set, circa 1860's.



Detail of some of the surviving 30mm figures from the *Kentucky* set. Note the difference in uniform styles depicted in the two sets.

*Kentucky* set, the figures are involved in a variety of routine camp activities but unlike the figures found in the *Kentucky* set, the figures contained in the *Americains* set are clearly depicted in pre-Civil War American military uniforms. The set represents an American Army encampment during the Mexican-American War, circa 1860's.

An additional example of an early German-made, American military-themed tin soldiers consists of nine beautifully engraved 70 mm. flat figures which depict the American Army immediately prior to the Civil War was recently discovered at a local antique show. The figures are presented in regulation full dress uniforms, complete with the knee-length single-breasted frock coats and the black model 1858 "Hardee" hats. Based on their size, obvious age, the high quality of engraving and the style of the uniform represented, the figures likely were produced shortly before or immediately after the beginning of the American Civil War, circa 1860-1861.

While it is clear that a variety of American-themed sets of tin soldiers were available in the United States prior to the Civil War, the description of the original Tin Army of the Potomac includes figures representing foreign armies such as those found in the *Inkjermer* set. The set represents one of the six major battles fought during the Siege of

Sevastopol, the first military campaign in which newspaper correspondents used the electronic telegraph to transmit their reports directly from the field back to their home office. In Sept. 1854, *The Times* (of London) dispatched W.H. Russell to the Crimea to report on the British Army during the Siege of Sevastopol. His reports often focused on the daily concerns of the common soldier providing his readers with a unique and uncensored account of the realities of modern warfare. Although both British military and government officials viewed Russell as "a miserable scribbler despoiling the country,"<sup>9</sup> a rapidly growing number of fascinated and often outraged readers eagerly awaited his next installment. Russell's reports were reprinted in newspapers around the world and the Siege of Sevastopol quickly became a topic of international interest.

This was especially true for the United States where much of the population maintained strong ties with family and friends living in Europe and Asia. For the German toy soldier industry increased American interest in a military campaign being waged by foreign nations on another continent represented an opportunity to expand export sales to the United States. A set such as *The Battle of Inkjermer* which would have once been limited for export to the victorious nation(s) could now be offered to potential buyers throughout America.



## BEFORE THE TIN ARMY OF THE POTOMAC (Cont.)

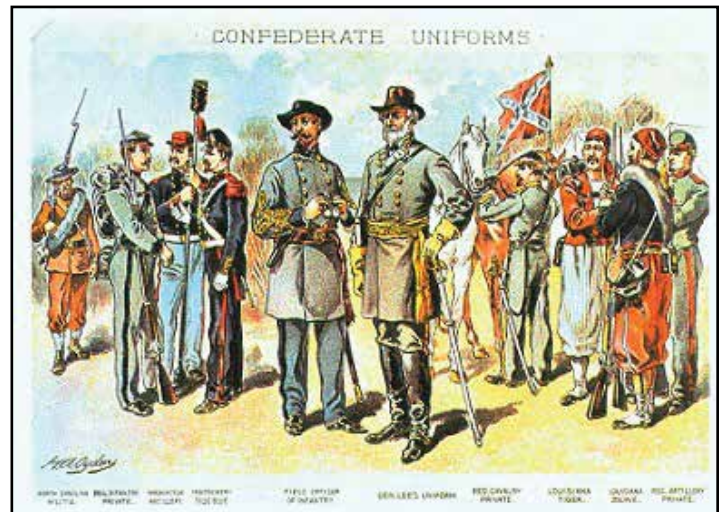


Detailed images showing the front (L) & back (R) of the previously-seen flat 70mm United States Army figures, circa 1860-1865.

The German toy soldier industry responded by producing numerous sets depicting every battle that was fought during the campaign. The firm of Gerhard Sohlke even produced an original board game titled *The Siege of Sebastopol*, described as “a particularly exciting and entertaining (game) that one cannot guess who will win and who will lose (until) the last moment.”<sup>10</sup>

What would a Civil War era Tin Army of the Potomac have looked like? Probably much the same as the one described by Mr. Downes with two major exceptions. The majority of the figures used to assemble the army would have been flats. Semi-round figures were first produced in Germany around 1850 and likely would also have been available in the United States prior to the Civil War. We can also be relatively sure that Civil War era Tin Army of the Potomac would have included figures specially designed to depict the distinctive style

of uniform worn by the French Zouaves. France first deployed its famous Zouave regiments at the Battle of Alma, the first of the six major battles fought during the Siege of Sevastopol. They quickly impressed a young American Army military observer named Captain George McClellan who later referred to them as “The finest light infantry that Europe can produce.”<sup>11</sup> Newspaper accounts of their fighting ferocity and battlefield illustrations depicting their unique and colorful uniforms quickly brought them world-wide fame. Images of the heroic French Zouaves inspired many local American militia companies to adapt the brightly colored short cutaway jackets, baggy trousers, turbans and sashes as their standard militia uniforms. During the American Civil War, both sides deployed regiments of Zouaves on the battlefield. The firm of J.C. Allgeyer produced several sets depicting both *Nordstaaten* (Northern States) and *Sudstaaten* (Southern States) infantry in



Two 1890 prints by H.A. Ogden titled *United States Uniforms in the Civil War* and *Confederate Uniforms*. Both sides deployed Zouave regiments during the conflict. (Public Domain, Project Gutenberg).

## BEFORE THE TIN ARMY OF THE POTOMAC (Cont.)



The cover of the 1908 novel *The Toy Shop* showing President Abraham Lincoln examining a group of solid cast cavalry figures. Lincoln is known to have occasionally visited a small toy shop located near the White House and purchased toy soldiers for his youngest son, Tad. Based on the few surviving figures, Tad Lincoln's toy soldiers were actually small, brightly painted figures hand-carved from wood. (Public Domain, Google-digitized)



Zouaves were made in many styles ranging from the rather crude early 30mm semi-round figures pictured above to the beautifully engraved early 55mm flats shown below., circa 1860's (Undetermined makers)



*Zuavenuniform* with castings originally made for earlier sets depicting the battles fought during the Siege of Sevastopol.

It would appear that an individual attempting to assemble a Civil War era version of the Tin Army of the Potomac had access to everything needed except for the three-dimensional solid-cast figures which were not introduced until around 1865. The fact that the firm of Gebruder Heinrich was awarded a gold medal at the 1869 Wittenberg Commercial and Industrial Arts Exhibition for the production of "unsurpassed tin soldiers which were not smooth pressed but physically full"<sup>12</sup> would also indicate that production of solid-cast figures was not yet widespread. During the decades following the American Civil War huge quantities of German-made, American-themed sets of toy soldiers in all manner of sizes and styles were exported to the United States.

<sup>1</sup> Downes, William Howe, *The Tin Army of the Potomac: or, A Kindergarten of War*. (S.E. Cassino, Boston, 1888) [www.hathitrust.org](http://www.hathitrust.org)

<sup>2</sup> Ibid

<sup>3</sup> Illustrious Wargamers: William & Walter Downes. [www.crossfirearmersfoort.wordpress.com](http://www.crossfirearmersfoort.wordpress.com)

<sup>4</sup> Johnson, Peter. The Heyde Maze: Dumplings & Dragons *Old Toy Soldier Newsletter* (Vol. 7, No. 2 April, 1983)

<sup>5</sup> [www.zinnfiguren-bleifiguren.com](http://www.zinnfiguren-bleifiguren.com)

<sup>6</sup> Sulzer, Alfred R., *Spielzeugfiguren des Ersten und Zweiten Empire*. (Arenenberg, 1996) pp. 41-43

<sup>7</sup> Winders, Richard Bruce *Polk's Army, the American Military Experience in the Mexican War* (Texas University Press, College Station, 1997) p.69

<sup>8</sup> Photos courtesy of Claarje Pennink ([www.antiquetoys.nl](http://www.antiquetoys.nl))

<sup>9</sup> [www.spartacus-educational.com/WARcrimean.htm](http://www.spartacus-educational.com/WARcrimean.htm)

<sup>10</sup> [www.zinnfiguren-bleifiguren.com](http://www.zinnfiguren-bleifiguren.com)


<sup>11</sup> [www.5nyzouave.org](http://www.5nyzouave.org)

<sup>12</sup> [www.zinnfiguren-bleifiguren.com](http://www.zinnfiguren-bleifiguren.com)





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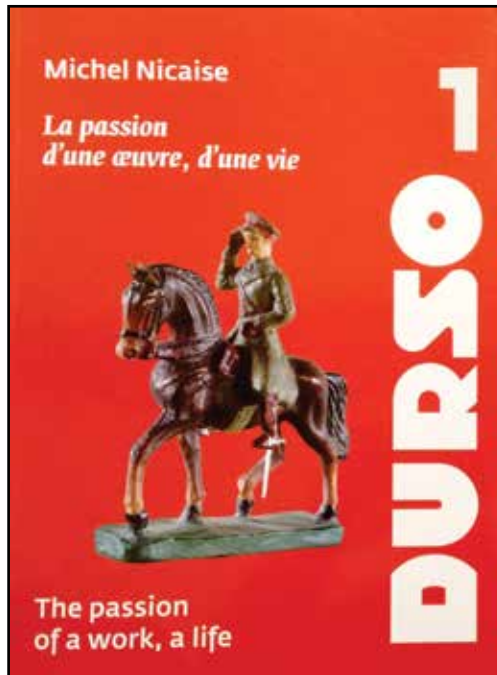


# BOOK REVIEW

## DURSO Volume 1 and 2

By Michel Nicaise

Reviewed by Russ Bednarek



The evolution of toy soldiers books has taken a course parallel to its subject matter. When many of us first began to collect toy soldiers there were literally no reference materials available. Knowledge was passed on via other collectors, with the accuracy of the information many times being subjective and inaccurate. Generally the format of toy soldier books at this time was short on text with some pictures of toy soldiers with the exception being John G. Garratt's superb, *The World Encyclopedia of Model Soldiers*, (1971). This trend continued until Henry I. Kurtz and Burt R. Ehrlich wrote, *The Art of the Toy Soldier* in 1987. With its oversized format, excellent pictures and descriptive text on glossy paper, *The Art of the Toy Soldier* was like a toy soldier book on steroids. The bar for toy soldiers books had been raised to a new level and collectors wondered what was next. The result was a wave of books dealing with a very narrow subject explored in great depth. The early 1990's were marked by such classics as; Norman Joplin's, *The Great Book of Hollow-Cast Figures*, (1993), James Opie's, *The Great Book of Britains*, (1993), Christian Blondieau's, *Soldats de Plomb & Figures Civiles*, (1993), and Edward Ryan's, *Paper Soldiers*, (1995). What made these titles landmark works was a previously unknown level of exhaustive research and information presented to the reader supported by extensive photographs and text. The next level of toy soldiers books has now evolved into

extremely tight, almost niche-like nature. I've been privileged to review many of these works for *Old Toy Soldier*. It appears the bar has been raised again, this time by Belgian author/collector Michel Nicaise and his 4 volume examination of Durso composition figures.

The Durso company was founded in 1938 by Michel Klimov and began production in Liege, Belgium. During its fifty years of existence, Durso created composition figures representing Belgian, French, German, Italian, Russian, American and Scot armies of the 20th century. They also created numerous civilian, historical, and folklore pieces. Unlike their German competitors, who used a mixture of sawdust and glue for their figures, the Durso recipe named "Dursolite" was a combination of ground pasteboard, chalk, Kaolin and linseed oil. An iron armature was inserted during the filling of the two half molds prior to pressing. Durso figures were more expensive and painted to a higher standard than their German counterparts. Surprisingly, the height of Durso's production was 1943 when they employed 60 workers. The reason Durso was allowed to continue production during the German occupation of Belgium was probably due to the fact that Klimov was of Latvian descent, Latvia being a German ally at the time. Klimov did produce a figure of Hitler, but when this was brought to the attention of the

## BOOK REVIEW (Cont.)

Gestapo, Klimov was forbidden to produce pieces of any German political figures. Durso did survive and thrive during World War II, but the late 1950's to the mid 1960's saw a large downturn in production. As was typical of most toy soldier manufacturers of the period, Durso was greatly impacted by the use of plastic. After losing several large accounts and the death of its salesman, Durso turned to making large figures of Belgian folklore, the target customer being tourists. The early 1970's saw production geared towards collectors and included pieces made by Klimov that were different than previous production. These differences were a greater attention to detail of the uniforms, the figures were made outside the Durso facility, and the painting detail was of a better quality. Production ceased in 1988 and in 2004 Klimov died at age 98.

Perhaps no one is more qualified to tell the story of the Durso company and its founder Michel Klimov than author Michel Nicaise. From 1965-1972 Nicaise along with his two brothers frequently visited Klimov at the Durso factory. During these visits the brothers would explore the factory resulting in the discovery of several rare pieces. Nicaise and his brothers also were in frequent communication with Klimov via their written inquiries regarding new production or availability of figures. The brothers had cultivated such a close relationship with Klimov that they were able to place special orders for figures. In 1967 Nicaise was one of several collectors who lent rediscovered molds from their private collections to Klimov so a new series of highly painted figures could be produced. Throughout all four volumes there are pictures that Nicaise took inside the factory, giving readers a truly rare and unique look inside the Durso facility. These photos taken in 1965-1967 are published for the first time.

Volume one of *Durso* begins with Nicaise's history of the company, complete with its four distinct periods of production, and versions of Durso production; Alma and Durso-Priba. The next forty-five pages supplemented with sixty-four photographs are devoted to the examination of Durso figure bases, a critical component of identifying the date of production for Durso figures. The remaining chapters explore and examine Durso production of figures representing the Belgian Army of 1940, 1945, 1955, sailors, honor guards, police and the gendarmery. An invaluable four page appendix of the 1939 price list completes volume one.

In volume two, Nicaise explores the French Army of 1918-1935, 1935-1940, and 1945. Subsequent chapters are devoted to French sailors and alpine troops, as well as the Italian, German, British, Scottish and Colonial Africa troops. A most interesting twelve page appendix closes out volume two. The appendix includes sketches the Nicaise brothers made for their 1966-67 order for French and Belgian figures in sky blue and khaki. Four letters from the Durso factory in response to inquiries made by Nicaise are included along with entire 1940 pricelist.

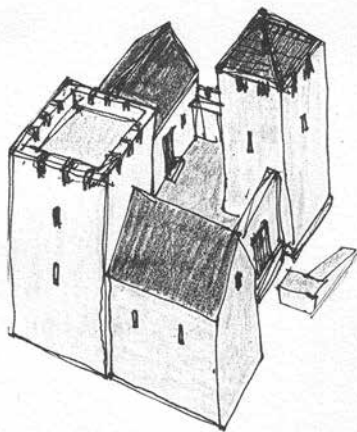
The layout for each volume is definitely user friendly. The bi-lingual text, (French/English), for the most part appears on the same page, with the English text appearing in a shaded column. When describing the Durso figures, a page number is given followed by the catalogue number. Next is the photograph number and then a brief description of the piece. Except for the photographs from Nicaise's collection, all the pictures of Durso items are in color. There is an excellent mix of standard sized pictures and several great close up photographs utilizing an entire page. The clarity of the photos is top notch throughout both volumes. Nicaise prevents the descriptive text from being too predictable by interspersing antidotes regarding his collecting and exploring the Durso facility. Both volumes have a heavy soft cover with text and pictures sharing the large 8"x 12" glossy pages. Each volume is in excess of 230 pages and 200 color photographs. Monsieur Nicaise has truly put his heart and soul into both volumes, and you will sense the author's commitment to telling the Durso story as you flip through the books. If you are a Durso collector, you will greatly increase your collecting knowledge by obtaining all four volumes. Casual composition collectors will also benefit from adding these four outstanding works to their collection.

Reviews of volumes 3 and 4 will appear in a future issue of *Old Toy Soldier*. Thank you to Monsieur Nicaise who generously supplied all four volumes of *Durso* for review.





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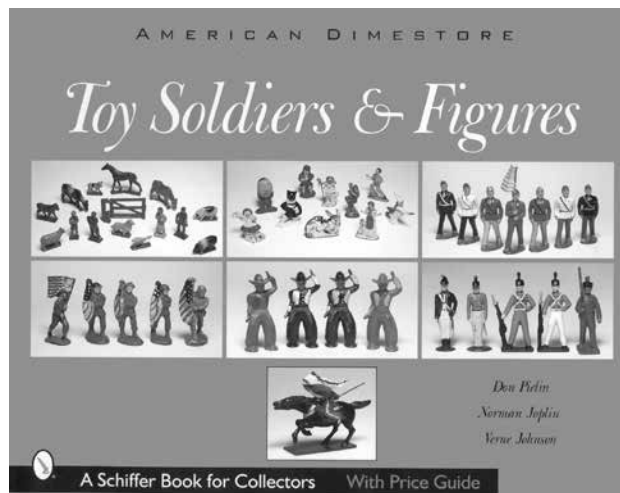
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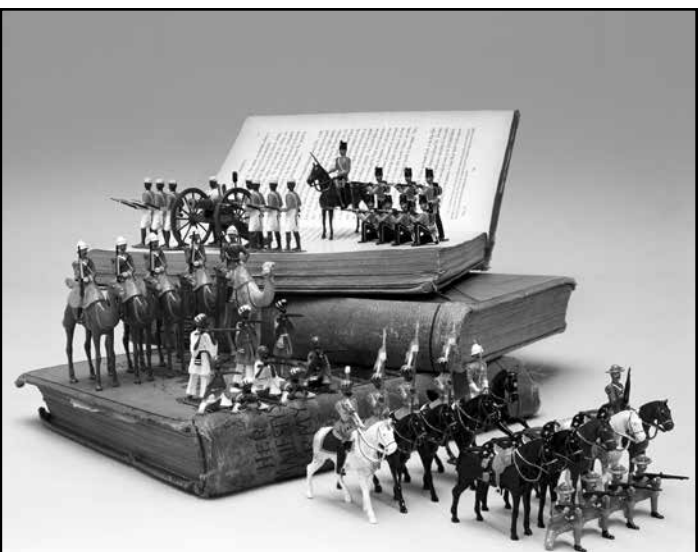
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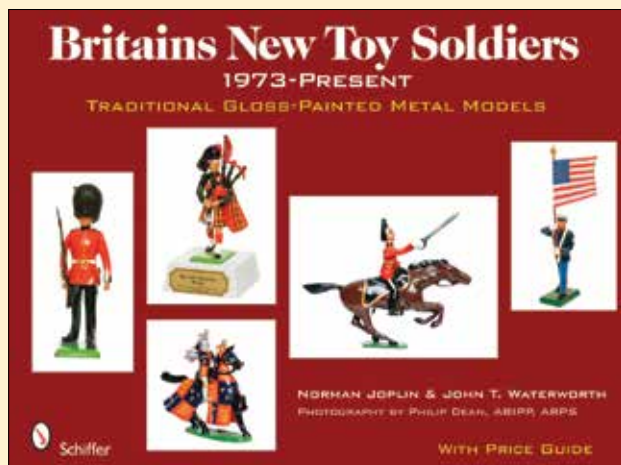
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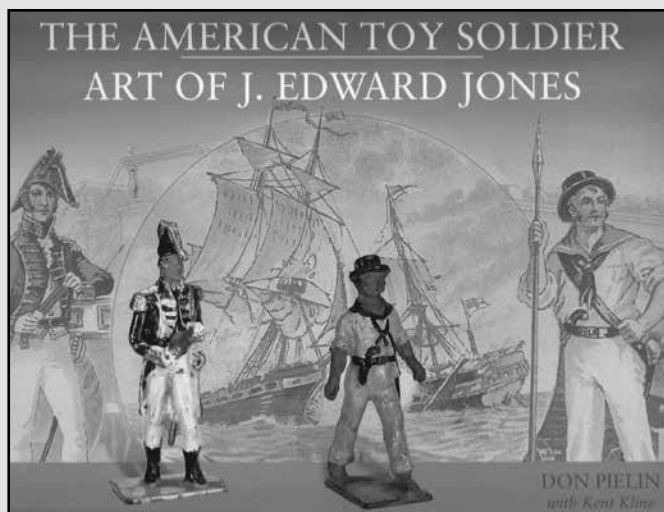


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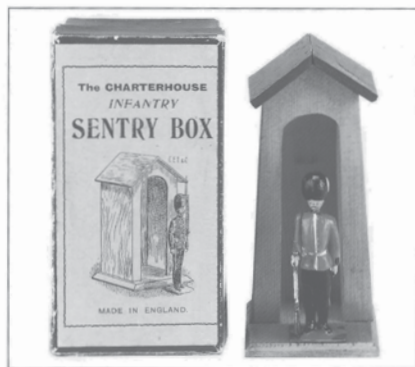


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While Britains are included to a certain extent the main focus is on the other makers of the period. Volume 2 which will be available in 2012 will concentrate solely on Britains advertisements of the same period and beyond.

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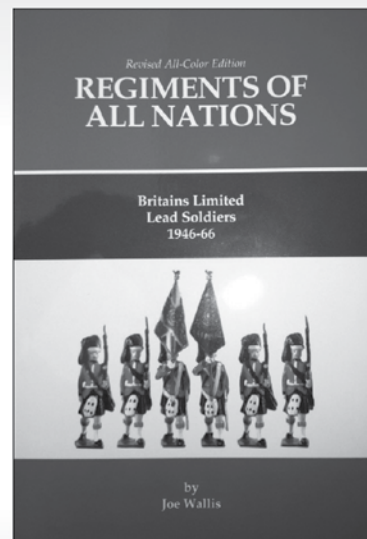
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# SMALL WARRIORS RECREATE BIG BATTLES AT PENNSYLVANIA TOY SOLDIER MUSEUM

*By Henry I. Kurtz*



**Jim Hillestad with the late Malcolm Forbes, a dedicated toy soldier collector**

As a youngster, Jim Hillestad received as a gift from his mother a set of Britains Arabs of the Desert on horses. The set, acquired at F. A. O. Schwarz in New York, was a reward for good behavior during a doctor's visit. That set was the beginning of a lifelong fascination with toy and miniature soldiers. Today Hillestad commands an army of 35,000 thumb-size warriors and Lilliputian civilians while presiding over one of the most unique museums in the United States. Founded in 1991, The Toy Soldier Museum is nestled amid pine trees near the town of Cresco, Pennsylvania, roughly a two-hour drive from either New York City or Philadelphia.

Entering the simple but efficiently laid out two-storey structure, one is confronted by eye-popping scenes of martial pageantry and raging battles, which are contained in more than 30 illuminated glass display cases spread out over 3,000 feet of floor space. Military history buffs are sure to be enthralled by the stunning dioramas of historical battles. Here one can see American and British troops clashing at Yorktown, and Ulysses Grant and his Union Army assaulting Vicksburg. One especially striking display depicts a column of Indian Army troops making its way through the Malakand Pass to rescue the garrison of a beleaguered British outpost during the Chitral campaign of 1895.



**One of the first floor galleries at the Toy Soldier Museum**



**A view of the interior of the Toy Soldier Museum**



**The Fight in the Wheatfield, Gettysburg, July 2, 1863**



# SMALL WARRIORS RECREATE BIG BATTLES AT PENNSYLVANIA TOY SOLDIER MUSEUM (Cont.)

Recently, to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the Battle of Gettysburg (July 1 through July 3, 1863), Hillestad created four dioramas depicting specific events during the battle. They include Union General John Buford's defense of the Chambersburg Pike on the first day; the fight in the Wheatfield on the second day; and Pickett's Charge on the third day. The dioramas, made up mainly of W. Britain contemporary figures, are each four feet by eight feet in size, are currently on loan to the National Civil War Museum in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

The museum's dioramas and displays, it should be noted, are not limited to battles. There are scenes of civilian life, including London's Grovesnor Square in the early 1900's and a magnificent 28-foot long Delhi Durbar display, made up mainly of figures by the English firm of Marlborough Ltd., with all manner of Indian troops and civilian onlookers—nearly 1,000 figures in all. A circus display is complete with sound effects, flashing lights and animals, trainers and clowns.

Although most of the figures in the displays are by contemporary manufacturers such as Trophy, Marlborough, Alymer, King and Country and more than 35 others, there are also toy soldiers by the old traditional companies such as C. B. G. Mignot, Britains Ltd, and Heinrichsen, to name a few. One case is devoted to Hillestad's childhood collection of mainly Britains Ltd toy soldiers and contains the last surviving figure from that original set of Arabs purchased in 1949.

Alongside the soldiers are fine examples of authentic military uniforms, drums, medals, swords and numerous other artifacts. Because the museum is run for serious collectors, admission is by appointment. For information about visiting the museum, you can access the museum's website at [www.the-toy-soldier.com](http://www.the-toy-soldier.com) or telephone (570) 629-7227.

Henry I. Kurtz is the author of "The Art of the Toy Soldier," and a dealer and collector of toy and model soldiers.



Pickett's Charge, July 3, 1863



Some of the period uniforms and regimental drums on display at the Toy Soldier Museum



28mm Flat Figures by the German maker Heinrich, circa 1890's



Britains 11th Hussars Set 12, circa 1895  
Royal Welsh Fusiliers Set 74, 1897



Britains 5th Lancers Set #23, 1894  
King's Royal Rifle Corps, Set 98, 1899

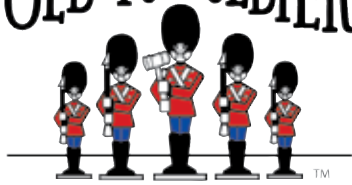


A trooper of the 11th Hussars by Britains Ltd,  
circa 1895



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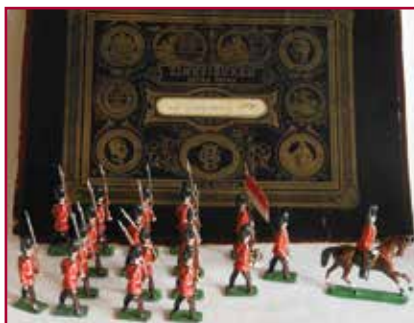
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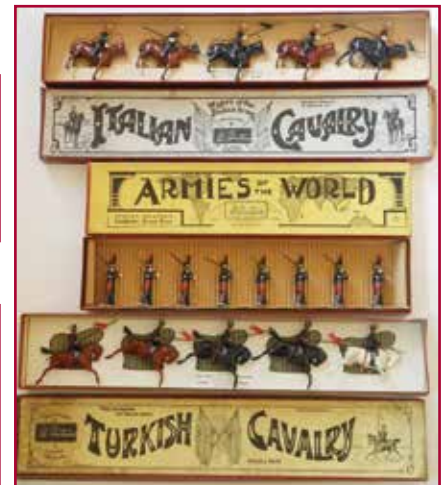
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Timpo Uncle Mistletoe and Aunt Hilly



Britains Village Idiots



Britains Military



# AUCTION PREVIEW (Cont.)



Britains Bikanir Camel Corps



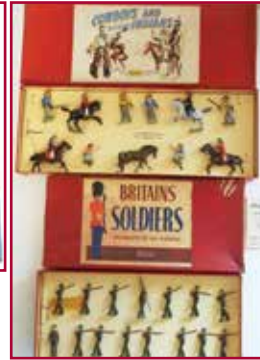
Britains US Marines in Service Dress



Britains South African Mounted Cavalry



Britains Military



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Minikin Spirit of 76



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# AUCTION PREVIEW (Cont.)



Britains Boer Infantry



Timpo Zoo



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# SHOW REPORT

## Birmingham *By Rob Wilson*

The Birmingham Central Toy Soldier Fair took place at Edgbaston Cricket ground on the 12th of October 2014. This was a new venue, easy to get to, with plenty of free parking.

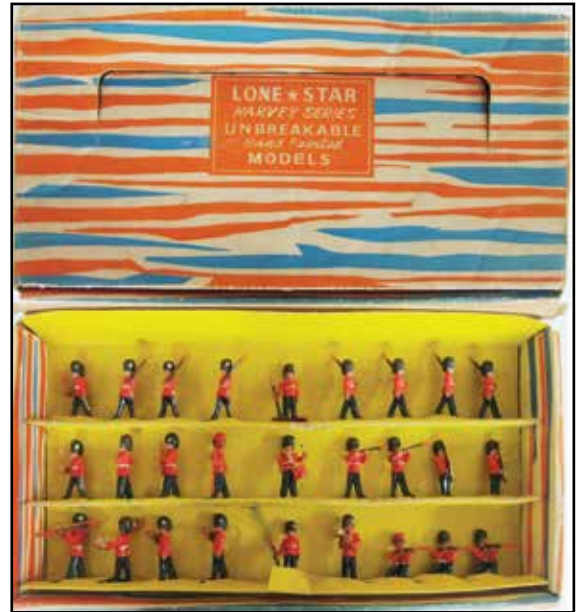
Now under new management, the show continues the Tradition established by Dave McKenna, who ran the show successfully for over 20 years. Failure to agree on a viable fee for the hall at the old venue led Dave to call a halt and the 2014 show was initially cancelled. Enter stage right a knight in shining armour in the shape of Patrick Adams of the British Toy Soldier Company. Patrick managed to get sponsorship from Britains, and with the support of other dealers he was proudly able to announce that the show would continue in its new home earlier this year. With around 50, mainly UK based dealers, many with multiple tables, there was plenty to see in this splendid new venue.

The main focus remains on plastics as opposed to metal, but many dealers with vintage lead figures and other items turned up to support the event. In addition there was a good turnout of modern manufacturers. The latter included W Britain who sponsored the event via the William Britain Collectors Club. Further support came from King & Country with multiple tables.

In addition to these two “big beasts”, the British Toy Soldier Company was one of a number of other New Toy soldier manufacturers present, presenting it's range of troops in full dress and service order.

Dealers in British and other plastic figures were also very well represented, with many rare and desirable items on their tables. A Lone Star Harvey series Guards

display caught my eye. I have always been fascinated by the switch from lead to plastic and this set represents a very early attempt by Lone Star to move from lead into flexible plastic, but using the same basic moulds developed for their hollowcast lead figures.



There were plenty of lead figures here too, including these two Courtenay knights, pictured in front of a rare card castle. The latter folds flat and is of the same type as often seen on pop-up card books.

Next dates, etc: Details are not currently available but contact details are given below.

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# SHOW REPORT

## London – Old Toy Soldier and Figure Show (UK)

By Rob Wilson

The latest incarnation of “Norman Joplin’s Old Toy Soldier Show” was held at the slightly earlier than usual date, on the 30th of August, at the usual venue (the Holiday Inn, Bloomsbury, Coram Street, London, WC1N 1HT). This is a dateline event for old toy soldiers and figures produced before 1980.

The earlier date reflected problems in booking the venue for the normal early September weekend. This obviously had an impact on both the number of dealers present, as well as the numbers of the public through the door (many were still in the middle of their summer vacations). Despite that, there was a reasonable turnout and all of the people I spoke with were having a great time.

Despite the timing problems a number of foreign dealers were present, including representatives from France, Germany, Luxembourg and the USA.

While much smaller than the OTS event in Chicago, this is still a good place to find rare and unusual items, as well as a wide range of sets and odds to fill all those gaps in the collection. The pictures illustrate just a couple of the items that caught my eye.

Francois Beaumont the Parisian dealer brought across some delightful examples of CGB boxed display sets. The one shown here depicts Napoleon in camp with his staff officers watching a march past of Imperial Guards and other regiments. The set dates from the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries (period Gerbau, with *terrace vertes* (green painted) bases). While not usually attracted to figures of the Napoleonic period, this large boxed display is just so typical of CBG’s output I could not resist it – delightful!

Heyde made large scale figures as souvenirs as well as Toys. The figure shown in the second picture was probably intended as an ornament rather than a Toy. However, Heyde did make Toy soldiers in this large scale (the figure measures 120 mm or 4inches from

the top of his bare head to toe). It is magnificently sculptured after the famous engraving by Richard Caton Woodville. This illustrated a character in an 1899 poem by Rudyard Kipling “the absent minded beggar”. It depicts an ordinary British infantryman associated with the siege of Ladysmith in the Boer War.

These were just two examples amongst the many thousands of other figures by British as well as German, French and other manufacturers on display at the show. These covered the full range of materials (lead, composition and plastic), civilian as well as military. Britains hollowcast probably remains the most common types to be found but there are many others for those looking for something a bit out the ordinary. This show remains one of the best places in the UK to find vintage toy soldiers. I will certainly be heading back next year.



Dates for the show next are yet to be set; for details contact Adrian Little at: [mercatortradingltd@gmail.com](mailto:mercatortradingltd@gmail.com) Telephone +44 (0) 163530535

There are also London based events. In particular, the Toy Soldier Show, London is held in March, June and December of each year at the Business Design Centre 52 Upper Street London N1 0QH. This show caters for both old and new figures. Next date: 6th December 2014. For further details of this event google [thetoysoldiershow.com](http://thetoysoldiershow.com)



# SHOW REPORT

## OLD TOY SOLDIER SHOW CHICAGO PART ONE

*By Norman Joplin*

The 34th Annual Old Toy Soldier Show Chicago is the place to find toy soldier rarities like no other.  
Part two to follow in February 2015 issue.

Filling in the Dimestore Line.



Previously unknown casting of  
Two Gun Cowboy from  
Manoil My Ranch



Original Barclay catalog printing blocks



Historical Miniature  
previously unknown



Clarke Brothers UK (above)  
See *Great Book of Hollow Cast Figures*



A sample box of Horse and Riders containing examples of  
'The Missing Cowboy' by Selwyn Smith



Timpo Carded GI Mortar and Machine Gun Section



# SHOW REPORT (Cont.)



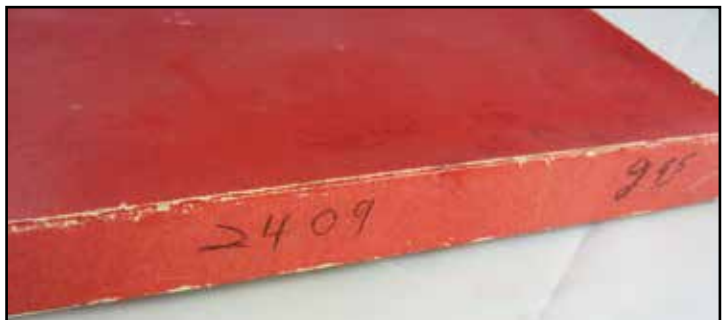
The Zulu (left) a previously unknown hollow cast made in England and (at right) a Reka version marked Japan.



Hans Christian Andersen Flats



Hampton Miniatures Steadfast Tin Soldier and Ballerina



Crescent rare Tea Shop version of the Milk Bar, made for the US market only



Rare White Horse example of side saddle huntswoman by Britains - Ron Kay

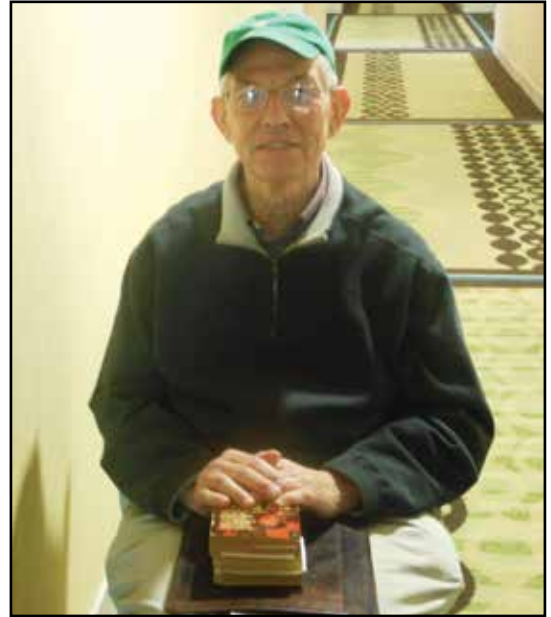


John Jenkins Pigeon Wagon Prize. More information on this in February 2015

# SHOW REPORT (Cont.)

## OLD TOY SOLDIER AUCTIONS THURSDAY REPRODUCTION BRITAINS SET SALE

Everything comes to him who waits. Norman Rodriguez was determined to snag the reproduction Britains Set 131. His long vigil paid off.



Norman waits in line 6 a.m.



Got it! Bellman Dante helps with transportation.



Britains Set 131 reproduction



Sue Joplin prepares Britains reproduction set 131 for shipment from Wisconsin to Chicago.



Other Britains Reproduction Boxes on offer.



# ID MODEL TANK TO “OLD TOY STYLE” A COMMANDANT MINIATURES CONVERSION

*By Ed Poole*

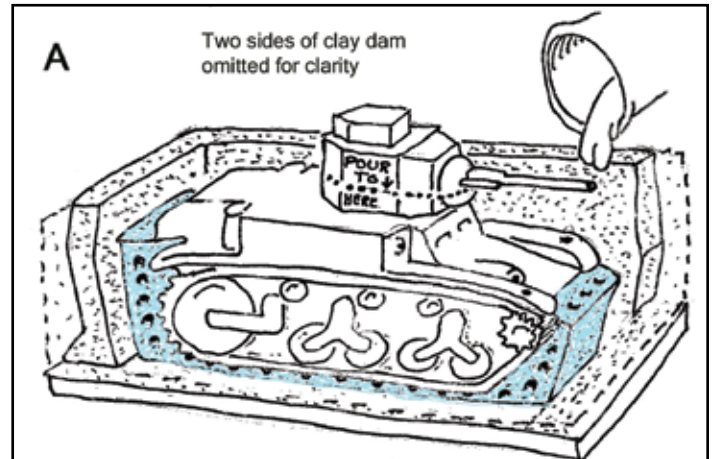
Britains Ltd. and their contemporaries went to war work before they could do any tanks of The Second World War (WWII). Starting in 1981 Commandant Miniatures (CM) started doing some early WWII tanks, based upon converting WWII identification models to old toy soldier style. This is the story of one ID model, the “General Stuart” U.S. M3 Light Tank and its conversion. Implicit in the process is that the original ID model (Photo 1) will not be destroyed or altered in any permanent way, although items such as gun barrels or headlights may be temporarily slipped out if loose.



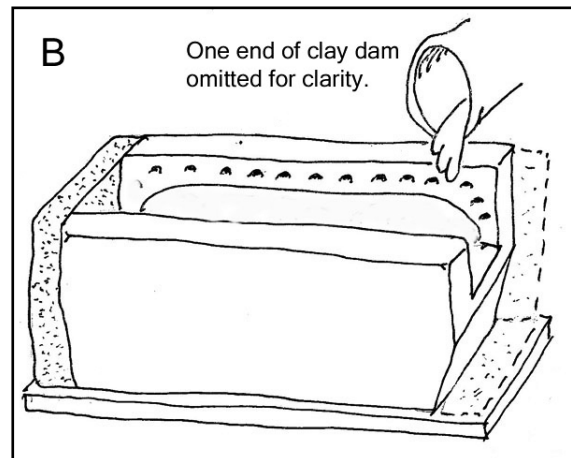
For a start, the hollow hull of the slush-cast metal ID was stuffed with cotton through the steeply ridged opening on its underside (Photo 2). The opening is temporarily closed with sheet styrene plastic held in place with modeling clay around its edges. Next a large clay plug, shown in blue in Diagram A, was fitted between the treads on the underside of the tank. A clay dam was built and the first mold half was poured using a solvent resistant room temperature vulcanizing (RTV) silicone rubber. Note the multiple small indentations in the clay plug; these will make aligning knobs in the completed mold. Note also that



the tank's non-rotating turret is only partly covered. This is to allow a separate rotating turret to be made later.



After overnight hardening, with the ID tank not removed, the mold was turned over and a new clay dam built. A parting agent was applied to keep the new pour from sticking to the first. After that dried, the second mold half was poured (Diagram B). “Poured” should really be in quotation marks since the relatively gooey RTV needed help getting into corners and into details by a small disposable brush- or even a toothpick. Following overnight curing, the flexible mold halves were separated and the ID tank removed.

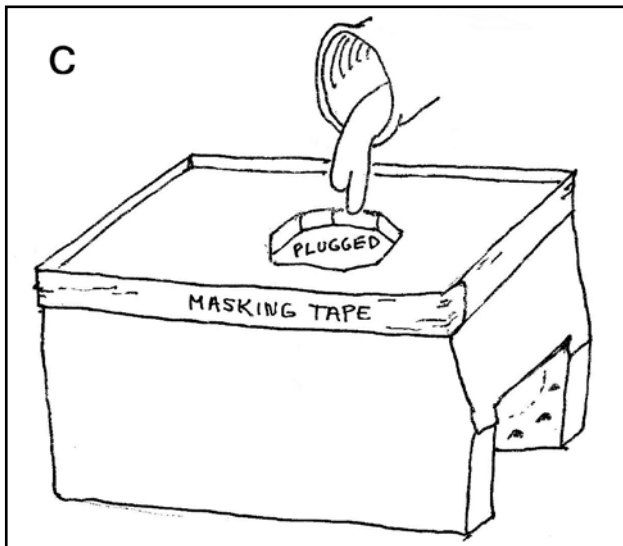


A note at this point for the beginner in pattern and mold-making and casting in metal or resin: there is such a variety of RTVs, resins, parting agents, alloys, tools, etc. that choosing among them can be confusing at start-up. I recommend beginning with a small but complete set of materials with instruction leaflets such as are available from micromark.com. Later, additional help is available online from

# ID MODEL TANK TO "OLD TOY STYLE" A COMMANDANT MINIATURES CONVERSION (Cont.)

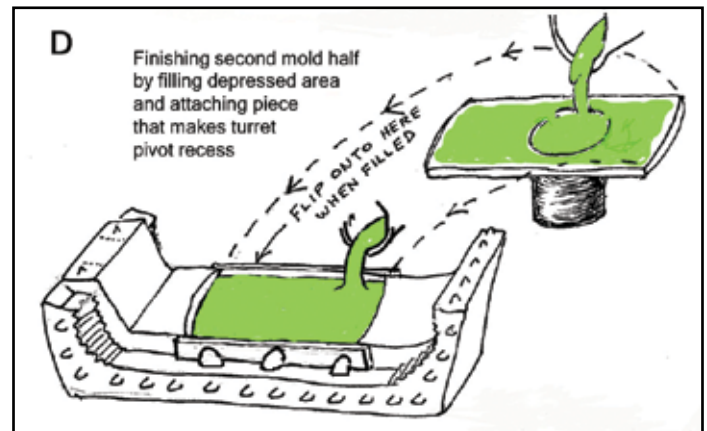
such companies as Dow-Corning (RTVs), Alumilite (resins), Kalmbach Publishing (pattern and mold-making), Oster (metals), etc.

Now the first mold half had to be finished by filling the void left by the protruding turret. A small plate of styrene plastic was placed under the void from inside and held in place with clay. The void was filled with catalyzed RTV and allowed to spread thinly over the surface of the mold, constrained by a dam of fresh blue tape around its edges (Diagram C and Photo 3). Styrene plastic sheets are available at the local hobby store. Non-reactive clay, which will not retard RTV curing, is an art store item (Amaco clay is reliable). Blue masking tape from the hardware store adheres well when fresh.



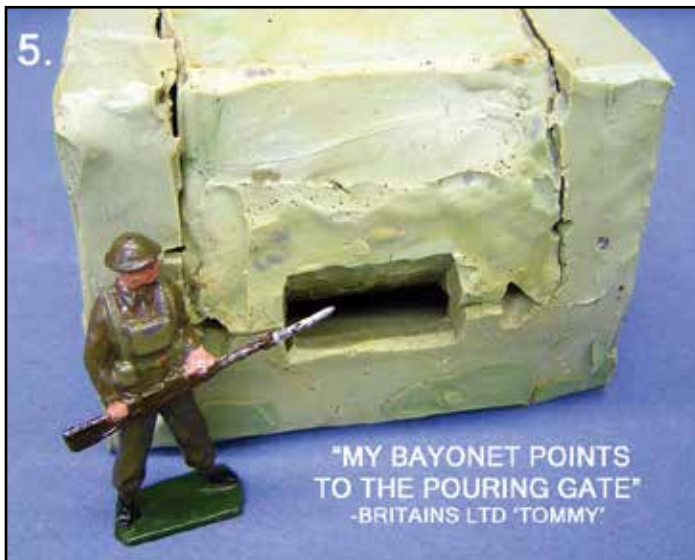
To finish the second mold half, the depressed area left by the bottom opening of the ID model needed filled, at the same time creating a recess for the turret pivot and its retaining sleeve. A styrene plate was trimmed to fit over the depressed area. A circular hole was then cut into this plate in a location centered directly under the turret and large enough to insert a cylindrical plastic container. A container for 35mm camera film was ideal but a prescription container about an inch in diameter should do.

Styrene sheets were fitted to each side of the depressed area and held in place with clay buttresses (See Diagram D). Catalyzed RTV then filled the depression and also the cylindrical container, with some also on the styrene plate, which were then flipped as shown, some inevitable cleanup accomplished and overnight cure allowed. The result is shown in Photo 4. The blue color resulted later when, after many successful castings, some repair was performed with automotive gasket sealant.





## ID MODEL TANK TO "OLD TOY STYLE" A COMMANDANT MINIATURES CONVERSION (Cont.)

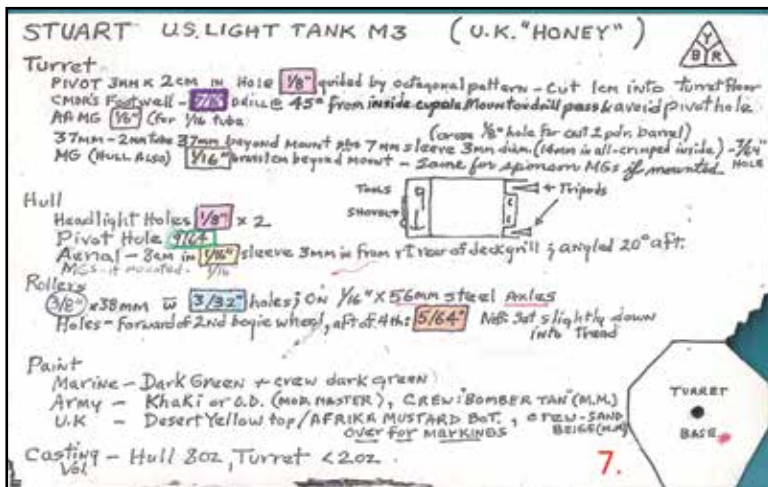


To complete this two-part mold a pouring (sprue) gate was carefully cut so that it enters the small vertical area at the tank rear. After spraying the mold with parting agent, a test pour of resin showed the need for tiny air release channels from the rearmost edges of the tank treads to the mold surface. These can be seen to either side of the ingate on Photo 5A. Hull casting is completed in Photos 5B and 5C. Now onward to make the turret mold: a clay dam was placed around the turret of the ID model, allowing the guns to protrude through and keeping the top and bottom edges as level as possible. The sequence was then as shown in Diagram E. RTV was poured and after overnight cure the mold removed and a resin casting made with silicone rod plugs filling the gun holes. The cupola of this casting was carefully drilled, routed and filed out to make the tank commander's cockpit. That casting was then fitted with gun barrels, placed in yet another clay dam and another one-piece mold poured. The final result is shown in Photo 6. The mold on the left is useful should a straight reproduction of the tank be wanted.



Some finishing of the castings was needed. The turret footwell needed to be drilled, angling slightly forward, for the Commander's legs, as well as a hole drilled for the turret pivot and for the AA machine gun mount. The hull needed a pivot hole and holes for headlights and aerial. To keep track of all the diameters of the various holes and the dimensions of all the small parts, aials, headlights, rollers, etc. each CM model has a "tank card" on file (Photo 7). The backs of the cards typically have data on insignia and other markings.

# ID MODEL TANK TO "OLD TOY STYLE" A COMMANDANT MINIATURES CONVERSION (Cont.)



Headlights were copied in a two-part mold along with other small parts using heat-resistant RTV and were cast in metal. Gun barrels and turret pivots were made from brass tubing and the radio aerial from piano wire, all hobby shop items. Rollers were cut from wood dowels and axle holes cut through them using a small drill press.

The tank commanders were modified in Britains Ltd. style giving them padded and goggled tanker helmets and pistol holsters and either binoculars or a triangular armored division breast patch. Then they were put into two-part RTV molds (Photo 8). Castings were made with lead-free alloy, then spray primed and base coated. Details were painted by hand.

After assembly of the tank, hobby store decals and spray paint were used whenever possible. Hand lettering with waterproof ink was sometimes necessary. When a certain color was not available, the airbrush was hauled out and a custom shade mixed. Not infrequently, for quantity production,

decals have been homemade on the computer. CM M3 models are seen in pre-WWII markings in Photo 9 and in British livery for service with the "Desert Rats" in North Africa during the war in Photo 10.

## REFERENCES

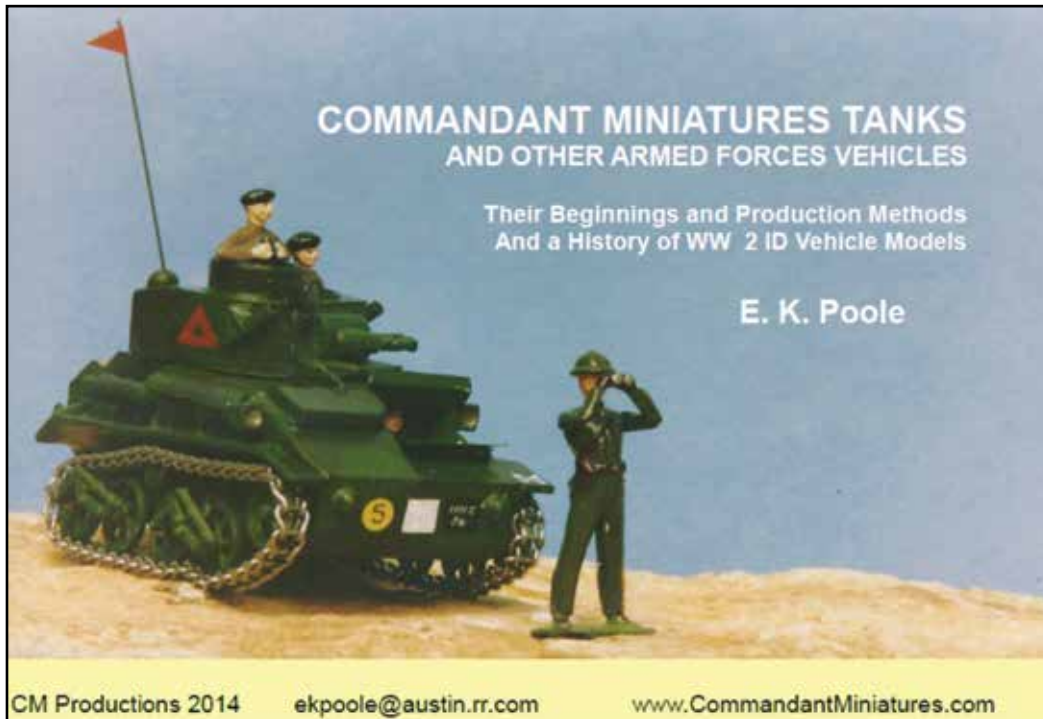
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# CD REVIEW

## Review of Ed Poole's *Commandant Miniatures Story*

*Reviewed by Rob Wilson*



My long running interest in World War II recognition vehicles was piqued by the article by Steve Sommers and Ed Poole in the previous issue of this magazine. That article was based on the forthcoming “e-book” *The Commandant Miniatures Story – A pictorial Survey of WW 2 ID Vehicle Models*. It was therefore a very welcome surprise when the editor of the magazine asked me if I would like to review the book. It is supplied on a computer CD, in pdf format, and comprises some 208 pages, lavishly illustrated with hundreds of photographs.

For all those like myself interested to find a comprehensive check list and illustrations of all the ID models made this is a treasure trove indeed. But the CD provides a lot more than this. In addition to providing a detailed history of the companies that made the models (Framburg, Dale and Comet), it also goes on to describe how Ed Poole (who had been collecting the ID models since the mid-1940s), decided in the early 1980s to start a small business reproducing and converting them to provide mechanical transport to support his Britains Army. It provides many general hints about the problems and pitfalls in setting up and running such a small business, as well as a history of *Commandant Miniatures* in particular.

Ed provides instructions for navigating the document and advises those readers in difficulties to “consult a

grandchild!” The pdf format certainly makes it easy to search the document when reading it electronically. However, this is not so much help if, like me, the reader prefers to work with a printed “hard copy”. Having printed the whole document out in colour it looks splendid. The only minor criticism is that there are no page numbers printed out. Perhaps this could be corrected in a 2nd edition?

As far as this reviewer is concerned the detailed listings, descriptions and photographs of the original WW II AFV ID/recognition models is by itself worth the “price of admission”. This extends well beyond the original Framburg and Comet types to include the “toy” versions with movable turrets, wheels and rollers, as well as the smaller scale Comet types produced up until the 1960s. It also includes a number of other ID types of which I was previously unaware – a true mine of information!

The many other chapters provide a real bonus and a fascinating insight into the rationale for starting a small business linked to Toy Soldiers, and the trials and tribulations of following it through. The book is full of hints about the technical aspects of casting figures and related equipment, in resin as well as metal. It also provides a check list of various other useful skills, including packaging, printing of labels, advertising, cataloguing and website design, that an aspiring

## CD REVIEW (Cont.)

business can learn from. Anyone contemplating setting up such an enterprise can learn a lot from the experiences of Commandant Miniatures.

Ed's business extended well beyond simply reproducing the ID vehicles. As well as producing modified types he also extended the range by converting other types (such as a Renault tank based on an SR souvenir inkwell), and scratch building models (such as the British Vickers Mk VI Light Tank). He also produced crew for these and other vehicles marketed by Dinky, Britains and others. The many illustrations show how the original ID vehicles are greatly enhanced by the addition of a full crew! I will certainly be beating a path to Ed's door to crew up my own fleet of vehicles.

The book also covers the work of other enthusiasts such as John Cloyd who developed a range of larger scale Tanks and other vehicles for use with Dime store size figures.

Turning back to the original ID models, although the book answers many questions it raises a few more. It is clear that intelligence at the time the original ID models were produced was a little sketchy. Some of the types depicted, such as the giant German Heavy Tank NbFz PzKpf VI and the Japanese Heavy Medium Tank, never saw service (or indeed in the latter case may never have existed!).

No examples of French, Russian or Italian types were produced, possibly because the US military never expected to come up against them in action. It is less easy to explain why examples of the German Panzer, Tiger and King Tiger were not produced. US troops would certainly have needed to identify these types pretty quickly once they engaged German forces in North Africa, Italy and France.

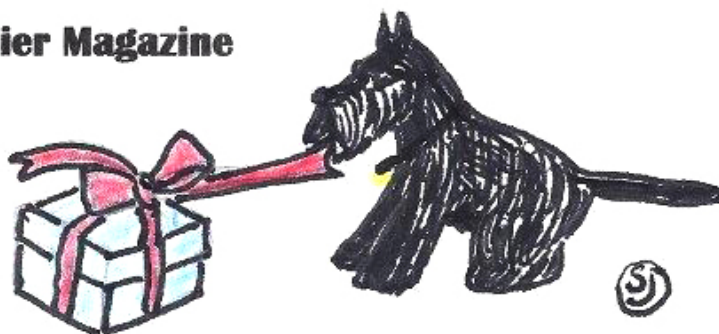
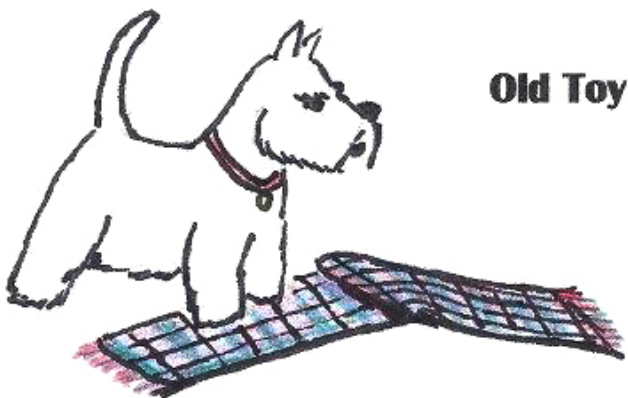
While more of a collection of annotated pictures than a conventional book, this is great fun to read through and very informative. It has been a pleasure to review this book and I recommend it without reservation.



# HAPPY HOLIDAYS !!!

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# FILLING THE LINE

By Rob Wilson

(with thanks to Norman Joplin for input from the Factory Records)

A few new finds at the latest Old Toy Soldier (OTS) show in Chicago and on eBay help to fill in some of the gaps in our knowledge about Britain's sets.

## Set #1754 *British Infantry and Cavalry*

Set #1754 appeared recently on eBay. A type written end label on the box simply describes the contents as "British Infantry & Cavalry". Joe Wallis in his *Armies of the World* book describes it as an uncatalogued set of 14 pieces. The example on eBay helps to flesh this out a little further.

The box itself is a large 4 row display with an art deco Types of the British Army silver on black label. The tie card is in two parts, each similar to those used in the rare *Historical and Collectors* series (sets #1870-1875 and #1886-1891). One card is punched in standard fashion for 5 cavalry figures and 8 infantry. The second has standard punch hole patterns for 4 cavalry plus 9 infantry, in addition to 3 further holes in a rather unusual arrangement compared to the normal equilateral triangle. Assuming that the latter are also for a cavalry figure, this makes altogether a total complement of 10 cavalry and 17 infantry, 27 pieces (rather than the 14 hypothesised by Joe).

The figures accompanying the box were in very good condition, untied but with what appears to be the original string present. However, as the contents are no longer "factory tied" some doubts must remain. They are typical of the kind of single

"types" supplied in the *Historical and Collectors* series and all have matching paint styles, indicating that they were probably produced at around the same time at least. So my first inclination was to think that they might be something similar.

Unfortunately only some of the figures appear to have maintained contact with their original "barracks". These covered a range of regiments, not all of which fall under the heading of *British Infantry and Cavalry*. Present and possibly correct were:

- Royal Horse Guards trooper;
- Royal Scots Grey trooper;
- 21st Lancer trumpeter in review order;
- 4 Guardsmen in action poses (which could be Scots or Grenadier Guards (the plumes are hidden on the eBay picture), standing, kneeling and lying firing); and
- 2 Infantry of the Line marching at the slope in review order, blue spiked helmets and yellow facings (probably intended as Middlesex Regiments, but see below!).

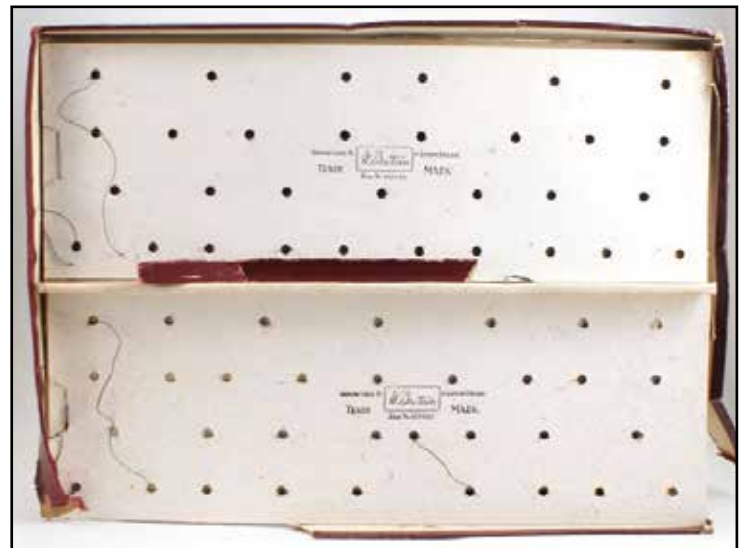
In addition, the eBay lot contained:

- a Royal Canadian Mountie (as supplied in set #1349);
- a US cavalry figure based on the same casting (as supplied in Set #276); and
- a US cavalryman on walking horse wearing a peaked cap.





## FILLING THE LINE (Cont.)



According to the Factory Records set #1754 included the following (including the Britains internal "B" reference numbers used in the Factory Records):

- 1 # 402B Infantry of the Line Officer plain arm
- 7 #27B Middlesex at slope lemon yellow facings.
- 3 # 58B Grenadier Guard Kneeling Firing.
- 3 #921B Grenadier Guards Lying Firing
- 3 # 165B Grenadier Guard Standing Firing
- 1 # 403B Officer 1st Dragoons
- 4 #137B 1st Dragoon Trooper
- 1 #404B Trumpeter 21st lancers
- 4 #43B 21st Lancer Trooper.

27 Pieces in total; Box size 22.

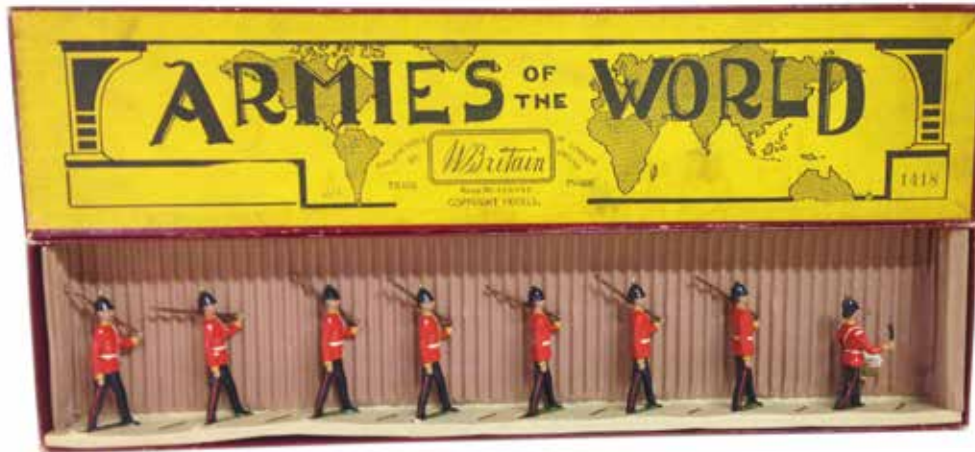
The officer of the first dragoons on the usual rearing horse probably fitted into the "odd" punch hole arrangement noted above.

Essentially this was a combination of standard set #31, set #76, set #100 and set # 1283 (the latter less one standing firing figure (from 1938 this set was Grenadier rather than Coldstream Guards)).

### Sets #1418 and #1421

The next two sets were discovered in a large collection of Britains dating from the late 1930s to the early 1940s (the Lyle Thorborn collection). While they are mentioned in the factory records and in Joe Wallis's *Armies of the World* book, they have previously not been photographed and the detailed composition was uncertain. The sets which emerged at the OTS show help to confirm the details.

## FILLING THE LINE (Cont.)

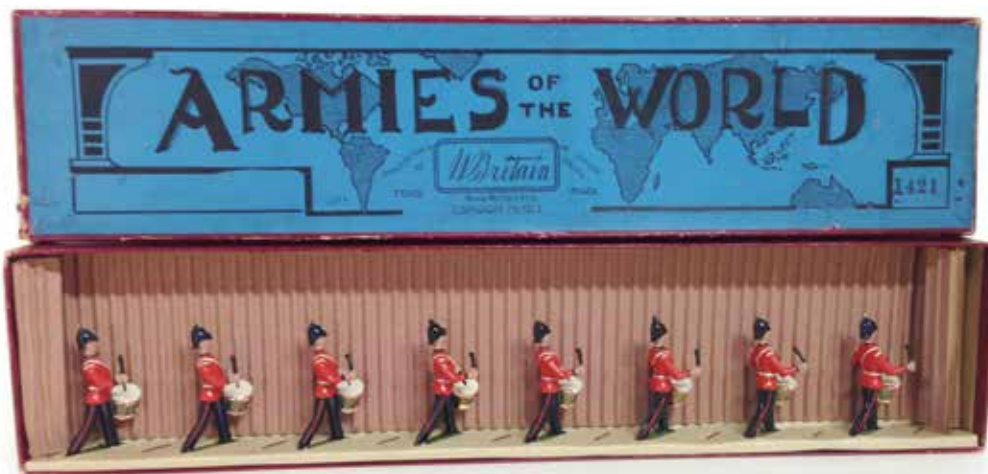


*Set #1418 Line infantry*

This set contains 7 men marching at the slope, with boy side drummer, (no officer). They are in review order, blue spiked helmets, yellow facings. In principle, they could be Middlesex Regiment (as depicted by Britains in Set #76), or one of many other British Regiments with similar Uniforms (Border Regiment, Hampshire Regiment, Suffolk Regiment, Royal Norfolk Regiment, *inter alia*). Joe Wallis in his *Armies of the World* book plumps for the Middlesex Regiment.

This is consistent with information from the factory records, where the set is described as containing 7 line infantry marching at the slope (Britain's internal reference number #27B and 1 side drummer (#344B).

They are contained in an *Armies of the World* box with yellow label, the set number rubber stamped in the slot on the right hand side, the left hand slot left empty. The end label is typewritten/ stamped/ handwritten. The internal fittings are slotted card base and corrugated card backing. According to James Opie in *Britains Toy Soldiers 1893-1932* this type of box was in use from 1935-1939.



*Set #1421 Line Infantry Drummers*

This set portrays a Corps of Drums, comprising 8 line infantry side drummers in review order. It is in a similar box to the previous set but with a blue rather than yellow label. In this case the drummers wear uniforms with dark blue facings. They could be intended as any of the "Royal" Infantry of the Line Regiments which were entitled to wear such distinctions (although this entitlement was not always taken up, as illustrated by the case of the Royal Norfolk Regiment). Britains produced a number of other sets depicting Royal Line Infantry Regiments. These were mostly marching at the slope, but also included set #30 Drums and Bugles and some figures in action poses (such as the Queen's Royal West Surry and Irish Regiments). The factory records provide no information about the intended regiment in this case. It was presumably intended to enhance set #30 which contained just two side drummers.





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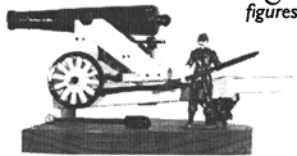
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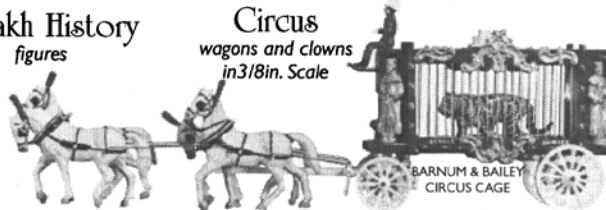
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# Advertisers Index



Alekna, Stan Email: salekna1936@yahoo.com Tel: 717-228-2361.....	59
American Dimestore Toy Soldiers and Figures - Book (Pielin, Joplin & Johnson) Email: dimestores@aol.com Tel: 630-497-1239.....	30
Antique Toy World Magazine PO Box 24509, Chicago, IL 60634.....	34
Arley L. Pett Antiques Email: APett92117@aol.com Tel: 978-283-2612 Fax: 978-283-2496 .....	60
Belgian Composition - Vin Russo Tel: 203-266-4235 Email: vindotti@erols.com.....	62
Bonhams Auctions bonhams.com/collectors Tel: +44 (0)208 963 2839 Email: leigh.gotch@bonhams.com .....	53
Britains New Toy Soldier Book by Norman Joplin info@normanjoplin.com.....	31
Brunton's Barracks www.bruntonsbaracks.com Email: pam@bruntonsbaracks.com Tel: 928-717-1698 .....	62
Commandant Miniatures ekpoole@austin.rr.com .....	26
Counterpane Gallery Email: www.counterpanegallery.com Tel/Fax: 703-536-3064.....	60
Durso Company Contact: Vin Russo Email: vindotti@erols.com .....	30
Dutkins Collectables www.dutkins.com Email: richd@dutkins.com Fax: 800-682-8163.....	35
Eurofigurines See page 31 .....	31
Figuren Magazin www.figuren-magazin.de Email: redaktion@figuren-magazin.de .....	27
Florida Toy Soldier Show Tel: 954-699-6040 or Email: mskurda@inbox.com.....	26
Green's Collectables www.greenscollectables.com Email: ma52557@aol.com Tel: 973-627-4961.....	58
Henry Kurtz, Ltd. Tel: 718-796-2696 Email: henrykurtz@optonline.net.....	60
Heyde Hunters Book toborges@pt.lu.....	33
Hobby Bunker www.hobbybunker.com Email: matt@hobbybunker.com Tel: 781-321-8855 Fax: 781-321-8866.....	54
Hocker, William Tel: 510-841-4458.....	30
Jones Book Contact: dimestores@aol.com 630-497-1239 .....	32
King and Country Tel: Hong Kong (852) 2861 3450 Email: sales@kingandcountry.com Texas Toy Soldier Show.....	IBC
La Boite De Soldats Tel/Fax (0) 1 45 78 89 44 .....	32
Le Petit Soldat www.lepetitsoldat.com Email: jcarleton@aol.com Tel: (314) 567-3311 .....	58



## Advertisers Index (Cont.)

---

Lilliput World Contact: gulliver@lilliputworld.co.uk.....	27
Memphis Toy Soldier Tel: 901-218-7046 memphistoysoldier@bellsouth.net.....	60
Morlan, Scott G. Tel: *82 949 574 9259 email: scotoyz@hotmail.com.....	62
Norman Joplin's New Book <i>Old Toy Soldiers and Figures 1900-1939</i> Email: info@normanjoplin.com.....	34
Northcoast Miniatures 54mmtroysoldier.com Email: joconnell06@comcast.net Tel: 707-537-7620 .....	60
Old Toy Castles - Peter Clark Contact: psclark@verizon.net .....	30
Old Toy Soldier Auctions Email: raytoys@aol.com 1-800-349-8009.....	IFC, 33
Old Toy Soldier Back Issues Email: raytoys@aol.com .....	4
Old Toy Soldier Home www.oldtoysoldierhome.com Tel: 760-758-5481 Fax: 760-758-7004.....	59
Peter Nathan Toy Soldiers Tel: (612) 9279 2668 Fax: (612) 9279 2658 www.toysoldiers.com.au Email: peter@toysoldiers.com.au .....	27
<i>Regiments of All Nations</i> Book - Joe Wallis .....	34
Rodden Heraldic Sculpture roddenheraldic.com Tel/Fax: 603-742-7480.....	12
Rodneys Dimestore Gallery Tel: 850-932-6522 Email: rodneysgallery@yahoo.com.....	6
Joe Saine josephsaine.com .....	31
Sierra Toy Soldier Company Tel: 408-564-4133 Fax: 408-257-0166 www.sierratoyssoldier.com.....	27
Soldiers National Museum Auction www.paonsiteauction.com .....	17
Toy Soldier Shop 202-546-2201 toysoldiershop.com.....	59
Toys of Yesteryear raytoys.com Tel: 1-800-349-8009 .....	1
Toymaker of Williamsburg, The www.toymakerofwilliamsburg.com Tel 757-229-5660.....	5
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Trains Galore and More Tel: 1-800-786-1888.....	34
Treefrog Treasures Tel: 866-394-2418 or 507-545-2500 Fax: 507-545-2502 sales@treefrogtreasures.com www.treefrogtreasures.com .....	13
Vectis Auctions www.vectis.co.uk Email: admin@vectis.co.uk Tel: 011-44-1642-750616 Fax: 011-44-1642-769478 .....	53
West Coast Toy Soldier Show Info: 760-758-7004 Email: theoldtoysoldierhome@gmail.com .....	16

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