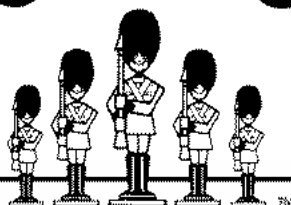


Spring  
2015

The Journal for Collectors

Volume 39 Number 1  
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# OLD TOY SOLDIER



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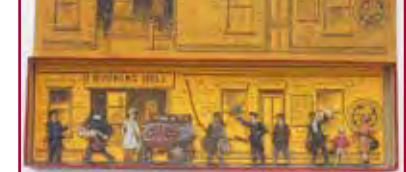
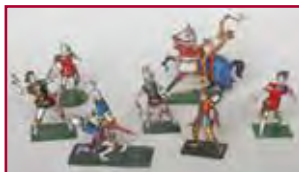
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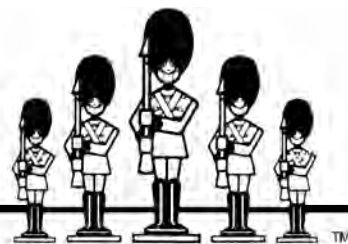


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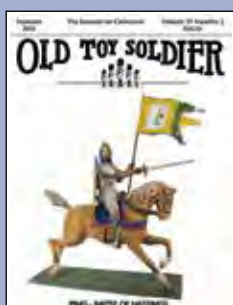


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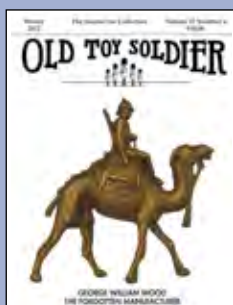
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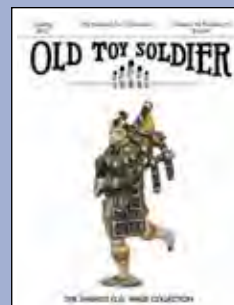


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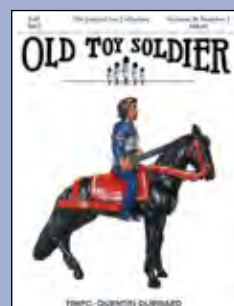
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# PARADE OF SOVEREIGNS

*By Norman Joplin*

---



**Frederick Ping Mounted King Edward the First  
Especially designed for Hamley's Window Display.**

Prior to the 1953 Coronation, many shop windows in an around London set up window displays showing examples in miniature of the Coronation procession. Mostly Britains figures were used for this purpose.

Hamley's, the world renowned Toy Shop in Regent Street London, however commissioned Frederick Ping to make for and display in their window The Parade of Sovereigns

Ping at that time had many figures in his range depicting Kings and Queens of England and it is assumed that they formed part of the Hamley's display.

It is certain that the centre piece of the display was a rare departure for Ping, in the shape of a mounted figure of King Edward I.

Ping utilized a Vertunni horse for his special creation, resulting in a unique figure. See above and front cover. Well known Ping collector, the late Nod Faulkener purchased the item, when Hamley's sold off the display after the Coronation.

Obtained by a fellow collector after Nod's death, Old Toy Soldier Auctions are pleased to offer this extremely rare item in their May 2015 Auction.

## OBITUARY THOMAS LITRAS (1929~2015)



Thomas Litras, collector and dealer of toy soldiers from Maryland, died in January 2015. He leaves his wife Harriet of 64 years, sons Christopher and Jonathan, four grandchildren, and seven great-grandchildren. On behalf of collectors and dealers who knew him, let me offer our deepest sympathy to the Litras family for the lost of a husband, father, grandfather, and great-grandfather.

A native of Oshkosh, WI, Tom was a U.S. Army veteran and a graduate of The University of Wisconsin. After working for 36 years at U.S. Steel, he went on to be successful in a number of business ventures, including his toy soldier business that he named, "The Tin Soldier & His Lady". For many years up until the spring 2012 when his health started to decline, Tom regularly attended toy soldier shows up and down the East Coast, and westward as far as Chicago. In addition, he and Harriet displayed merchandise for several years in a booth at an antique mall near their home.

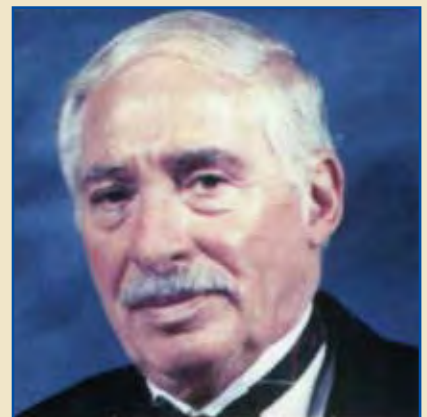
I first met Tom years ago at an Annapolis, MD, toy soldier show when I began collecting Dimestores. After encountering him a few more times at shows, we became friends, and because we didn't live too far apart, we decided to occasionally have lunch together. It was during these luncheons that I learned about the basics of collecting toy soldiers and about the toy soldier business. Over the years, having lunch with Tom and Harriet became one of life's treats. But more important, I just enjoyed being with the man because of his positive attitude on life and his wicked sense of humor. Case in point: I recall one show where he drove some distance to arrive the night before the show, stayed overnight at a nearby motel, and was up early the next day to set-up his four tables by 9:00 a.m.. Near the end of a five-hour show, he came to my table with a big smile on his face and said, "Want to know how much I sold? ... \$28 bucks!" We both had a hardy laugh, knowing full well that "stuff happens", and that it's best to simply roll with it. With Tom the glass was always half full, and tomorrow would be a better day. Being with him was always a cheerful experience. And so Tom, I hope you can hear me when I say thanks for befriending me and for taking me under your wing. I will miss you, as will many other people.

Submitted by Roger Dubois

## NEWS FROM Bonhams AUCTIONEERS UK

Their final toy soldier auction will take place on Wednesday, June 27th, 2015

## BELATED HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO ED RUBY...



whose 90th birthday  
was celebrated on  
April 12th, 2015.





# A VISIT TO THE WEST POINT MUSEUM PROVIDES A SPECIAL TREAT FOR MINIATURE SOLDIER BUFFS

*Text and Photos by Henry I. Kurtz*

---

Visitors to the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, New York should plan a stopover at the fine military museum located just outside the main entrance to the Academy grounds. Since 1988, the museum, which boasts over 45,000 items of interest to students of military history, has been housed in Olmstead Hall, a spacious neo-Gothic building conveniently situated near the West Point Visitor's Center.

At the museum, you will find exhibits tracing the history of West Point from its American Revolutionary War origins as a fortification guarding the Hudson River to its present status as an educational institution and military training center for future army officers. For the miniature soldier enthusiast the History of Warfare Gallery is the one not to miss. Interspersed among the many exhibits tracing the development of military tactics and weaponry, from the age of Imperial Rome to the nuclear age, are a series of miniature soldier dioramas depicting key battles of history and their influence on the evolution of warfare.

Four of the six dioramas were created by the well-known English model maker John Greenwood and were presented to the museum by the Lily Endowment in the 1950s. Using 30mm figures, the late Mr. Greenwood chose four battles to highlight certain tactical changes. The first of these is the Battle of Cynoscephalae (197 B.C.) in which a Roman Legion using mobile tactics and war elephants was able to penetrate the formerly invincible compact Macedonian Phalanx (see photo one).

Next comes the Battle of Adrionople in 378 A.D. in which we see Visigoth cavalry defeating Roman infantry, ending the dominance of infantry on the battlefield and heralding the age of cavalry. Cavalry dominance in warfare lasted until the Middle Ages when strong-armed English and Welsh longbowmen brought the plumed and armored knights of France crashing to the ground at Crécy and Poitiers. The Greenwood diorama of the Battle of Crécy (1346), which is my personal favorite of the group, shows gallant French knights being cut down by showers



Photo One: Battle of Cynoscephalae

## A VISIT TO THE WEST POINT MUSEUM PROVIDES A SPECIAL TREAT FOR MINIATURE SOLDIER BUFFS *(Cont.)*

---

of arrows as they assault the wing of the English line commanded by Edward, Prince of Wales, more popularly known, and celebrated by Richard Courtenay, as the Black Prince (see photo two).

Some 300 years later, during the Thirty Years war, the Swedish King Gustavus Alolphus soundly defeated the Imperial Catholic Army commanded by Count Tilly at the Battle of Breitenfeld in 1631. Gustavus employed a modern combined arms approach to warfare, making greater use of mobile light artillery working in close support of swift firing musketeers

and hard-hitting cavalry columns. Against the more static, densely-packed masses of Tilly's pikemen and smaller number of musketeers, Gustavus' tactics proved highly successful. The diorama of this engagement shows the final attack by Swedish forces (see photo three).

On the occasion of the present museum building's opening in 1988, two new 30mm dioramas created by Andrew Chernack were added. The first of these shows Frederick the Great's infantry assaulting Austrian troops in the churchyard of Leuthen during



Photo two - Battle of Crécy



Photo three - Battle of Breitenfeld



## A VISIT TO THE WEST POINT MUSEUM PROVIDES A SPECIAL TREAT FOR MINIATURE SOLDIER BUFFS *(Cont.)*

---

the Seven Years War. By use of skillful maneuvering and extended order formation, Frederick's superbly trained Prussian troops soundly defeated the Austrians at the Battle of Leuthen (1757) (see photo four).

The second of the more recent dioramas shows a small portion of the battlefield at Austerlitz, where, in 1805, Napoleon achieved one of his most brilliant victories. The diorama depicts a detachment of French troops preparing to launch an attack in mass column formation (see photo five).

Also in this gallery will be found an enormous diorama showing a Roman Army under Julius Caesar laying siege to the fortress town of Avaricum in 52 B.C. This mammoth display perfectly illustrates how the

Romans used movable towers and ramps to breach the walls of the town and capture it from the Gauls. A gift of Time-Life Inc., the diorama features 30mm figures crafted by John Scheid and Colonel Joe Shimek.

After viewing the miniature soldier dioramas, you can make a quick tour of the wars of America from colonial times through the Civil War and right on up to World War II and Vietnam. Then trace the evolution of the U.S. Army over the past 200 years in the adjacent gallery. Finally, two galleries on the lower level are devoted to small and large weapons from primitive clubs and spears to the Atom bomb. All these things considered, your visit to the museum will be time well spent.



Photo four - Battle of Leuthen



Photo five - Battle of Austerlitz

# AUCTION PREVIEW

OLD TOY SOLDIER



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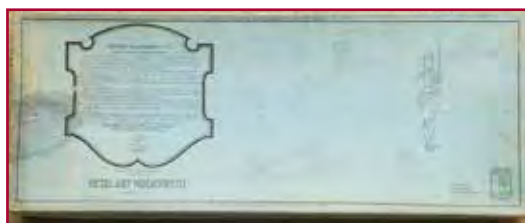
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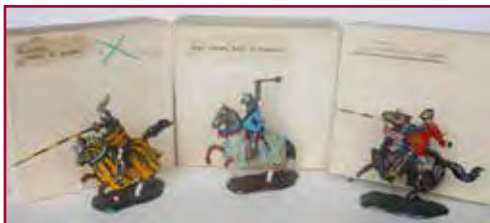
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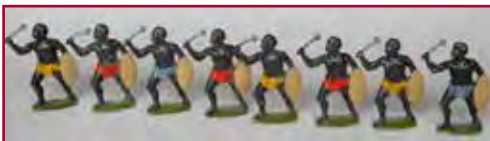
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Britains Large Zoo Display



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# BRITAIN'S 1ST VERSION LIFE GUARDS AND HORSE GUARDS: A NEW TWIST?

By Rob Wilson

In 2013 Britains celebrated 120 years in the Toy Soldier Business. To mark the anniversary they decided to make some special editions commemorating their very first sets of Toy Soldiers (notably Set #1 the Life Guards and Set #2 the Royal Horse Guards). In their publicity material issued at the time, Ron Ruddell of London Bridge Toys Ltd refers back to Frederick Britain being asked "can you make these for us?" by a representative of Gamages the famous London Store that specialised in quality toys. At that time Germany ruled the toy soldier world, companies such as Heinrichs producing high quality figures in many scales. The legend is that Frederick, who was Britain's lead salesman at the time, went back

to the factory to consider things with his brothers. Following discussions with brothers William Jr. and Alfred, they jointly came up with the idea of beating the Germans at the own game. The new twist was that they would focus on using an alloy of lead and antimony that allowed for production of hollow rather than solid cast figures, with all the advantages in terms of savings in raw materials and transport costs that that would bring. The rest, as the saying goes, is history!

I was approached by the editor to see if I could help in the project by finding examples of early castings that Britains could use to develop their new master

**120 Years Ago**  
**"Can you make these for us?"**

Frederick Britain heard those words from the A.W. Gamage store in London when shown some German made metal soldiers. They had become quite expensive since new British import duties went into effect. Fred, the salesman for W. Britain and Sons, went back to 28 Lambton Road in North London and discussed the matter with his brothers William Jr. and Alfred. Pattern maker William soon came up with a eutectic alloy of lead and antimony that rendered a hollowcast figure, while production manager Alfred streamlined the casting and finishing process. The Britain Brothers now had a product for a successful future. Not to rest on their laurels, immediate attention was given to improving the quality – and after 120 years this factor has never stopped. Open the *Wall Street Journal* and you will notice few companies dating back 120 years. The traditional Britains logo of 1893, now proudly shown on all packaging, pre-dates many well known trademarks in today's world. Throughout two world wars and the ups and downs of economic cycles, the Britains hallmark still reflects the commitment to quality and tradition started 120 years ago. First Gear, Inc., W. Britain's parent company, is the custodian of this obligation; presenting to the discriminating collector all the past achievements and exciting products for tomorrow. May the adventure continue!



Early 1893 casting with 120 Year Anniversary Figure, No:49032

"Can you make these for us?" - excerpt from Britains 2013 catalogue.



# BRITAIN'S 1ST VERSION LIFE GUARDS AND HORSE GUARDS: A NEW TWIST? (Cont.)

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2. Heinrichs - early boxed set of Dragoons from the German company

figure. Fortunately I had a couple of old pieces, one of which had already been stripped, which I was happy to provide for their project. The casting was complete but I knew I would not see it again, since the mould production process often damages the figure. I was happy to supply a second Life Guard figure (this one from a complete set) to act as a colour guide for the new figure, with a request that this be returned once it had served its purpose. This piece had a missing horse tail, but I thought this would not pose any problems since the aim was simply to illustrate the paint style. I was somewhat surprised to find that Britains decided to use the figure with the tail-less

horse in their publicity shot showing the original and new figures! Had I known I would have sent one of his compatriots on a complete horse! Fortunately, the photographer managed to pose the shot so the lack of a tail was not too obvious.

Britain's 1893 release of their first three sets comprised so called "Germanic versions", 5 similar fixed arm figures, with a tin sword embedded in the casting:

- Life Guards, set #1
- Horse Guards, set #2
- 5th Dragoon Guards, set #3



3. Royal Horse Guards: from left to right: Heinrichs example (identical casting to the boxed set of Dragoons); prototype with soldered on reins; standard Britains figure; the 2013 commemorative issue

# BRITAIN'S 1ST VERSION LIFE GUARDS AND HORSE GUARDS: A NEW TWIST? *(Cont.)*

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Britain's "tail-less" Life Guard (as used in publicity shots!) and the prototype Horse Guard with soldered on reins.

These were soon replaced (1894) by versions with the same troopers, but with an officer now mounted on a rearing horse (still rather Germanic in style).

All three sets continued to use the same castings up until 1902, at which time the troopers were remounted on the classic Life Guard trotting horse and eventually a movable arm was introduced. The Horse Guards set used the same castings. From 1903 the 5th Dragoon Guards were remounted on the new dated "head-up" trotting horse, the officer remaining on the same horse as used in sets #1 and #2.

Although the tale of how Britains took the toy soldier world by storm with their hollow casting technique is now the stuff of legend, there is now more uncertainty amongst collectors and experts about who really invented the technique. There is no doubt that Britains effectively "patented" the method in Great Britain (including making use of Copyright laws to protect their designs around 1900). It is not so clear that they were the first to use the hollow-casting technique. Gerbruder Heinrichs, trading under the Noris label, had been producing fine scale toy soldiers for many years before Britains got started. There is some



Andy Morant's Life Guard



# BRITAIN'S 1ST VERSION LIFE GUARDS AND HORSE GUARDS: A NEW TWIST? (Cont.)

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evidence that they may have developed hollowcast figures before the 1890s.

James Opie in the *Great Book of Britains* (page 11), quotes Alfred Britain as saying that the first moulds were made for (rather than by) the company. It is possible that this may have been by someone in Germany. Certainly the earliest figures produced by Britains all had a distinctly German look to them. If not direct copies then they were certainly heavily inspired by German produced figures. As well as these first three sets of cavalry, the next 6 Britains sets all had strong German influences (3 sets of plug-armed lancers, plug handed Scots Greys and Fusiliers and "rocking horse" mounted Hussars).

Heinrichs / Noris are thought by a number of French Collectors to have influenced Gerbeau. They were certainly producing both solid and hollowcast figures in 54mm scale in the late 1880s and early 1890s. Whether the hollowcast examples were copies of Britains or *vice versa* remains the subject of conjecture.

The examples of tin sword Royal Horse Guards and other Dragoons produced by Heinrichs in the author's personal collection are similar to but not identical to the Britains castings (see pictures in this article).

In 2014 Andy Morant (the well know London dealer operating out of Portobello Road), turned up what he thought was an oddity. The figure was a Life Guard with tin sword, similar to the Britains figure, but with tin cast reins soldered and pinned in position rather than being an integral part of the casting. Such a feature was characteristic of German manufacturers, especially for higher quality figures. Some people Andy spoke to dismissed the figure as a curiosity .... "probably a German copy". Not to be put off so easily Andy continued with his research, noting that the examples he had found were accompanied by other very early Britains figures. When he showed me the example he had brought along to the London Show, I was immediately intrigued. It also rang a distant bell.

On returning home I checked through my records and found reference to some similar figures I had bought many years previously. I had catalogued these as "probably German copies of Britains". These examples were painted as Royal Horse Guards rather than Life Guards. Again they came with some other

early Britains figures, regulation tin sword Horse Guards, early "donkey horse" hussars and plug-armed lancers.

Digging the figures out of the box they had rested in for the past few years, I examined them more closely. My excitement rose as I realised that apart from the reins these figures were not just similar to Britains castings but identical in every detail apart from the reins. The paint colours and style are identical. Comparison with other similar figures that I was pretty certain were by Heinrichs, made it clear that they were quite different castings, with different horse furnishings and many other differences from the German made figures.

Andy and I agreed to compare notes in more detail at the March 2015 London Show. Close comparison of various examples of both Horse Guards and Life Guards again confirmed that the figures with the soldered on reins were otherwise identical to the casting used by Britains for their commemorative issue, but quite different from known German "copies". The paint style is also identical to Britains. James Opie who was also at the London Show was invited to join in the debate, along with a number of other experienced collectors. The general consensus is that these are likely to have been earlier versions of Britains first sets as they were experimenting with and refining their hollowcast production methods. While the separate reins look neat they would add considerably to the unit cost of production. Modifying the mould to build the reins in would save substantial costs of labour. While we will probably never know for certain whether these were produced by (or maybe for) Britains in the early 1890s, that certainly seems like a reasonable hypothesis.

Subsequently I found another example of the Life Guard on Ebay ( albeit in rough shape). So there are obviously more out there! To date I have yet to find an example of the 5th Dragoon Guard with soldered on reins but I will keep looking - please let me know if you find one!

Rob Wilson, April 2015 (r.a.wilson@warwick.ac.uk)

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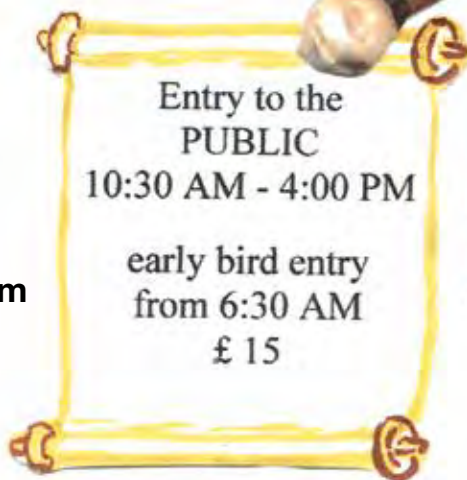
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# BOOK REVIEW

## DURSO Volume 3 and 4

By Michel Nicaise

Reviewed by Russ Bednarek



I am pleased to complete my review of Michel Nicaise's four volume examination of DURSO production in this issue of *Old Toy Soldier*. The intent of this review is to delve into the contents of volumes three and four, eliminating the need to repeat the history of DURSO, production materials and methods, and the author's collecting relationship with owner Michel Klimov. Collectors interested in this information should refer to my review of volumes one and two that appeared in *Old Toy Soldier* Volume 38, Number 3. The thorough examination and outstanding bilingual text and photographs that were the bedrock of volumes one and two happily continue in the final two volumes. The author continues to entertain readers with multiple collecting antidotes of how he and his brothers were allowed to rummage through the DURSO factory resulting in several fascinating discoveries.

Volume three begins with the discovery of figures depicting the Dutch army circa 1938. Briefly mentioned in the 1960-61 pricelists, these figures were unknown to exist until the author's visit to the

DURSO factory in 1965. This series was exceptional in that the historical accuracy of uniforms was exceptional. In addition to infantrymen, the range included sailors, medical staff, motorcycles, bands and mounted troops. A separate line of mounted troops was discovered dressed in "the old uniform". These cavalry figures represented various regiments wearing shakos, helmets, bicorne, and *colbacks*, (fur cap). The inspiration and expertise required to create "the old uniform" range was the result of an order placed by the Dutch Cavalry Officer's League. The order requesting figures of the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th hussar regiments was placed in 1937. At this point in time the League's membership was 378. A total of 35 variations were possible and a conservative estimate is that no more than 1100 of these rare and expensive figures were made. The only other 20th century military ranges examined in volume three are those of the American and Russian armies. The Americans is a small 10 piece line, while the Russian range in addition to infantry wearing their unique *Boudionovka* hat includes Cossacks and Generals Zukov and Stalin.



## **BOOK REVIEW (Cont.)**

Civilian, folklore, Nativity and Canadian Mounted Police ranges all receive an insightful review in addition to a very interesting Tarzan range. Two major eras consume the remainder of volume three; "Cowboys and Indians" and the "Men of Arms" series. The Cowboys and Indians range consisted of 35 different figures in numerous variations exclusive of painting options. Some of these figures were sold in well made visually pleasing boxes. Later figures were made with even more variations as slight as the repositioning of a feather or head change. The Cowboys and Indians range received an infusion of new figures in 1947 when DURSO bought the INCAMIN company. With the popularity of American films depicting the "Wild West", the demand for the Cowboys and Indians range grew and led to a "side" range of figures; the "Bandits". The Bandits line were figures from the Cowboys and Indians range except they received a new head featuring a black handkerchief covering their face. The "Men At Arms" range consisted of two series. Series I figures represented Gauls, Germanic warriors and Vikings. Series II figures were medieval; men at arms and mounted knights and included an outstanding number of accessories. The collector could acquire a siege tower, battering ram, catapult and a most impressive Viking ship plus crew and a fortress that could be assembled into four different variations.

Volume four explores several lines and individual pieces intended as novelty items, and arguably some of DURSO's most creative, colorful and unique ranges. The animal kingdom kicks off volume four as the first fifty-five pages explore the wild and domestic lines of animals and birds. Next we are transported to Africa and the "Congo" and Sahara" are presented. The "Congo" series has a number of "native" pieces; figures with bow and arrow, spear, porters carrying their load and a colorful chief. A half dozen explorer figures are included as well as several figures representing the Belgian King Baudouin and his 1960's visit to the Congo, complete with cheering Belgian flag waving Congolese. The "Saharan" series is dominated by camel riding Arabs in various poses. Readers are next treated to the exotic "Bengal" series, consisting of an impressive array of elephants ridden by Maharajahs, and colonial hunters. An excellent examination of the painting variations of the hunted tigers concludes the series. A very colorful and creative Circus range follows next complete with all the usual animal acts and trainer, clowns, band and more. The "Waterloo" series was produced late in the history of the DURSO company and consisted of twenty-eight different figures representing five

different armies that participated in the epic battle that saw the final and complete defeat of Napoleon I. The final third of the book looks at numerous ranges; Boy Scouts, various police, garde d'honneur, modern military types and miscellaneous pieces intended for the souvenir/tourist market. For collectors and researchers a most important nine page appendix includes the pricelists for 1949, 1952, 1957, 1960 and 1961.

The entire four volume set of "DURSO" is one thousand pages and contains close to a eight hundred high quality photographs reflecting the author's lifelong passion and dedication to the collecting of and researching of the DURSO company and its figures. Printed on 8"x 12" glossy paper, the clarity of the photographs allows the reader to closely examine each figure. In the case of rare or unusual pieces the author devotes a larger photograph and in some cases an entire page for our viewing pleasure. When depicting variations, excellent close-up photographs amply show the minute differences that are an extremely important item for the collector. The bi-lingual text, (French-English) does not suffer from the often awkward translation that is found in other works. A nice feature is the caption for each photograph is also bi-lingual. For the DURSO collector you cannot afford to be without this series. Composition collectors in general should carefully consider obtaining the series as it has become difficult to obtain. Exploring various Internet bookselling sites and eBay produced no available copies of any volume. Unfortunately in the review of volumes one and two I had been unable to make contact with the author prior to our publishing deadline. Fortunately, since then, I have been able to contact M. Nicaise and have established contact information for those intending to purchase. The price per volume is 90 Euros and at the time of this review, the exchange rate is very favorable for US buyers. Thank you to Monsieur Michel Nicaise who generously provided all four volumes of his landmark work for this review.

### **CONTACT INFORMATION**

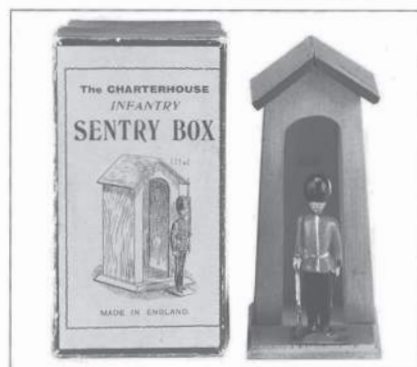
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While Britains are included to a  
certain extent the main focus is  
on the other makers of the period.  
Volume 2 which will be available  
in 2012 will concentrate solely  
on Britains advertisements of the  
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Note: this book is only available directly  
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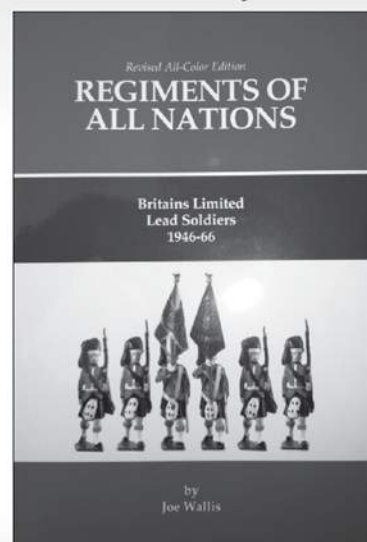
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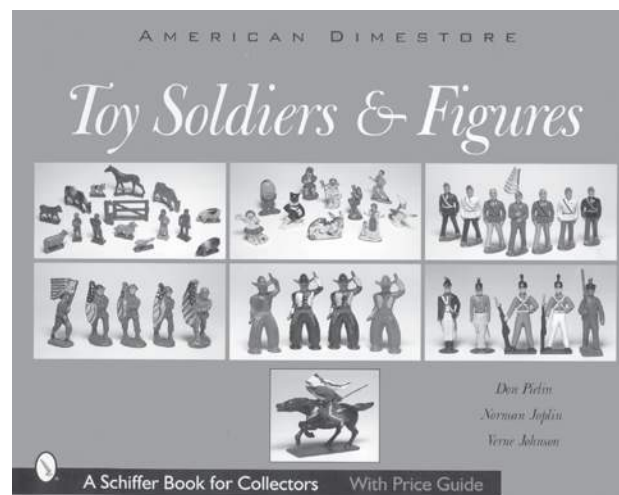
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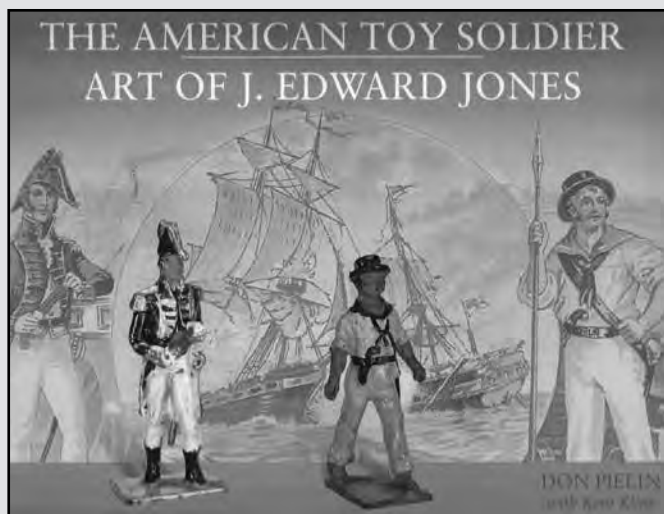
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# DIMESTORE UPDATE

By Stan Alekna

Here is another edition of DIMESTORE UPDATE that is intended to continue the flow of new information, discoveries and variations of American Dimestore figures and vehicles. OTS is the only existing publication for our hobby and I encourage all collectors to use this last remaining forum to share their own findings of unique figures and variations. After all, no collector wants to have his collection so complete that there is nothing left to hunt for. I'll wager that some in our cult will add one or two items to their "Want List" as a result of this article.

Here's a discovery that has escaped the keen eyes of many experts and collectors for a great many years. Manoil's M115 and M115a, "aviator carrying bomb sight", is an erroneous description of the figure. It is not a bomb sight at all but an aircraft mounted camera. I was even able to find a photo of a model of the camera that is a very close match to the item on the shoulder of M115.



M115



WW II Aircraft Camera

If you ever see a poorly painted Barclay zeppelin (BA2) it could have originated from the Paint-Your-Own set pictured on the 1938 Butler Toy Catalog page 1. Note the prices for lots of a dozen of the advertised items. The second catalog page confirms the existence of two extremely rare Barclay items; the baby crib and the freight train with a lighted head lamp, neither of which were ever included in Richard O'Brien's Collecting American Toy Soldiers books.

I acquired an American Metal AM32 Soldier Marching with Rifle, in brown, with flashing on his helmet that had been painted over and that had a bent rifle, which is not unusual for marching Dimestore figures. I then bought a second brown AM32 with the flashing removed after the helmet was painted, leaving an area of raw lead visible but with the rifle bent at the



Butler 1938 Catalog page 1



Butler 1938 Catalog page 2

same angle as the first one. A third AM32 in gray (German) had the flashing removed before painting, but again, it also had a bent rifle.



AM32 Helmet Flashing



AM32 bent rifles

A good friend and advanced collector, Don Sherman, sent me a photo of three other AM32's from his



## DIMESTORE UPDATE (Cont.)

collection. The one in brown has the same bent rifle as mine but his two gray ones have straight rifles.



AM32s Photo Courtesy of Don Sherman

My conclusions are as follows:

American Metal had lousy quality control, but we already knew that based on the frequency of casting flaws found in “finished” figures. They had at least one AM32 mold that was defective and produced castings with flashing on the helmet and a bent rifle. The rifles were not bent in play because the figures are near mint with no play wear, and all are bent at the same angle.

Sometimes the flashing was removed before painting and sometimes it was painted over and shipped. Sometimes they removed the flashing after painting but did not touch up the paint before shipping. Other AM32 molds produced figures with straight rifles.

Below is a previously undocumented B59a Marine marching with an unmarked, flat base. Most B59a's had marked, concave bases. Richard O'Brien used these criteria to sometimes designate variances in his Dimestore books so I pass this finding along in that vein.



B59a



B59a bases

Below is an unlisted Barclay tow car with no lettering on the sides and a cast tow hook. All other Barclay tow trucks had wire tow hooks. I do not have the vehicle any longer so I do not know its length but would put it at around 2 ½ inches. I have seen a few of these over the years.



Unlisted Tow Car 1



Unlisted Tow Car 2

I acquired this Barclay B56 naval officer (following page) because he had a thin red cross painted on his left sleeve which we know is not kosher. I shipped it off to several advanced collectors and we all agreed (maybe because we are all equally nutty) that this was a factory painted red cross. Here is our collective “logic”:

Not many people would have a paint brush with so few, fine bristles required to paint such a thin cross.

## DIMESTORE UPDATE (Cont.)

The figure is near mint and all other paint is original. The thin red cross is very similar to the cross on the head of Barclay's B82, kneeling nurse. We believe that a Barclay painter lost focus for a minute and since the Barclay doctor in white, B81, which has a red or blue cross on his left sleeve, looks so much like B56, she mistakenly, or absentmindedly, applied a red cross to at least one B56. Bill Lango, who interviewed some of the Barclay factory painters many years ago, said that they admitted that they would sometimes add little "touches" to some figures just to break the monotony. We'll never know the "rest of the story" on this particular figure, for sure.



B56



B56 red cross

Below is pictured an ad that offered Lincoln Log molds for sale for the home casting of figures, and also a photo of one of these molds.



Lincoln Log Ad

Lincoln log was never known for high quality painting of its figures, but if you run across a really badly painted Lincoln Log figure in funky colors, chances are it began as the creation of a young artist using one of these \$3.00 casting sets.



Lincoln Log Mold

Several years ago, I wrote an OTS article on Barclay cannons wherein I stated that I thought that Barclay's BC4 "COAST GUARD CANNON" was actually patterned after a huge railroad cannon, based a photo that I found in a book on WW II U.S. military weapons, c.1942.



BC4



U.S. RR Cannon drawing in 1942 book



## DIMESTORE UPDATE (Cont.)

Even the crewmen behind the railing in the photo look very similar to crewmen on Barclay's BC4. Browsing on the internet one day, I stumbled across the following photos of a huge German railroad cannon in action and none other than the "Austrian paper hanger" inspecting another such monster gun. I also found a photo of an American Coastal Defense Gun, many of which were installed on both coasts in the early days of WW II, to defend against an anticipated enemy invasion.



**German RR Cannon in Action**



**U.S. Coastal Defense Gun.**

Note that both American and German cannons have railings around the superstructure the crewmen near the railings are not dressed in standard military garb but are dressed similar to those on BC4 with non-military helmets. We will never know whether it was a railroad cannon or coastal defense gun that inspired Barclay to make BC4 but the real weapons fired a huge projectile. One description stated that such a gun was 800mm and could fire a 260 pound projectile up to five miles. Perhaps this is not earth shattering Dimestore information but I still thought that it was worth sharing.

So much for this edition of Dimestore Update and please consider documenting your Dimestore anomalies and discoveries for the community. This is not an attempt to win a Pulitzer Prize as you can tell from the above writing so please take the time to participate in keeping the information flow alive. Hey guys, we are all that we have left. If you need a little help getting started, just call Norman Joplin at (262) 692-3919 or contact me.

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# **“THE GREAT EMBELLISHER”: IN PRAISE OF THE WORK OF FREDDIE GREEN**

*By Rob Wilson*



**The Belgian Royal Horse Artillery officer that inspired this article**

Browsing round the stands at the March 2015 London Toy Soldier show, a figure caught my eye from a distance. Could it be what I thought it was? Picking it up to examine it in more detail I enquired about the price? “Did I know what it was ?” was the immediate retort. I certainly thought I did - “Freddie Green ?” I asked. The table holder, pleased to know it had been recognised, was willing to sell it to me for what he had paid for it many moons ago. The deal was done!

The reason I was so pleased was that I was pretty certain it was an officer which completed a set of Belgian Royal Horse Artillery that I had bought many years previously. Originally auctioned by Phillips, the officer had become separated from the set by the time I bought it, now they would be reunited. Getting



**The Belgian RHA officer back in charge of his team**

it home, I soon confirmed that it indeed did match. Having dug out a number of other similar pieces I was inspired to put together an article to make the work of this talented painter and convertor known to a wider audience.

Since toy soldiers were first made their owners have sought to improve and customise them. Such attempts are regarded as sacrilege by many modern collectors, some of whom are obsessed by the idea of obtaining examples in original condition (preferably mint and boxed).

Few examples in such pristine condition survive (especially from before the Second World War). Most have suffered from accidental damaged and



**Russian Artillery, note the magnificent beards and moustaches!**



## **“THE GREAT EMBELLISHER”: IN PRAISE OF THE WORK OF FREDDIE GREEN *(Cont.)***

normal wear and tear. Indeed some evidence of such “patina” is often regarded as reassuring in the presence of so many attempts to forge some of the rarer sets and other scarce items (such as the output of the Britain’s Paris Office).

Attempts to embellish and convert Britains figures are another reason why finding pieces in original condition is so hard. In the early days, such models (as Britain’s often referred to them, rather than as toys) were not regarded as valuable collectables/antiques but something to be cherished, admired and used (i.e. played with!).

Beauty is, of course, in the eye of the beholder. One man’s interesting conversion is regarded by many others as just another figure ready to be put back in the paint stripper! The quality of such work varies enormously, ranging from crude attempts to add detail and enhance the toy makers initial efforts (often by childish hands), to rather more sophisticated (and sometimes very knowledgeable) attempts to improve the originals.

There are few records of such efforts in the early days although many examples of such efforts have survived. In the absence of more pristine examples most collectors are happy to retain figures with minor embellishments or attempts at restoration.

In the 1930s, as Britain’s hollowcast production reached its zenith (both in terms of quantities but also the range of subjects covered), the aspect of the hobby involving embellishment and conversion began to be better documented. Organisations such as the British Model Soldier Society (BMSS), which was formed in 1935, led the way. Many of its members were keen to enhance their armies. The society brought together all those with a serious interest in model soldiers, including a number with real life military experience. Although undoubtedly some of these pioneer collectors liked to find figures in original condition, many (most?) were more than happy to “improve” their troops if the fancy took them. Thoughts of long-term investment values never entered their minds. Many articles in the BMSS Bulletin provide hints on how to do it. These include major soldering operations as well as simple repainting tips.



**Grenadier Guards supply wagon**



**Austro Hungarian supply wagon**



**Spanish Artillery with officer and trumpeter**



**Russian Grenadiers with Standard**

## **“THE GREAT EMBELLISHER”: IN PRAISE OF THE WORK OF FREDDIE GREEN *(Cont.)***

Nowadays modern collectors groan when they come up against such examples, berating the previous owners for failing to maintain the figures in original condition. Of course, if everyone had done that the rarities we all prize so highly would be much more commonplace and hence less valuable!

Much of this early work was fairly mediocre, being based on materials and tools that were not quite up to the task. A few neat examples that are more successful have survived, but generally the quality is not great.

This gradually changed in the period after the Second World War, possibly reflecting greater leisure time

as well as easier access to good materials. Classic amongst this genre is the work of Freddie Green. Many others also produced great work, including some who became pioneers in the development of what are often now referred to as “New Toy Soldiers”. Others, following the pioneering steps of Courtenay, developed figures that are generally referred to as connoisseur figures. Books have already been written on these topics! However, the work of Green has attracted less interest, although his work is greatly prized by those “in the know”. The aim of the present article is to make his work a little more widely known and appreciated amongst collectors.



**Russian Imperial Cavalry**



**Russian Kuirasiers**



**Prussian Jaegers**



**Prussian Infantry**



**London Scottish vignette**



**Signallers in action**



## **“THE GREAT EMBELLISHER”: IN PRAISE OF THE WORK OF FREDDIE GREEN (Cont.)**

---



**London Scottish in action**



**The Drum and Bugle Corps of the King's Royal Rifle Corps**



**Prussian colour party**

Unfortunately Freddie is no longer with us so it is impossible to be entirely sure of what he produced over the years. He was undoubtedly a prolific painter and converter of Britains figures. However if all the figures attributed to him were done so correctly he would probably have had no time to do anything else!

The figures shown in the pictures have all been attributed to Green. All show many of the characteristics that distinguish his oeuvre. These include:

1. A focus on European Armies at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries;
2. Use of Britains castings (although for wheeled equipment SR items were also often used);
3. Replacement of movable arms by fixed ones;
4. Extensive and skilled use of the soldering iron;
5. Addition to detail in terms of equipment and weapon and uniforms (e.g wire for cap lines);
6. Characterisation - no two figures are identical, each has a personality, with florid moustaches and beards being typical (courtesy of the soldering iron);
7. Bases often extended, especially for flag bearers, to ensure stability;
8. The painting of regimental standards was also one of his special skills;
9. Meticulously researched uniform and equipment details.

In many respects these are better characterised as “model” rather than “toy” soldiers in the best traditions of Courtenay, Ping and Greenwood & Ball.

The accompanying pictures illustrate the range of his work, both in terms of nations covered and types.



**Prussian Engineers with pontoon**

## **“THE GREAT EMBELLISHER”: IN PRAISE OF THE WORK OF FREDDIE GREEN *(Cont.)***

---



French Artillery with ammunition caisson



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# THREE NAPOLEONIC BATTLE DIORAMAS; A MYSTERY SOLVED

*By Henry I. Kurtz*

Several years ago, I purchased from Philip Weiss Auctions, in a private treaty sale, three beautifully crafted dioramas of battle scenes from the Napoleonic Wars. There was no provenance available about the origin of the dioramas except for the signature “J. Redley” inscribed on one of the displays. So I set about to do a little research. I contacted my friend Peter Greenhill of Greenhill Miniatures in England and he informed me that “J. Redley” was Jon Redley of Wolverhampton, England, who is still active as a painter of miniature soldiers. Peter also provided me with Mr. Redley’s address and a very useful correspondence resulted. In one of his letters, Jon described the origin of the dioramas. He wrote as follows:

“The dioramas were constructed in the period 1979-1982 and were produced using a range of 30mm figures manufactured by Greenwood and Ball and designed by Barry Minot. In total I produced eight dioramas using Minot’s figures, the majority of which were taken to America by Al Charles, who was active both as a designer and as a representative of the company.

“In addition to the three in your possession, Jack Coutts of “Under Two Flags had a further two of the same base size as yours (roughly seven- and- one- half by eight-and-one-half inches). These dioramas depicted British Infantry fighting in line with Wellington and reserves standing behind them. The other diorama was of Prussian Infantry of 1806 in action attacking an unseen French force...”

This brings me to a discussion of the three dioramas in my collection, taking them in chronological order according to the date of the event. We begin with an actual incident during “The Retreat from Moscow” in 1812. This diorama is based on a painting by Adolphe Yvon and shows Marshal Ney, seen in the center wearing a light colored coat and holding a musket, commanding the French rear guard, which is fighting off attacking Russian Cossacks.



**Illustration 1: Retreat from Moscow**



**Illustration 2: Many actions must have been conducted in a somewhat irregular manner, as in this depiction of Marshal Ney leading the rearguard during the retreat from Moscow. (Engraving by H. Wolf after Adolphe Yvon.)**



**Illustration 3**



## THREE NAPOLEONIC BATTLE DIORAMAS; A MYSTERY SOLVED (Cont.)

The second diorama depicts British Infantry from the 30th Regiment of Foot marching past the Duke of Wellington, seen at the right in a blue frock coat conversing with a regimental officer, on the eve of the Battle of Waterloo, June 17, 1815. Between Wellington and the marching column, one can see a wounded comrade being helped from the field by a comrade and a captured French officer being escorted to the rear (see illustrations three and four).

Finally, we have the third diorama, which depicts the last stand of Napoleon's Old Guard at Waterloo, June 18, 1815. The scene is based on an 1849 painting by Hippolyte Bellange and shows the Guardsmen rallying around their eagle banner. Tradition has the Guard's commander replying to a British request to

surrender with the heroic battle cry, "The Old Guard dies but never surrenders!" The accompanying illustrations (five through seven) show the diorama, a British officer calling on the Guard to surrender, and another of the final stand of the Old Guard.

In all three instances, the figures are superbly painted—especially considering their small scale (only 30mm)—and the landscaping and arrangement of the figures is excellent. I am happy to have them in my collection and to have made the acquaintance, even if only by mail, with Jon Redley, their creator.

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



Illustration 4: British Infantry in action, based on a print by Richard Simkin, well known by toy soldier collectors for his paintings of British regiments used as models by Britains Ltd. for their early figures.



Illustration 5: "Old Guard" at Waterloo



Illustration 6: British officer requests for surrender of "Old Guard" at Waterloo



Illustration 7: The last stand of the "Old Guard" at Waterloo

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# MAKING VERSATILE DIMESTORE CONVERSIONS

*By Roger Dubois*

Dimestore manufacturers of years ago made toy soldiers in a variety of poses doing an assortment of tasks. Some pieces were in a marching pose with a rifle resting on a shoulder while others in the same stance played musical instruments. Some were standing straight up holding signal flags while others were set low with weapons at the ready. Some sat tapping away on typewriters and some sat eating chow. And so it went.

In the end, whatever a figure was doing, it did it forever, never changing posture or task. Never that is until a Dimestore converter came along and changed the posture and the task of a piece. But when the work was completed, a conversion once again displayed a fixed posture doing a fixed task.

Even though the posture and task of a Dimestore are fixed, it is possible to make a conversion that is capable of doing a task using different objects. For example, a toy soldier can be designed to carry interchangeable military items or fire interchangeable weapons.

The idea of constructing a Dimestore conversion with the ability to handle interchangeable objects is not new. Some years ago at a Chicago show I saw an Ed Poole conversion of a Barclay Sharpshooter, prone position (#751), capable of handling one of three interchangeable weapons: a rifle, machine gun, and a third weapon that escapes me at this time. Although I've been making conversions with versatility for some time, I strongly suspect that Ed's conversion predates mine by several years. Indeed, there may have been other hobbyists who made these types of conversions long before I began converting Dimestores over twenty years ago.

Nevertheless, Ed's figure is the only one of its type that I have ever seen during the past two decades of attending toy soldier shows, suggesting that making this kind of conversion has not taken hold within our hobby. And so with that thought in mind, I'll focus the theme of this article on describing how some Dimestores can be converted to handle interchangeable objects thereby giving these conversions some versatility.

For this article, six Dimestores have been selected as examples of toy soldiers that can be converted for versatility. Because I have previously described the converting techniques employed in this essay in past issues of OTS, the thrust of this article will focus

less on technique and more on showcasing the idea that Dimestore conversions can be made to handle interchangeable objects.

## Six Conversions With Versatility

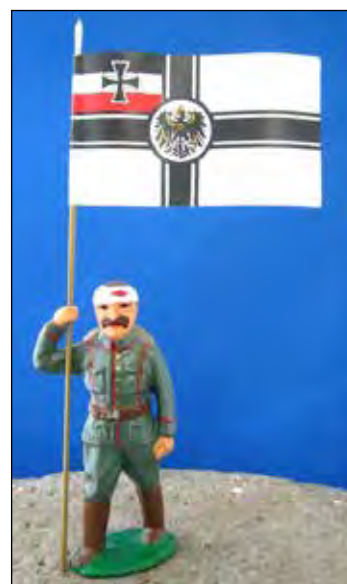
Converting the first four Dimestores is a relatively simple task; a little cutting here, a little drilling there, some sanding, and a figure is ready for painting. The fifth piece requires carefully enlarging a hole in a shoulder that will receive the butt of a weapon. The last figure entails the most work: cutting, filling in cavities, sanding, and securing an arm to a shoulder.

For precautionary reasons, it's important to note that all safety measures described in an article published in the 2007 spring issue of OTS (v. 31, n. 1) were followed during each converting project. This included wearing safety glasses and a dust mask as well as washing hands with a scrub pad immediately after kneading two-part epoxy putty.

**1. Barclay Drum Major, short stride (#711):** In the 2007 spring issue of OTS (v. 31, n. 1), I described how I converted this figure into a wounded soldier walking with a wooden staff. The baton was cut away with a razor saw; a hole was drilled through the hand; and a brass rod was passed through the hole to serve as a walking staff (Photo 1).



**Photo 1. Wounded WW I German soldier walking with wooden staff.**



**Photo 2. Wounded German standing with WW I German Battle Flag.**

The staff, however, is removable, which means that it can be exchanged for any other rod having the same diameter. In Photo 2, the walking staff has been exchanged for a flagstaff holding up a World War I



# MAKING VERSATILE DIMESTORE CONVERSIONS (Cont.)



Photo 3. WW I U.S. Marine leaning on German helmet while hurling grenade. This figure can also lean on the log next to the helmet.



Photo 4. WW I German soldiers carrying ammo boxes and sharing part of the load.



Photo 5. German soldiers individually hauling ammo boxes.



Photo 6. German soldiers transporting trench ladder in left hands while carrying ammo boxes in right hands.

German Battle Flag. Clearly, other German flags of the Great War, such as regimental flags, could be periodically substituted for the Battle Flag or the walking staff.

**2. Manoil Soldier, Crouching with Hand Grenade (#41):** This figure is leaning on the ground with his left hand in a three-point stance as he's about to hurl a grenade. From my point of view, the hand touching the ground is a bit too long. So the tip of the hand was cut with a razor saw, filed, and sanded to form what I regard a more natural hand.

Unfortunately, decreasing the length of the fingers leaves the hand too short to touch the ground, thereby causing the figure to topple over. To remedy the problem, an object needs to be placed under the hand.

Two objects are shown in Photo 3: a German helmet and a log. Needless-to-say, the possibilities of what this figure can lean on are almost infinite.

**3. Barclay Soldier, Stretcher Bearer, closed hand (#759):** The posture of this figure is perfectly designed to carry whatever you can fit into its hands. But before giving this figure something else to carry besides a stretcher, his hands were modified a bit in order to increase the range of objects he might carry.

After cutting the two short braces that extend from the fingertips to the thighs, a heat gun was employed to heat the hands. Then with pliers, the fingers of each hand were bent slightly upward.

Objects can now hang from the cupped hands as shown in Photos 4 and 5 where two figures are transporting ammo boxes made from stock wood and brass wire purchased from a hobby store.

When I tire of looking at them carrying ammo boxes, I remove a box from a hand of each figure and insert a trench ladder into the empty hands (Photo 6).

## MAKING VERSATILE DIMESTORE CONVERSIONS (Cont.)

On a shelf of my bookcase, these figures have also been known to carry water buckets or logs, while at other times they've been seen pushing wheelbarrows. In the end, what these "little guys" can do is totally dependent upon the imagination of a hobbyist.

**4. Barclay Soldier, Signal Man with Flags (#730):** Some years ago, I decided to convert three figures into a land surveying party. One figure extended a measuring line from a post stuck in the ground while another sighted through an engineer's level at a third figure holding up a surveying rod.

The figure holding the surveying rod originated as the Barclay Signal Man. At the start of the converting process, both flags were removed with a razor saw. Then a one-sixteenth inch hole was drilled through each hand; a brass rod was inserted into the hole of the left hand and glued to the inside of the figure (Photo 7).



Photo 7. German soldier ready to receive equipment.



Photo 8. A surveying rod in two sections.

The surveying rod was made from two pieces of hollow-square brass tubing that were joined together by gluing a smaller size brass tubing into the upper section of the larger rod. The smaller tubing extends half an inch from the base of the larger rod (rod section on right in Photo 8).

The smaller brass tubing was small enough to pass through the hole in the right hand and long enough to fit into the lower rod section. In Photo 9, both rod sections fit nicely together "not glued" to give the appearance of a figure holding a surveying rod.



Photo 9. German soldier holding surveying rod.



Photo 10. Signaling paddles.

Once the rod man was made, I saw that it was possible to remove the rod and add a signaling paddle to each hand, thereby converting the figure back to a signalman.

A signal paddle was constructed by cutting a segment out of the edge of a washer so that a piece of brass tubing could be glued edgewise to the washer. For the paddle handle in the right hand, the tube extends a quarter of an inch from the edge of the washer. Then a smaller size brass rod was inserted and glued inside the tube; the rod extends a quarter of an inch beyond the edge of the larger tube (paddle on right in Photo 10). The diameter of brass rod was small enough to pass through the hole in the right hand. Finally, the center of the washer was filled with two-part epoxy putty.

The signal paddle for the left hand was made in the same way. Here the brass tube secured to a washer was cut long enough to slide over the full length of the extended rod shown in Photo 7.

Photo 11 displays the figure with signaling paddles.

**5. Barclay Machine Gunner Lying Flat (#728):** Some years ago, one of these figures came into my possession with the machine gun broken off at the hand. This started me thinking about removing the gun butt and converting the figure to one with the capability of handing two weapons of my own design (Photo 12).



## MAKING VERSATILE DIMESTORE CONVERSIONS *(Cont.)*



Photo 11. German soldier holding signaling paddles.

After the butt was cut way with a razor saw, holes appeared in the hand, arm, and shoulder. The armhole was filled with two-part epoxy putty, but the hole in the hand was left alone to provide space for a weapon handgrip.

The hole in the shoulder was too small to receive the butt of a weapon shown in Photo 12. Therefore, using a small file, the hole was carefully enlarged just enough to let a butt comfortably slide into the body cavity (Photo 13).

When the figure was finished, a machine gun was added to it (Photo 14). However, with the passage of time, I get tired of looking at the piece, and so I exchange the machine gun for a pistol attached to a stock (Photo 15).

### **6. Barclay Soldier on Parade, long stride (#704):**

I've lost count the number of times castings of this figure have crossed my workspace. All pieces were converted by simply attaching military equipment reflective of a World War I soldier from Britain, France, Germany, or the United States. The equipment included metal castings of soft hats or helmets, backpacks, shovels, and canteens. Of course, broken rifles were repaired.



Photo 12. Weapons used in Photos 14 and 15.



Photo 13. WW I German soldier in prone position ready to receive a weapon. Note the hole in his right shoulder and the gap in his right hand.



Photo 14. German soldier firing machine gun.



Photo 15. German firing pistol.

## MAKING VERSATILE DIMESTORE CONVERSIONS *(Cont.)*



Photo 16. Right arm with rifle cut away from figure. Then rifle cut from arm.



Photo 17. German soldier carrying flag.



Photo 18. German soldier hauling log back to camp.

Not long ago, an idea came to me as to how I could convert one of these figures into a conversion capable of carrying a variety of items. And so work began by cutting away from the body the right arm with hand and rifle; that left a large hole along the side of the figure (Photo 16). Next, the rifle was cut from the arm (Photo 16).

The arm cavity seen in Photo 16 was filled with epoxy putty and shaped into an arm. Using the same filling material, the body opening was closed, and the putty was shaped to match the shape of the opposite side of the torso. Once the putty had dried, a bit of putty was added to the waist and shaped to form the missing part of the ammo belt.

After all of the patchwork putty had dried, the arm was secured horizontally to the shoulder. This posture now gives the figure the ability to transport items on his shoulder such as a flag (Photo 17) or a log (Photo 18); at other times, he transports a machine gun as he marches across a shelf of my bookcase. Clearly, this conversion could carry a variety of items.

### **CONCLUDING COMMENTS**

Based on what has just been written, it seems safe to say that constructing a versatile Dimestore is not all that difficult, no more so than making a conversion without versatility. For figures converted in this article, all that was needed were a few simple tools, two-part epoxy putty, and glue; these tools and materials are nothing more than the rudimentary “stuff” used to construct basic Dimestore conversions.

Compared with basic conversions, versatile conversions have more “pizzazz” simply because the look of one can easily be changed by simply changing an item that a figure is handling. And when several of these “little guys” are collectively displayed, periodically replacing old objects with new ones, the vista is refreshed.

It should be understood that once a versatile conversion has been created along with a few interchangeable objects, work need not end at this time as it does when a basic conversion is finished. There is always the challenge of making more interesting items for a figure to handle; therefore, work on a versatile conversion can potentially continue on-and-off for a very long time.

In conclusion, for those of you who convert toy soldiers of any size, I hope that this article has provided enough motivation for you to try your hand at converting some of your pieces into versatile figures. If you do try, you may be pleasantly surprised to find that making conversions with versatility introduces new challenges into your hobby. Not only will you have to work on developing a vision of what a conversion will handle, but you will also have to resolve how to construct objects that a figure will hold. Challenges like these don't normally surface when creating basic conversions.

On the other hand, for those of you who are not involved in converting toy soldiers, I hope that after reading this article you come away with a better understanding of what some of us are contemplating and doing in our mutual hobby of “toy soldering”.



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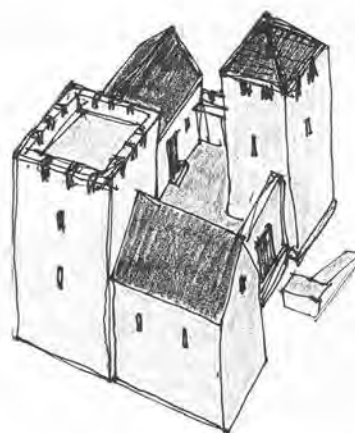
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# MYSTERY FIGURES POP UP AT AUCTION. WHO MADE THEM?

*Text and photos by Henry I. Kurtz*

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Photo 1 U.S. Grant



Photo 2 Phil Sheridan



Photo 3 George A. Custer



Photo 4 Stonewall Jackson

Some years ago, while previewing a toy soldier auction in New York City, I came across a group of mounted figures of American Civil War generals, both Union and Confederate, which the auctioneer had lumped together with a damaged Britains Band of the Royal Scots Greys. Being a Civil War buff of long standing, I jumped on the lot and purchased it for a modest price.

The figures appear to be custom made, and as far as I can determine are unique. The riders are good likenesses of the various generals and the horses are well sculpted, each one different. There is no maker's label, but the paper identification tags have the name "Melo," which also appears under some of the bases, along with "b.a./84," which Ray Haradin believes may stand for "Buenos Aires, 1984." Peter Grenhill and others who looked at the figures, or photos, have not been able to come up with any better explanation of their origin.

Presented here is a sampling of the Melo figures. The first photo illustrates my personal favorite of the group. It is a vignette of Lieutenant General Ulysses S. Grant during the Wilderness or Overland Campaign of 1864, mounted on his favorite horse "Cincinnati." Accompanying him is a color sergeant carrying the regimental standard of the 4th U. S. Cavalry, which provided escort for the general.

Certainly the most dramatic of the figures is a highly animated representation of "Little Phil" Sheridan mounted on his famous black charger "Rienzi" as he might have looked when he rallied his army at the

Battle of Cedar Creek during the Shenandoah Valley Campaign of 1864. The Union victory secured the valley for the North and helped President Lincoln win re-election the following month (see photo two).

Last among the Union generals here represented is George Armstrong Custer, the "Boy General," whose brilliant cavalry charges during the Civil War, especially at Gettysburg, secured him a place among the outstanding cavalry leaders of that conflict. Custer is shown in a modified version of his self-designed uniform, including his trademark red cravat, widebrimmed black hat and pale blue sailor's shirt with general's stars (photo three).

The two Confederate generals in the group are Thomas J. "Stonewall" Jackson and "Jeb" Stuart. Jackson is shown peering into the distance, field glasses in one hand, reins in the other, looking for signs of Union troops. (See photo four.)

The "Jeb" Stuart figure shows the youthful cavalry leader of the Army of Northern Virginia wearing a floppy campaign hat and full uniform, and both he and his spirited horse seem eager for action. All of the figures are roughly 85mm in height, with the riders approximately 65mm tall.

It is a pity that more is not known about these distinctive figures. One can only hope that additional information about the maker of these miniatures will surface in the future.

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**August 9th-Sunday** Toy Soldier Extravaganza Toy Soldier Show and auction Holiday Inn Livonia. 17123 Laurel Park Drive. Livonia MI. 419-662-8697. Contact Joe Saine jos@josephsaine.com

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**September 27th-Sunday** 35th OTSN Chicago Toy Soldier Show Hyatt Regency, Woodfield. Schaumburg. 10am-3pm. Contact dimestores@aol.com Don Pielin 630-497-1239. Steve Sommers 708-383-6525.

**October 18th- Sunday.** Columbus Ohio Toy Soldier Show. Tall Timbers Banquet and Conference Center, 1381 National Road SW. Reynoldsburg, Ohio 43068. Contact Rod Chapman 740-924-2531

**November** Old Toy Soldier Auctions USA. Date to be announced.

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*Dates and times are correct at the time of printing; however, it is strongly advised that before traveling, contact is made with show organizers to confirm date(s).*

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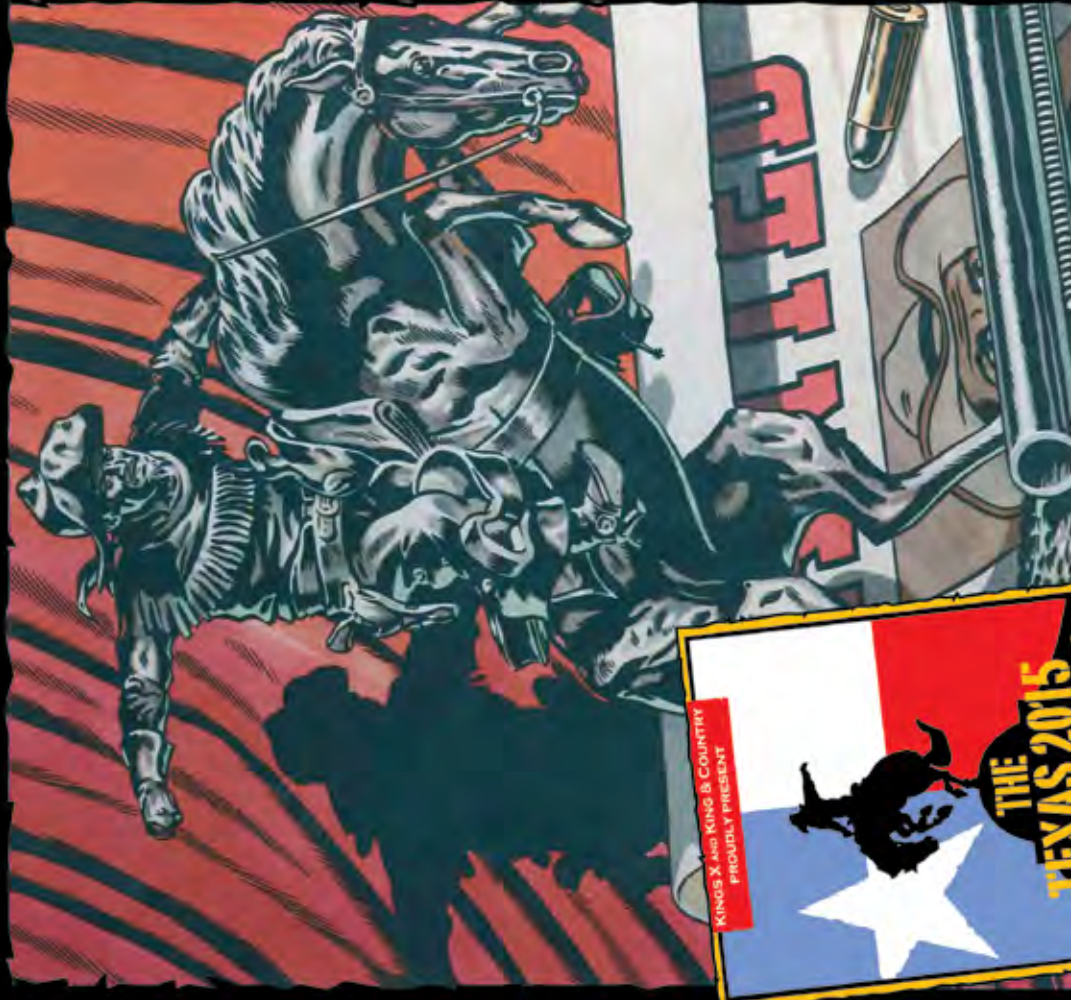
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Henry V led his troops into battle and participated in hand-to-hand fighting. The French king of the time, Charles VI, did not command the French army himself as he suffered from severe, repeating illnesses and moderate mental incapacitation. Instead, the French were commanded by Constable Charles d'Albret and various prominent French noblemen of the Armagnac party.

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