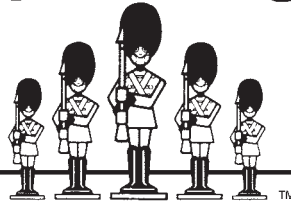


Summer
2012

The Journal for Collectors

Volume 36 Number 2
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Photograph courtesy Norman Joplin

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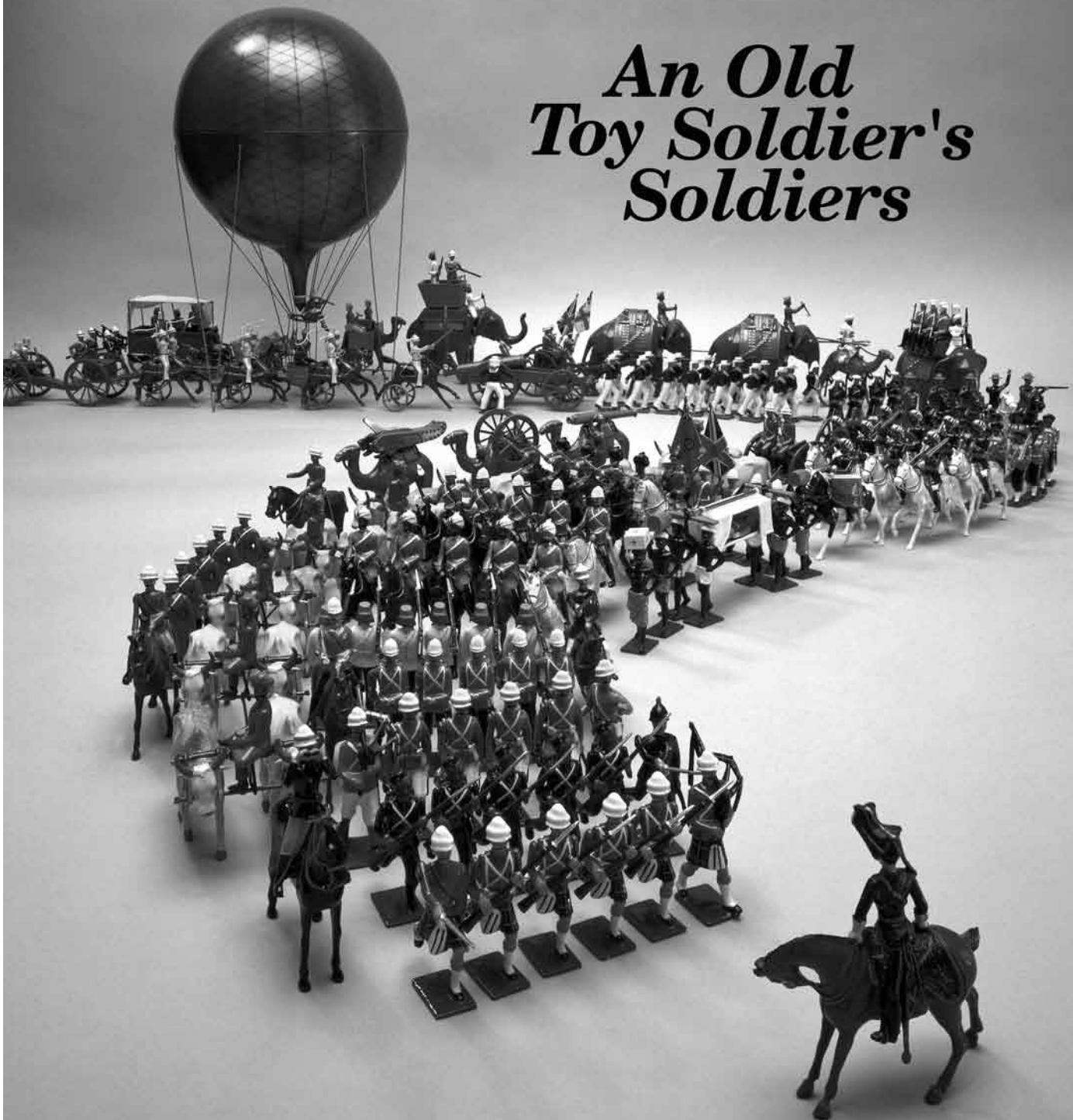
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RICHARD O'BRIEN ... A TRUE LEGEND TO OUR HOBBY

By Stan Alekna

Without the sharing of this extensive research, the hobby would never have risen to the extent that it has.

His publication of *Collecting Toy Soldiers*, thirty years ago in 1988, became the "bible" for the collecting community. The "gospel" from St. Richard was the final word on any matter. His subsequent publications of *Collecting American Made Toy Soldiers*, *Collecting Foreign Made Toy Soldiers*, and *Collecting Toy Cars and Trucks*, solidified his title, coined by Jack Mathews, of "The Godfather of American Toy Soldier Research".

Richard wrote over thirty books including several novels but many collectors have no idea of his broad and successful career before he turned to writing.

Citing from the back cover of the very recent publication of Richard's "*The Barclay Catalog Book* & *The Second Catalog Book*" by RAMBLE HOUSE:
"As a press agent, he (Richard)

was responsible for kicking off the careers of Woody Allen, Bill Cosby, Joan Rivers and Flip Wilson. As a comedy writer, he has written for a number of syndicated and magazine cartoonists, for Joan Rivers, Victor Borge and since 1968 has had a continuing job as gag writer and idea man for Woody Allen".

Yet with all his success and professional interaction with so many in the entertainment field, Richard was a very humble, kind, soft-spoken, and gentle individual. No question was too dumb, no collector was too much of a novice for Richard to help. When Richard was actively attending toy soldier shows around the country, his table was nearly always surrounded by collectors seeking information from the "Godfather".

He is and will be, terribly missed by so many of us. There will never be another.

With the passing of Richard O'Brien, we have lost the most extensive researcher, mentor and a dear friend to those of us who were privileged to know him well over the years. Richard was always available to discuss, debate, and investigate alleged new discoveries and when they were critically validated, add the information to his next edition. He was on a continuous search for factual information from catalogs and documentation and spent many hours interviewing employees and relatives of the major toy soldier companies. He more than any other person, chronicled the manufacture of toy figures and then provided this data via his many books.

~ O'BRIEN FAMILY OBITUARY ~

Richard O'Brien, died May 18, 2012 at age 78. He was born in Flushing, New York, the son of the late John and Milada O'Brien. He graduated from Brooklyn College and served in the United States Army. He had a varied career as a press agent, gag writer, expert on collectible toys, creator of two syndicated comic strips, and writer of both fiction and non-fiction. As a press agent, he was responsible for kicking off the careers of Woody Allen, Bill Cosby, Joan Rivers, and Flip Wilson. Since 1968 he has had a continuing job as a gag writer for Woody Allen. While living in Beaufort SC he became a surfer at the age of 63 and was a regular at Hunting Island State Park where he was accepted as "just one of the guys" by the much younger regular surfers.

He is survived by his wife of 53 years, Mary Ann, and four children, Alison Marek (Alex) of Playa Vista CA, Sean O'Brien (Elaine) of Neptune NJ, Rebecca Gage (Mike) of Austin TX, and Julie Petoia of Tryon NC. He is also survived by eight grandchildren, Cabot Lee, Talia, Malynne, Gabriel, Jacob, Jeremiah, Callum, and Evangeline Petoia, all of Tryon. There will be no funeral services but the family will be at home at 60 Bickford Avenue, Tryon NC from 3:00 until 6:00 on Wednesday, May 23rd.

Advance Notice

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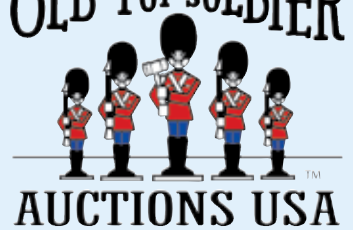


OTS AT THE CHICAGO SHOW

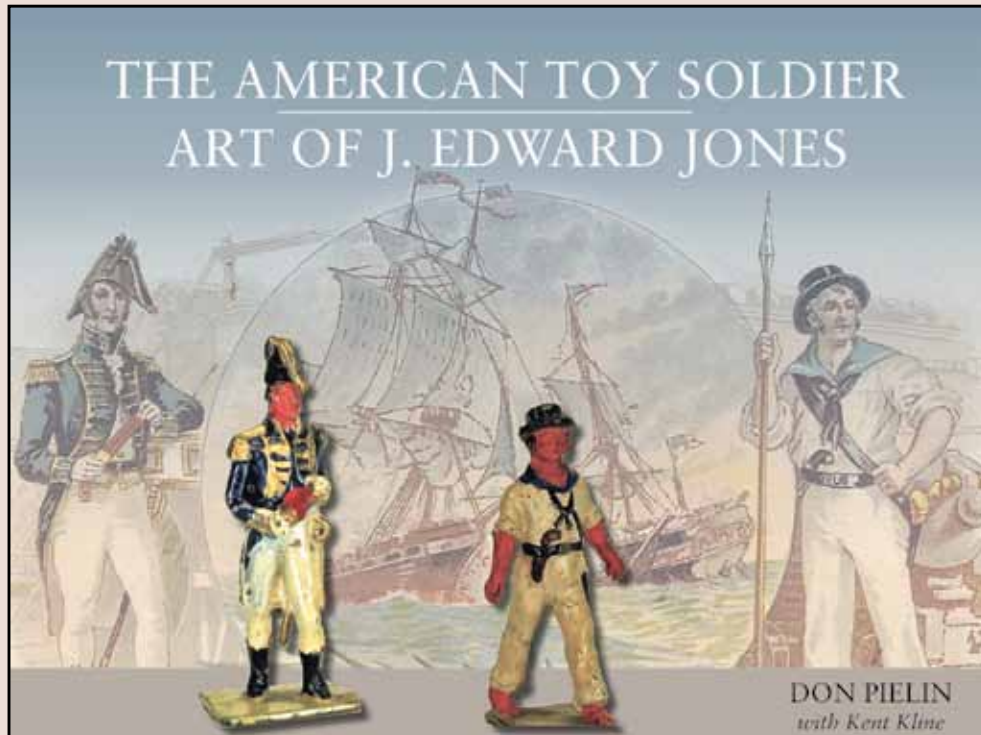
OLD TOY SOLDIER AUCTION'S SPECIAL EVENT.

The single figure collection of the late K. Warren Mitchell and other prominent collectors will be for sale at a special event on Saturday, September 22nd at 10:00 a.m. at the Hyatt Regency. The sale will be located on the fourth floor of the hotel - see full page ad, next page.

OLD TOY SOLDIER



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The long awaited publication by Don Pielin on J. Edward Jones is nearing completion. Hopefully copies will be available at this years Chicago Show.
Contact Email: pielin@aol.com

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HOBBY NEWS

A TALE OF TOY SOLDIERS AND SPIES

Written by Kristyn Halbig Ziehm • Photos by Tierney Bonini

Wednesday, 06 June 2012

FREDONIA EXPERT WILL BE FEATURED IN TV SHOW AIR DATE AUGUST 7, 2012 AND LATER REPEATS



Patrons at the Niederkorn Library in Port Washington were surprised recently to find a crew filming footage for the popular Public Broadcasting System show “History Detectives.”

“People were using the library, checking things out,” Library Director David Nimmer said. “There might be some slightly dumbfounded looks on the people in the background on film.”

“It was a fun experience. They were very professional. They really know their craft.”

The library will provide the backdrop for a research segment on the episode, which will be hosted by Eduardo Pagán, a professor of history at Arizona State University. Pagán and the crew were at the library from 9 a.m. to about 2 p.m. on a recent Saturday to do the filming.

“He was a friendly and warm guy,” Nimmer said.

The crew also shot footage in downtown Port for the series, and interviewed Fredonia resident Norman Joplin at his home.

Joplin is an expert on toy soldiers, the artifact featured on this episode of the show, and said it was a pleasure to work with the crew.

“It was fun,” he said. “They were excellent, a very, very nice group of people. They were professional. They were friendly. They were absolutely 100% professional. It was a pleasure to work with them and to help them.”

Joplin said he counts himself among the fans of “History Detectives” and looks forward to watching the episode.

“I know what I contributed, and I’m looking forward to seeing the other part of it,” he said.

“It might not end up being a lot of footage, but it was pretty neat,” Nimmer said, adding that the crew seemed impressed with the Niederkorn Library and its offerings. “We’ll get a thank you in the credits.”

Pagán said the library was “a great place” to film what they call the research scenes, and the street scenes will be used to lay out the basic story.

The segment, he said, is a World War II mystery that was brought to the show’s attention by a Pueblo, Colorado man raised in Detroit and it revolves around a Nazi spy ring discovered in Michigan in 1943.

The man was Jim Wark, whose best friend when he was 12 was Fritz Thomas. Fritz’s father was a doctor who did an internship in Germany, fell in love with the German culture and visited the country almost annually after that, Pagán said.

Dr. Thomas was also an admirer of Adolph Hitler, he said. While that seems inappropriate today, at the time people didn’t realize Hitler’s plans but instead saw him as a charismatic leader who had a plan to regain his country’s prominence in the world and bring the nation out of a depression, Pagán said.

In 1943, members of a Nazi spy ring were arrested in Detroit, all but one of them foreign-born nationals. Dr. Thomas was one of those arrested.

Wark told the show that he recalled going to his friend’s house the night news broke of Dr. Thomas’ arrest, playing and then heading home.

“That was the last Jim saw his friend,” Pagán said. “The family disappeared. He tried for years to find his friend, but was never able to.”

Wark brought to the show a couple of the Nazi toy soldiers he had — toys Dr. Thomas had purchased in Germany and brought back to Michigan, where his son and Wark played with them. Wark bought some

HOBBY NEWS (Cont.)

of the toys from his friend, and still has about eight of them, Pagán said.

“Those are the last link he has to his friend,” the show host said.

It was those toy soldiers that led the show to Ozaukee County. Joplin is one of the preeminent experts on the subject of toy soldiers, Pagán said, and he provided the show with his take on Wark’s keepsakes.

“It was the Nazi leaders as action figures,” Pagán said of the handpainted figures. “It seems bizarre to us as Americans today, but if you put yourself in their shoes it seems perfectly normal. There’s this new rising rock star named Adolph Hitler, and it makes sense they would make these toys.



“They were really collectible, even back then. They weren’t the toy soldiers little boys play with.”

Joplin, who turned a childhood interest in toy soldiers into a career, has written 10 books on toy soldiers over the last 30 years and is a specialist appraiser for Old Toy Soldier Auctions USA in Pittsburgh.

The 3-1/2-inch tall toy soldiers in question are intricate, made of a composition material — a combination of sawdust and glue molded around a wire frame, Joplin said. They’re collectible now, he said, but aren’t rare.

The main question Pagán and the show had for him was whether the toy soldiers were linked to espionage, Joplin said.

“I couldn’t see any connection at all,” he said. “This line started out being toys, but as the Third Reich was

gathering momentum, they moved from being toys for children to propaganda for political purposes.”

While the show didn’t find a link between the toys and the spy ring, it did discover what happened to the Thomas family, Pagán said.

He said the show obtained the FBI files on Thomas.

“When the spy ring was rounded up, some of them were genuine spies. Honestly speaking, I think in his case it was guilt by association,” Pagán said.

Thomas was incarcerated for about four years, tried and convicted of conspiring to spy, but the case against him was so weak that even the jury asked the judge for leniency, Pagán said. The verdict was thrown out on procedural issues and the government eventually dropped it because the case was so weak.

“The Thomas family fought these charges from day one,” Pagán said, noting the doctor lost his medical license and the family’s savings were frozen by the government. “It was a very difficult time for them. They went from living a reasonably comfortable life to depending on the generosity of strangers.”

They moved to Ohio to start life over again, he said. Fritz had to drop out of school so he could work to support his family, but he still went to classes at night. By 1955, he moved to Nebraska and eventually became a prominent journalist and environmental activist.

“Sadly, we weren’t able to bring about a reunion,” Pagán said, noting that Fritz died in 1999.

The film shot in Ozaukee County will become part of a roughly 13-minute episode, Pagán said, adding the crew is still collecting footage. It takes about 15 hours of raw footage for each episode.

This season of “History Detectives” premieres June 17. Although an air date for the Nazi spy ring episode hasn’t been set yet, Pagán said he expects it will likely air in late September or early October.

This isn’t the first time “History Detectives” has filmed in Ozaukee County. In 2006, a crew visited Grafton for a show revolving around the village’s ties to Paramount Records and the musicians who recorded at the Wisconsin Chair Co.’s local studio in the 1920s and 30s.

Image Information: THE PBS TELEVISION SERIES “History Detectives” was recently in Fredonia and Port Washington. Host Eduardo Pagán (left) consulted Fredonia resident and toy soldier expert Norman Joplin to determine whether toy soldiers might have been used by a spy ring during World War II. FIGURES SUCH AS these depicting Adolph Hitler before World War II started out as toys but were used for political purposes as the Third Reich gained power, according to Norman Joplin of Fredonia. These collectibles are part of a lot sold by Old Toy Soldier Auctions, USA, which is based in Pittsburgh, not those used as a basis for the “History Detectives” episode.



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SPECTACULAR SOLDIER COLLECTION

The complete 40 year Elastolin and Lineol toy soldier and vehicle collection of Jack Matthews is set to be sold in two parts starting in September for the 13, 14 & 15 Auction. Highlights include a Hausser half track and an eight wheeled armored car. There are also many flag bearers and other rare figures from the Hausser archives, purchased in 1980's. Many foreign troops, motorcycles, bunkers, and approximately 40 lots of tinplate vehicles round out this auction. Mark your calendars; this is one sale you will not want to miss!

TOYDELL LONDON CEREMONIAL SOUVENIR TOY SOLDIERS

By Norman Joplin

Toydell and Rangemaster were trade names for the products of Philip B Ducker who produced synthetic resin, gloss finished figures depicting a wide selection of British Ceremonial soldiers around the 1953 period in London.

Mr. Ducker described his figures, which were made at his works in Tooting South West London as having been finished in "Topic" paint thus giving them a "Sheen".

The items were approximately 4 inches in height measuring from the base to the forehead of each figure ,although the size did vary from time to time depending on the subject matter. The bases are tin and each figure carries a circular paper sticker with the brand name Toydell.

The London Souvenir market seemed to be the aim of Mr. Ducker's venture and the subject matter in most cases reflected the uniforms most commonly seen by tourists to London.

In 1953 on a visit to Windsor I recall my mother purchasing some of these items for me from a gift shop near Windsor Castle, some of which I still retain and are included in the illustrations in this article, yet despite being an avid collector I was unable to locate any others for many more years. The next time I encountered a group of Toydell items was at one of the first Florida Toy Soldier shows in the nineties when I was lucky enough to purchase a number from collector Tom Scott. It was

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Grenadier Guards Side Drummer Variations

TOYDELL

LONDON CEREMONIAL SOUVENIR TOY SOLDIERS (Cont.)



RHA



Khaki Circa 1950

another 10 years or so before another group was found at the Toy Soldier Show in London.

The figures therefore are fairly rare, being slightly larger and more in line with souvenirs rather than in scale with 54mm toy soldiers, they do not seem to have survived in great quantities. The advertisement illustrated above indicates that the figures were available "From London's Principle Stores" and were described as "The Country's Most Exclusive Toy" With 40 Figures and adding being the boast from the advertisement, there are obviously still more to find. 21 examples including a Sentry box are illustrated here with a Guards Officer illustrated in the advertisement bringing the total to 22.

If any readers have any examples not shown in this article please contact OTS Editor Norman Joplin Telephone 262 692 3913 Email info@normanjoplin.com in order that the article can be updated in a future OTS magazine.

During my research when compiling the *Great Book of Hollow Cast Figures* I did manage to track down and locate a telephone number for Philip Ducker but during a brief conversation with him it transpired that the venture had not been a success and the mention of the company brought back unhappy memories.



Partly Finished Highland Drummer



Grenadier Guards

TOYDELL LONDON CEREMONIAL SOUVENIR TOY SOLDIERS *(Cont.)*



Household Cavalry



Sentry Box & Sentry



Guards Band



Sentry Box Base



Yeoman and Chelsea Pensioner



Paper Stickers on Bases

BOOK REVIEW

Johillco-Second to None

By Philip Dean • Reviewed by Russ Bednarek

Any discussion of British toy soldier manufacturers inevitably begins with Britains. The titan of the British toy soldier world set the standard for hollow-cast figures. Numerous manufacturers attempted to capture a portion of the collecting market and Johillco was one of the more successful firms. Following the success of his first book "Wend-al", author Philip Dean applies his exceptional photographic skills in his latest tome "Johillco-Second to None".

Johillco's origin may be traced back to 1914 with the production of founder George William Wood's hollow-cast figures. Many collectors preferred Britains to Johillco. However, Johillco was one of the first manufacturers to offer individual figures for purchase. Johillco did produce an exceptional coronation coach and accompanying sets for the coronation of George V. Production volume gradually increased and at the outset of World War II the molds were transported to northern England for safe keeping. Post war production saw 70% of Johillco's figures being exported to the US market. In 1956 production of plastic figures began with the quality being somewhat disappointing. Production was halted in 1967 with the molds offered for sale.

In the foreword, Dean declares his intent "to show Johillco figures in a fun and colorful way" and he certainly succeeds. The initial chapter is comprised of multiple pages of vintage Johillco advertisements. The subsequent thirteen chapters examine the various military and civilian ranges created and produced by Johillco. All photographs are in color and the size and exceptional clarity are a reflection of Dean's photographic skill and ability.



A typical page will have four individual figures, each with their own photograph, permitting the collector to examine and study the various nuances of each figure. Military and civilian ranges are presented in addition to some of Johillco's more unusual offerings. In an attempt to capitalize on the souvenir market, Johillco produced the "Black Magic by Dorre" range. These large figures were painted black and gold depicting highlanders and various birds and animals. Named after Johillco staff member Dolores Brown, the figures proved to be unpopular and are now highly sought after. A successful venture was the three piece boxed set of King George V, Queen Mary and the Prince of Wales busts that was created for the 1935 Silver Jubilee.

Dean's exquisite photographs make The Box Art chapter, depicting Johillco's colorful box art and "Playpacks", a visual feast. Playpacks were scenic themed boxes containing appropriate figures. When the box was opened, the interior displayed a scenic

backdrop to create a small diorama. Common Playpack themes were; "Wild West", "Farmyard" and "Knights". The Playpack line expanded from twelve offerings in 1953 to twenty-two the following year.

Philip Dean has gone to great lengths to create a quality book. The 397 page hardback book is printed on heavy semi-gloss paper that further enhances the physical quality of Dean's effort. Long on pictures and short on text, "Johillco-Second to None" is an exceptional photographic reference exploring the figures produced by Johillco. Collectors will be pleased to learn that the final chapter explains the history of Johillco production and was written by toy soldier expert Norman Joplin specifically for this book. "Johillco-Second to None" is a superb reference work that belongs in every collector's library. Collectors should contact Mr. Dean to order a copy the cost being \$140 which includes shipping. Paypal is a convenient option for payment. Highly recommended.

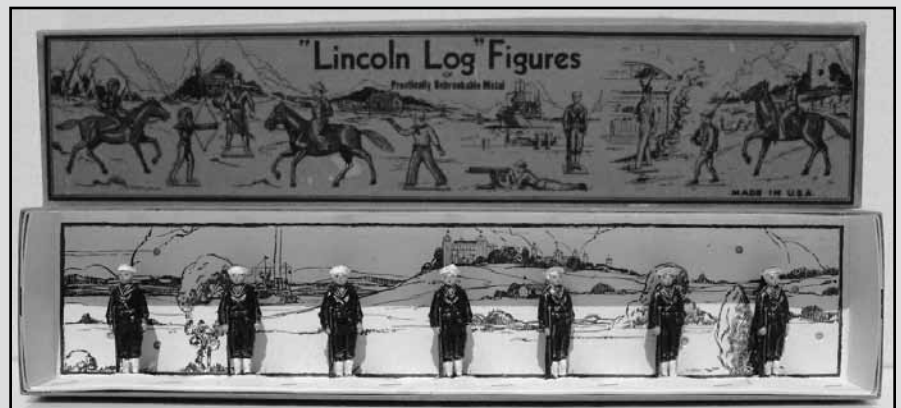
Thank you to Philip Dean who generously supplied a copy for this review.

Contact Information
philip@philipedean.com



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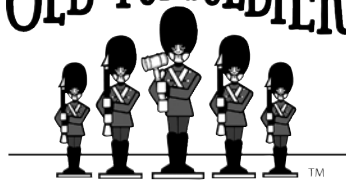
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AUCTION REVIEW

OLD TOY SOLDIER



AUCTIONS USA

MILITARY FANS HEEDED THE CALL TO BID IN OLD TOY SOLDIER AUCTIONS' SALE OF PROMINENT COLLECTIONS

By Catherine Saunders Watson

PITTSBURGH – Battle lines were drawn in the sand long before Old Toy Soldier Auctions conducted its June 2-3 sale featuring the collections of Bob Bailey and the late K. Warren “Mitch” Mitchell. “Absentee bidding was brisk,” said OTSA’s owner, Ray Haradin, describing bidder interest in the run-up to the 1,247-lot sale. “There were 117 absentee bidders. Add to that, 14 phone bidders and another 220 people online and we had all the makings for a very exciting event.” The sale realized \$385,000 (inclusive of 20% buyer’s premium) and resulted in “a lot of very happy buyers,” Haradin said.

The auction offerings were led by a strong mix of early Britains acquired by Bob Bailey in the 1970s during his world travels as a Pan Am flight attendant, as well as rare soldiers from the Mitchell collection. A respected veteran dealer and collector, Mitch Mitchell’s influence can be seen in many of today’s top collections. “I know many people in the hobby who bought their very first set of soldiers from Mitch. His reputation created a high level of anticipation leading up to the sale,” Haradin said.

Britains military figures performed extremely well during the Saturday session of the Internet, absentee and phone auction, which was devoted primarily to pre-1970 productions. An excellent Britains display set #1905 titled “Officers and Men of the U.S. Army Air Corps” contained 16 uniformed figures, all still tied in place inside their original box. Produced in 1940/41, the set estimated at \$2,000-\$3,000 marched to a winning bid of \$5,860, making it the top lot of the sale.

Another very rare military set, a Pfeiffer 12-piece representation of a US mounted officer and 11 infantrymen, was presented with its original box and entered in the sale with an \$1,800-\$2,200 estimate. “This was probably the most sought-after item in the sale,” Haradin observed. Made of composition in 90mm size, the soldiers stood at attention as a new owner claimed them for \$4,920.

Postwar Britains made a strong impression, as well, especially the US Civil War display set #2070 with original box. Comprising 30 pieces, the selection played no favorites, with an equal selection of Union and Confederate cavalry, infantry and artillery figures. It sold for \$2,340, nearly twice its high estimate.

Three veteran collectors locked horns over the eight highly desirable Britains Historical Series sets that came from the Bailey collection. Britains produced the non-cataloged 11-set sampler series in 1940/41 exclusively for the New York department store FAO Schwarz. “They’re so hard to come by that collectors who wanted to fill in the blanks in their collection bid very aggressively on the sets they were missing. They knew it might be a very long time before they had another opportunity like this one,” said Haradin. An example of set #1870 – numbered 7 from an edition of 25 – streaked past its \$2,500-\$3,500 estimate to settle at \$5,040.

The opening session also featured Courtenay medieval knights, with lot 206, a rare Z16 Sieur de Crevecoeur, more than doubling its high estimate at \$1,560. An English Timpo Ivanhoe set earned \$3,930; while an example of the always in-demand Cherilea

Baseball set scored \$4,440 against a \$1,500-\$2,000 estimate. Another collector favorite, a Johillco Cowboy Town set with 18-inch-wide foldout Old West town façade and both cowboy and cowgirl figures, was not going to ride off into the sunset without a fight. Determined bidders pushed it to \$4,080, more than three times the high estimate.

Traditionally, OTSA allocates the Sunday session to post-1970 figures. “This is the session that newer collectors gravitate toward, because they know there will be many very nice figures they can buy affordably to create a quality base for their collection. The average lot price for the June 3rd session was \$140. Just about anyone can get into the hobby at that level,” said Haradin.

Mignot and Trophy figures were consistently popular with bidders, but the highlight of the day was an impressive and colorful 35-piece Indian Camel Corps set manufactured by Walt Dineen. It brought an above-estimate price of \$660.

Ray Haradin is planning a big three-day extravaganza for OTSA followers over the weekend of Nov. 16-18. The auction will feature the Arthur Puglisi collection of early Britains, German-made Heyde soldiers and non-Britains productions; as well as a large, diverse selection of pre- and post-1970 soldiers from a host of other consignors.

To contact Ray Haradin, call 412-343-8733 (tollfree: 800-349-8009) or e-mail raytoys@aol.com. Visit OTSA online at www.oldsoldierauctions.com.

AUCTION REVIEW (Cont.)



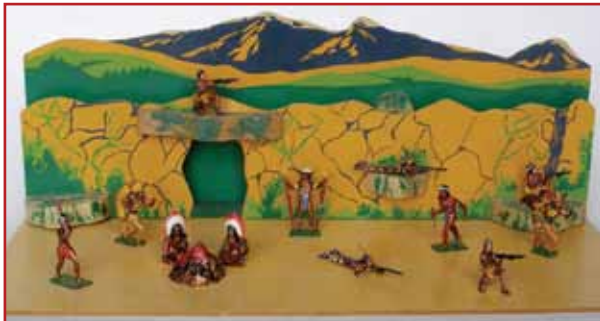
Britains Set # 1870 EXCEPTIONALLY RARE Non Cataloged HISTORICAL SERIES COLLECTION For F.A.O Schwarz \$4240



Britains Set # 104 RARE City Imperial Volunteers with Officer. \$1300



Courtenay Geoffrey Hamelyn, \$650



John Hill - Johillco Indian Camp for British Mid West Importers. \$3200



Britains Set # 188 Zulu Display with Kraals. \$4100



Heyde VERY RARE Size "O" 80 MM American Army Gun Team at Halt Full Dress \$2400



Britains Set # 9 Rifle Brigade at the Slope. \$1300



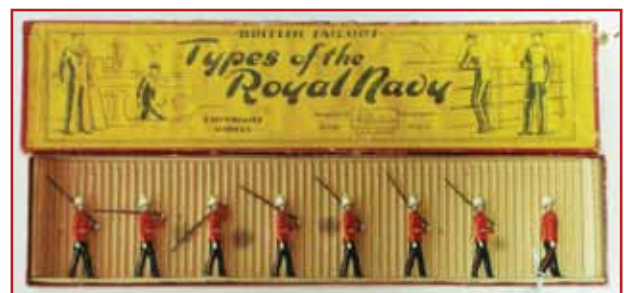
Timpo Exceptionally RARE Ivanhoe Set \$3300



Britains Set # 7 Royal Fusiliers. \$800

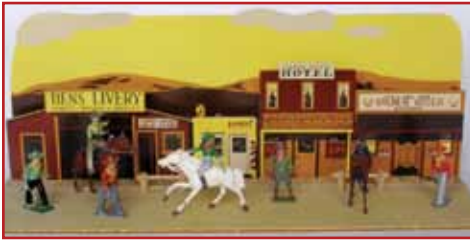


Britains Set # 2186 VERY RARE BAHAMAS POLICE BAND. \$2700



Britains Set # 1626 VERY RARE Royal Marine Light Infantry. \$1000

AUCTION REVIEW (Cont.)



Johillco for British Mid West Importers
18-inch-wide Cowboy Town façade \$4,080



Britains Set # 51 British Army Cavalry Display.
\$900



Pfeiffer Composition VERY RARE US Mounted
Officer and US Infantry with Original Box \$4100



Britains #1873 non-cataloged set from Historical Series
\$5,040



Courtenay # Z16
EXCEPTIONALLY RARE
Sieur de Crevecoeur on
Foot. \$1300



Cherilea Baseball Set \$4,440



Britains Set # 1905 VERY RARE
U.S. ARMY AIR CORPS \$4900



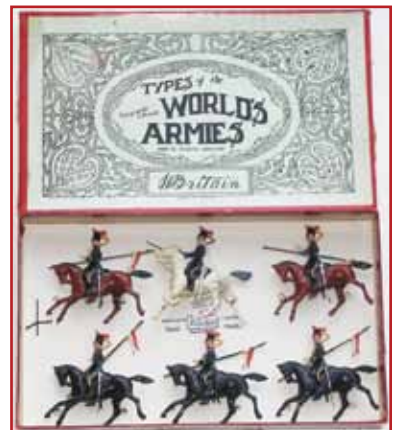
Britains Set # 2070 RARE. US Civil War Display
Set. \$2100



Walt Dineen 35-piece postwar
Indian Camel Corps, \$660



Britains Set # 1635 EXCEPTIONALLY RARE Canadian
Army Display Set. Lord Strathcona \$4100



Britains Set # 1796 VERY RARE 12th
Royal Lancers. \$1700

AUCTION PREVIEW



THE ARTHUR PUGLISI COLLECTIONWITH ADDITIONAL IMPORTANT PROPERTIESTHREE DAY AUCTIONFEATURING OVER 1000 LOTS

November 16, 2012

NEW TOY SOLDIERS (DAY ONE)

ALL THE QUEENS MEN, ALYMER, BANNERS FORWARD, BLENHIEM, CBG, COMBAT READY COLLECTIBLES, CONTE, DAVID SPARROW, DUCAL, EDMUNDS, FRONTLINE, FORCES OF VALOR, GUARDS TOY SOLDIER CENTER, HIRIART, HOCKER, IMPERIAL, LUCCOTTE, JOHN EDEN STUDIO, KING & COUNTRY, MARLBOROUGH, MIGNOT, NEW ERA DIMESTORE, NICHOLSON MINIATURES, NOSTALGIA, PREMIER, ROYAL ESSEX LTD, RUSSIAN MINIATURES, STEADFAST, SOLDIERS BY BOB, TRADITION, TROIANI, TROPHY

November 17 & 18, 2012

OLD TOY SOLDIERS (DAYS TWO AND THREE)

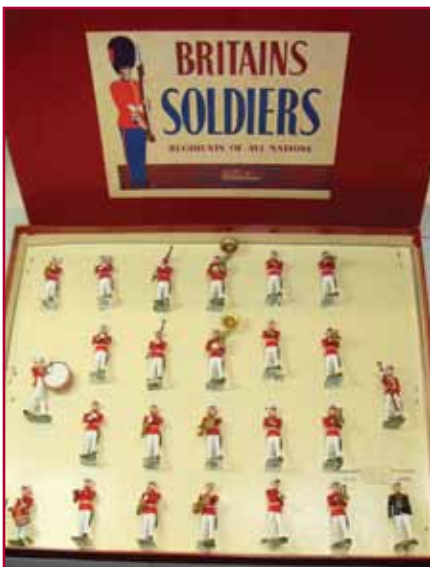
BRITAINS MILITARY PRE AND POST WAR, BRITAINS FARM, BRITAINS ZOO AUTHENTICAST, BALLADA, CHARBENS, CHERILEA, COURTENAY, CRESCENT, ELASTOLIN, F.G TAYLOR, HEYDE, JOHILLCO, JONES, KING AND COUNTRY GLOSS, MARKLIN, METAYER, MIGNOT, NOSTALGIA, RUPRECHT, SALCO, SPENKUCH, STADDEN, TIMPO, WARREN, WILLIAM GRANT, WOLLNER



Britains Set # 218 Spanish Cavalry.



Britains Set # 26 Boer Infantry.



Britains Set # 2112 US Marine Band.



Britains Set 1630 Royal Canadian Dragoons.



Britains Set # 316 Royal Horse Artillery at the Halt.



Britains Set # 255 Green Howards



Britains Set # 2149 Gentlemen at Arms.



Britains Set # 1642 Underslung Lorry and Searchlight.



Britains Set # 1392 Auto Giro.



AUCTION PREVIEW (Cont.)



Britains Set # 2093 Berkshire Regiment Band.



Britains Set # 91 2nd Version US Infantry.



Britains Set 1836 Argentine Naval Cadets.



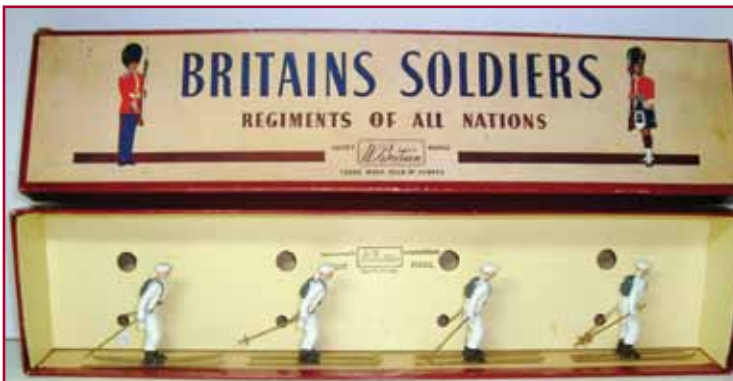
Britains Set # 1894 RAF Pilots.



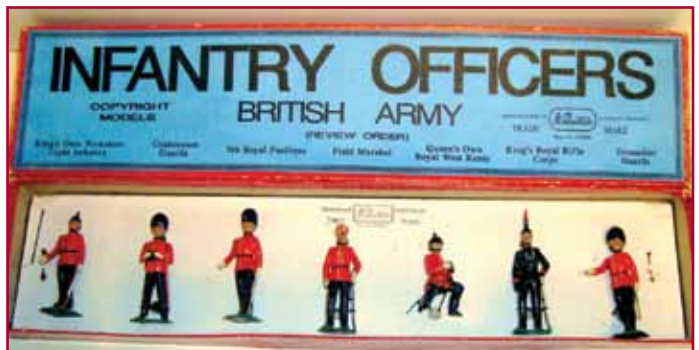
Britains Set # 2048 Beetle Lorry, Clockwork Trailer Howitzer.



Britains Set # 1 Britains First Version Life Guards.



Britains Set # 2017 Ski Troops.



Britains Set # 1908 Infantry Officers.

AUCTION PREVIEW (Cont.)



Britains Set # 1317 Salvation Army Band.



Britains Set # 135 Japanese Cavalry Dark Blue Uniforms.



Britains Set # 170 Greek Cavalry.



Britains Set # 168 Civilians.



Britains Set # 144a Royal Field Artillery in Khaki.



Britains Set # 155 Railway.



Britains Set # 64 Indian Army Display.



Britains Set # 1426 St. Johns Ambulance.

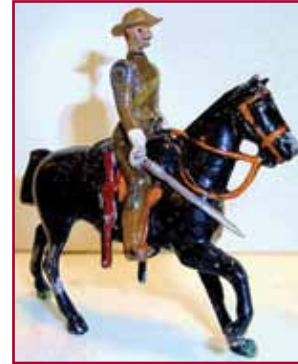


Britains Set # 1313 Eastern People.

AUCTION PREVIEW (Cont.)



Britains Set # 2171 RAF Colour Party.



Britains Boer Cavalry Officer.



Britains Sets 918/976 Boy on Camel.



O'Brien Britains South Australian Lancers.



Britains RC 127 Racing Colours



Britains Set # 143 French Matelots.



Britains Set # 166 Italian Infantry.



Britains Set # 2186 Bahamas Police Band.



Britains Set 433 R.A.F. Monoplane.



Britains Set 104V Gas Pumps.



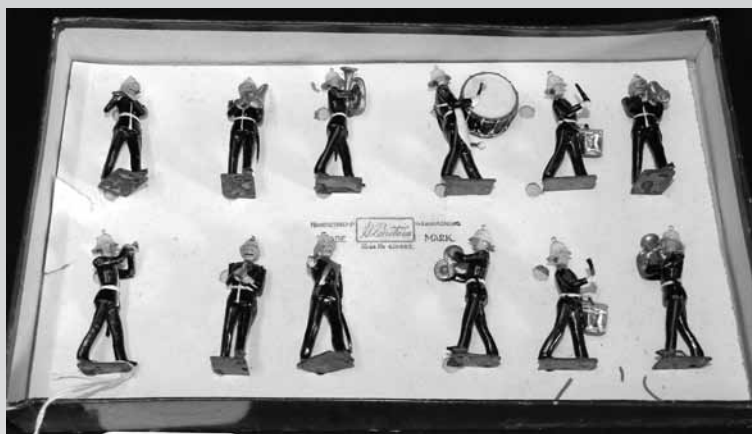
Britains Set # 60F Farm Lorry.

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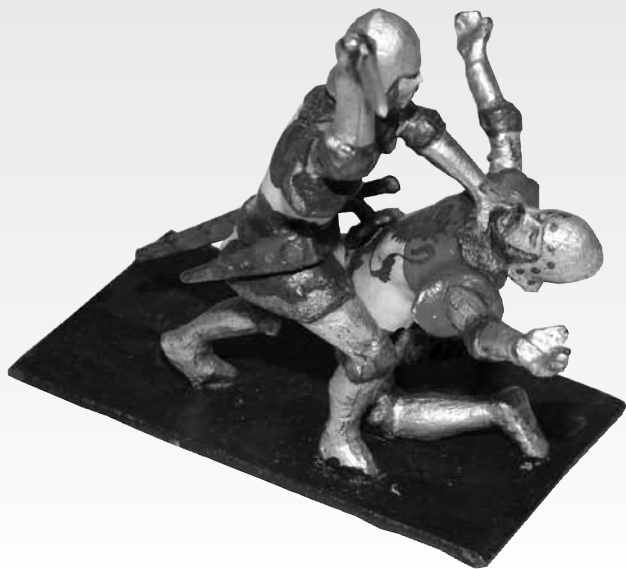
9/15 - Trains and Toys

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WILLIAM ROBERT LANGO... PART III VINTAGE CASTINGS... THE MAGAZINE... THE SHOW... THE INTERNET

By Louis S. Steinberg

Bill's article, Part II in the Old Toy Soldier Winter Issue of '012, recapped the final days and the terminus fatal demise of Barclay's New Jersey Plant, sitting high and mighty on its prime cliff parcel overlooking Hoboken down below and Manhattan afar. Here's where I cue the readers to begin smoothly humming "Those Were the Days My Friend."

Also mentioned in the article's closing was Bill's fidgety negotiating to buy some toy soldier and vehicle molds from a man seeking monies to treat himself to a new boat.

Well, I was told much later that the deal was made and the seller of the Barclay molds was on his way to buy his boat.

Bill, however, now with the purchase of so many molds, precipitated an adventure in our Hobby that as time



Just Our Bill a Terrific Kind of Guy

passed would endure for almost forty years.

Yes, there always will continue to be the unbeknownst among us that perchance, as the aphorism goes, "will come out gold-plated."

Bill did mention that the aged original Barclay molds weighed so much that his old Volvo station wagon could hardly make it up the steep North Bergen Hills with such a load.

He said, "All in all, there were close to a hundred, mostly bronze, molds in the deal. They ranged in style from slush-cast vehicles to WW I Doughboys. The podfoots; winter figures; and, a grouping of little people were only bronze-faced, die-cast.

"Considering the molds were handled like scrap metal when the Barclay Plant was closing, they fortunately were still in excellent condition. I couldn't wait to do some sample castings! So I began experimenting by using dental plaster. Those sample castings were a success!"

For Bill, the dilemma now became to cast figures from the molds in metal. Soon he found several New Jersey sources that befriended and worked with him steering him in the right direction. The idea for Vintage Castings was being formulated.

"It was the nearby Benigno brothers who owned *Hollowcast* that really helped me out and years later manufactured some slush-cast molds for me. I could not have gone forward without their vast experience and their introductions to others. George Buhler who made a range of die-cast vehicles in the 50s was another great inspiration. In fact, when he closed his company, I bought their die-cast molds which I still have today," explained Bill.

Bill perceived that all those he went to for help were small business men which soon impacted his own thinking: "Why not turn my own hobby into a small business?? After all, on most weekends I was already doing local train meets and other shows," he theorized.

It was then he took the big leap to out-sourcing the casting of WW I Doughboys and vehicles from his old original molds. Together with the help of

his father-in-law, they did the final painting and finishing of the toy soldiers and autos.

Both items began selling and making a worthy profit, and now its growth for sure could be called a "small business."

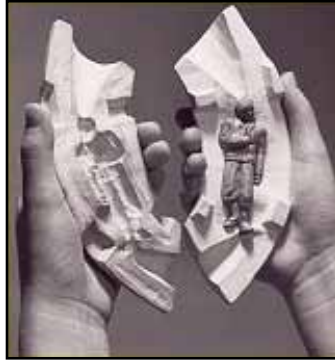
The business was first registered in New Jersey under the banner Vintage Castings. Then in 1981, it was incorporated as **Vintage Castings, Inc.**

Bill said, "That's when I put a one page flyer together showing all the figures and vehicles we offered in our line. Business began to grow to the point that I needed to have new molds made of the old figures, such as Manoil's Hostess, Boxer, Hot Papa, Banjo Player and the Paymaster. The same happened with Barclay's Santa on Skies, Tall Grenade Thrower, Legionnaires, Kneeling Nurse, Jones' Pill Box and a few others.

WILLIAM ROBERT LANGO... (Cont.)



Wow! Do You See What's Out There?



Wounded Resting in His Mold



Remake of the Great War's Renault Tank

"Those were the enthusiastic days in the Dimestore Hobby when it showed no signs of slowing. Eventually we came out with a multi-page catalog when our line of figures and vehicles reached the large quantity we currently offered."

Although Bill was always looking for new figures to reproduce, he soon learned that the cost of designing and producing a new bronze hollow-cast slush mold could exceed \$1,000.00.

Around the late 80s he approached his Hobby friend, Charles Blethen, who owned and operated a small aluminum foundry and was making parts for older toys. Charles took Bill's suggestion to produce in aluminum some hard to find Dimestore figures like the All-Nu Girls Band, Majorette and the WW I Signalman.

He also reproduced Barclay's Detective and Robber, the Soldier with Dog and the never made Small Santa, as well as Manoil's unproduced Traffic Cop.

Within a short few years, every household that had a computer could go to e-Bay on the Internet and search for toy soldiers. Bill's strong catalog sales lessened. He said, "American Dimestore figures considered Rare or Scarce on the tables at Shows, now turned up frequently on-line, and the more common pieces were found in abundance on e-Bay, often at bargains.

"However, the very opposite had happened on-line with my Barclay and Metal Cast vehicles' offerings. Yearly sales always increased.

"Factually, there are many more Vehicle collectors than there are Dimestore Figure collectors!

Vintage Castings, since its earlier catalog, has not printed another. Nor has it come out with additional listings. Yet, I am told that the sales of figures and vehicles remain brisk. There you go again... "coming out gold-plated."

The Magazine...

Toy Soldier Review:

During the time that Bill was absorbed and attentive with the business of Vintage Castings, a large part of its operation depended on the development and printing of its product, its show advertising, and its Dimestore catalogs.

Bill was then working closely with a local typesetting studio whose owner, Tony Bracco, had a vast knowledge of the commercial printing business. Tony, being a history buff, also shared his passion for collecting toy soldiers and things military.

"We often held lengthy brainstorming meetings about expanding each of our businesses. One day a suggestion to publish a magazine about my hobby came-up. We listed all the positive and negatives we could think of. The positives won. So, we set some goals on coming out with a quarterly publication.

"The summer of 1984 unveiled the premier issue of *Toy Soldier Review*.

"At that debut, the results were better than we expected. With the cover price at \$3.00, we needed a circulation of at least 4,000 to turn a profit. If the cover price was raised, I feared the loss of circulation. In our small Hobby it was a daunting task to increase subscriptions," Bill reminded himself.

WILLIAM ROBERT LANGO... (Cont.)



Come on Guys, Both See'em! See What? Are We to Shoot the Pigeon?

Yet, I am told that circulation did come close to 3,000. Advertising revenues were episodically unstable and printing costs were ever increasing. The magazine had become a virtual "money pit." Plus, the rise of the Internet had a negative effect.

Bill said, "We led a gallant struggle to continue publishing, but after three loans to keep it afloat, the reality of harsh dollars and cents caused us to cease.

"Toy Soldier Review, after almost twenty years of Hobby life, succumbed."

The Show...

East Coast Toy Soldier Show and Sale:

This year will celebrate the 30th anniversary of the East Coast Show! Happy, Happy Everything!!

Today's Toy Soldier Shows evolved from those events held by various Model Soldier Societies. Their emphasis was the judging of finely detailed



Come to Keystone. We Service All Makes of Cars, Vans and Trucks!

Model Soldiers...Not Toy Soldiers! It was soon discovered that the majority of vendors, exhibitors and attendees were also toy soldier enthusiasts.

The early 1980s was when Steve Sommers and Don Pielin, then publishers of the *Old Toy Soldier Newsletter*, ventured to sponsor their first Chicago Toy Soldier Show which has become the state's, if not the world's, premier Show. Awestruck collectors called it an instant success!!

"I had always thought of organizing some sort of Show," recalls Bill. "The enormous success of the OTSN Show was the absolute force that inspired me. I now believe that it also incubated all the Toy Soldier Shows that followed."

Bill began thinking of a place that had the accoutrements to accommodate the Show he envisioned. Being very familiar with Schuetzen Park, located in nearby North Bergen, NJ, he booked the Main Casino Ballroom that was often used for major conventions, political events and weddings.



Never Produced Paratrooper with MG



I Got Him! No I Got Him! No He's Over Here!!



OK, Last Time! Break It Up!!

WILLIAM ROBERT LANGO... (Cont.)

“More importantly”, emphasizes Bill, “was the Park’s close proximity to Manhattan with NY City busses stopping right outside its doors. It also offered plenty of free parking. Even though we got a rental break, it wasn’t without conditions, like set-up and knock-down times, if there was a conflict with any event. Our first Show, 120 vendors and 1000 collectors, was a great success!

“For subsequent Shows, I had to reserve, as well, two more smaller ballrooms. Even then, we couldn’t provide enough space for all the vendors who wanted to participate. Soon the Park altered its facility space and parking then became a big problem. I had to find another location.”

Fairleigh Dickinson’s University in Hackensack became Bill’s next choice. He was able to service on one level in the school’s large gym, Rothman Center, at the beginning about 300 vendor tables and by the late 90s it peaked to 360.

The Internet...

On-Line with e-Bay:

Bill speculated, “With the advent of the Internet, the ease of buying and selling toy soldiers on-line, maybe slowed down Show attendance for a while. I think collectors eventually realized that buying figures on the Internet really wasn’t as good as going to a Show.

“What in the world can take the place of the interest of the many attendees, the camaraderie of your friends, the physical examination of the soldier held in your hand and taking it to the seller face to face?? In fact, our last few Shows have seen an increase in vendor and exhibitor table sales and in paid attendance.

“The Show itself also has evolved. Although it is still a Toy Soldier Show, I have seen another increase by more participating Antique Toy dealers.”



Bill Passing Out Toy Soldiers, Donated by Richard Conte, to All in Scout Pack 350
From L to R: Bill; Paul Schaefer, Bear Den Leader, Scout Pack 350; Will Schaefer, Arrow-of-Light Scout 350; Edward Schaefer, Bear Scout 350.
Photo Taken by the Courtesy of Noel Schlageter

WILLIAM ROBERT LANGO... (Cont.)

In the past, sets and single figures would command high prices. Presently with e-Bay's massive growth, users are listing more sets and individual figures, resulting in some saturation and lower prices.

On the more important positive side, the Internet with its glut of soldiering websites, at the click of a mouse, instantly brings together worldwide collectors, thus allowing the sharing of an incomparable wealth of Hobby data, knowledge and enthusiasm.

Thoughts About...

The Hobby

Today, technology has absorbed leisure time. The Hobby's aging old guard and prices dwindling as more and more collections come on the market. Nevertheless, growth is taking place in both connoisseur and life-like, metal and plastic sculpted figures.

Sophisticated collectors are always willing to pay for the best. Even amongst the naïve the penchant for toy soldiers is seldom marginalized and forever perennial.



Box of 24 Mini Figures

Bill contemplates, "It's the love of history that continues to play a big part in the Hobby. In past years, collectors would store their toy soldiers tied in their boxes. Today, I see many collectors constructing dioramas to display their miniature fighting men in more lifelike settings. Nowadays, the Hobby thus seems to be more appealing to the newcomers.

"I feel other collecting hobbies are so very serious and without much joy. But do observe soldier collectors, they are delighted in what they do. Here is real fun that few other hobbies can boast.

"We also must not forget how the presence friendly camaraderie plays in our hobby. For years I have been able to contact an unnumerable amount of collectors who could truthfully answer any question that arose. This is a security buffer that has yielded real confidence in many situations from buying to selling. For that I am forever thankful."

Bill still enjoys all his early playthings... his trains, slush cars and particularly his older Dimestore toy soldiers. The mystic of just holding one old toy soldier in hand somehow elicits a positive retreat to the happiness of Auld Lang Syne.

When working with them, he said, "Sometimes if I close my eyes, I can see my Grandpa Mike handing me a toy soldier and/or my Dad buying me a new slush car at Woolworths.

"Now getting a bit longer in the tooth, I often settle back and make time to build a small diorama, restore an old toy or repaint a Dimestore."

In bringing to a close the articles about the saga of Bill in *Old Toy Soldier*, I know for sure he wished to offer special thanks to those, too numerous to mention, who although are now gone, will be truly remembered for taking the time to share their wisdom and enthusiasm with him.

Herewith, I express my own personal THANKS, Bill, for allowing me the opportunities to relate in depth your colorful business and Hobby anecdotes.

Readers, you must please take heed, that at any of Bill's Shows, a policy of **Free Admission** is always in force for Veterans wearing their VFW or American Legion Caps; Active Duty Military with ID; and, all Scouts in Uniform.

For William Robert Lango, his old toys and toy soldiers are a bridge to his past. For solace, we all should at times try to visit our own bridges.

"I love 'em. Every last one of them!" exclaimed Bill.

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SHOW REPORT

71ST ANNUAL MFCA SHOW AND MART MAY 18th & 19th, 2012

By J. Noel Schlageter

Attendees of the 71st Annual MFCA Show and Mart were greeted by a Casino when they arrived at the Valley Forge Convention Center, King of Prussia, PA. However at 8:00 AM on Friday, May 18th, 53 dealers marched past the doors of the recently opened Casino and descended to the lower-level hall where 150+ empty tables awaited them. The tables would shortly hold a great variety of figures and items relating to the pastime of collecting miniature figures. Vendors remarked that the table arrangement was greatly improved from the layouts which they had to contend with in recent years. The Exhibit Area of 62 tables was located behind the Mart area. The aisles in both areas were sufficiently spacious to allow the unimpeded flow of shoppers and viewers who were admitted at Noon. As could be expected, an abundance of metal and

plastic vintage toy figures were on view. Several contemporary figure makers presented their products. Vendors who specialized in the more detailed and pricey military miniatures displayed their wares. Books, magazines, figure/diorama building kits, and other items were offered at various tables.

The Exhibit Area presented a variety of single figures and dioramas in different scales. Many of these were scratch-built. This area was a popular place judging from the large volume of viewers seen entering from the Mart area.

The two day show generated positive comments from all involved organizers, exhibitors, vendors and shoppers.

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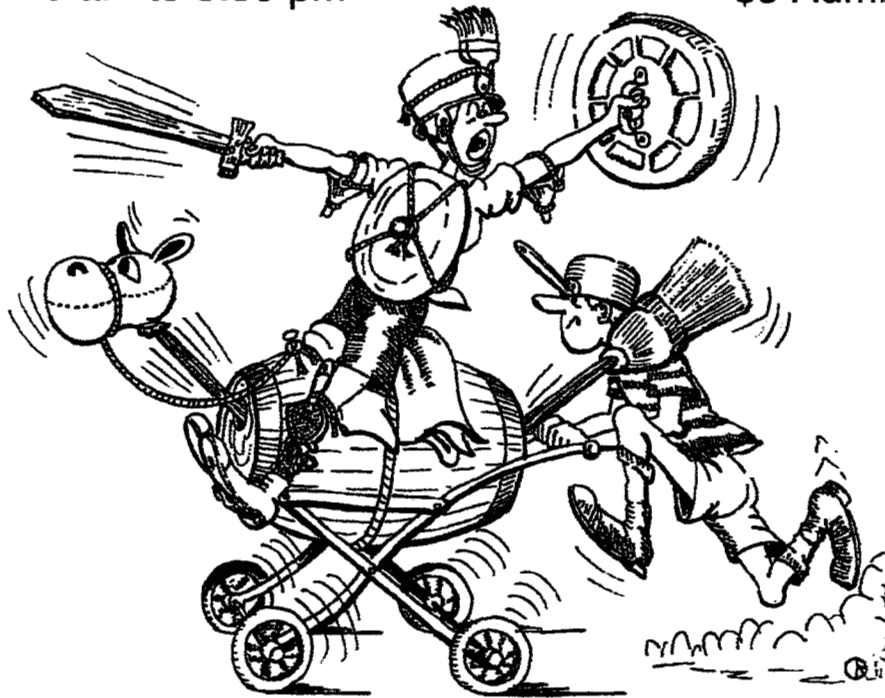
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COMPLETING THE LINE - BRITAINS SET NUMBER 1826

By Rob Wilson

Since the publication of James Opie's "Great Book of Britains", and the accompanying "pocket price guide", many of the original gaps in James's sequence of set numbers have been gradually filled. Joe Wallis in particular, with his research into the factory records, has managed to find information on many of the more obscure sets that did not appear in the standard Britain's catalogue. Many of these were special commissions for particular retailers, with non-conventional numbers of figures (in Britain's terms at least) such as boxes of 6 cavalry figures rather than the normal 5. Three of these were offered for sale in the June 2012 Old Toy Soldier Auction, (set 396 11th Hussars; set 1219 21st Lancers and set 1796 12th Lancers). Apart from the addition of an extra matching trooper, these set are otherwise indistinguishable from the standard sets (sets 12, 100 and 128 respectively).

Britains also made some larger display sets for major retailers. Set number 1826 falls into this category, being a special combination put together for Gamages, the famous London Toy Store. In "Armies of the World" Joe Wallis describes the contents of the box as a rather strange mixture of foreign troops, including Belgian cavalry, French Infantry and Zouaves, Cossacks, and Italian Carabinieri.

A complete example of the set has recently surfaced in England which has a rather different complement. The set comprises 42 pieces in total, all with matching paint colours. There are 10 Belgian Chasseurs a Cheval, including two officers. These are accompanied by 16 French Infanterie de Ligne, marching at the slope and 16 Italian Carabinieri. Although no longer tied in they appear to be a complete and matching set in virtually mint condition, no longer tied in but with the remains of the original string still present.

The box label gives little away. Apart from Gamages Special Soldiers, the only information is the address of the shop (Holborn, E.C.1 and City Branch 107, Cheapside, E.C.2.) Britains gets no credit on the main label, the only indication about manufacturer is "Made in England" in small font. There is a small "May" and a number of Maltese crosses hand stamped on the main label, the meaning of which is obscure. The end label is no more informative

being simply a sticky label with the numerals 1826, typewritten.

The box is in the usual Britain's red paper covered strawboard. It comprises two layered trays lined in white paper, with total dimensions of 20" x 9" x 13 3/4" (51 x 23 x 7 cm). There are two semi circular cut outs in the edge of the main box to allow easy lifting out of the top tray, otherwise the box is of typical Britain's design.

The usual Britain's trade mark is found inside the box on the two tie cards. These are identical in layout, although one is cut smaller than the other to fit the relevant tray. They display the 10 cavalry figures mixed in amongst the two sets of infantry.

Following further correspondence, Joe Wallis confirmed that according to the Factory Records the official contents was: from Set #141. French infantry marching at the slope (8 pieces); from Set #1412 French Zouaves charging (8 pieces); from Set #432 German Infantry marching at the slope with officer (8 pieces); from Set #136 Russian Cossacks with officer (5 pieces); and from Set# 190 Belgian Chasseurs with officer (5 pieces). It may be that the set illustrated is an example of "Friday afternoon at the factory get the shipment out". Logically, there is no guarantee that the contents of the box are what were originally sold in it. However, the perfect match of the paint across all the figures suggests that it is not a "made up set". As anyone who has ever tried to match in an odd figure to complete a set knows all too well this is much easier said than done!

The other logical possibility is that the factory did not adhere to the listing and could either "wing it", or perhaps more likely respond to the demands of particular clients (such as Gamages) to vary the contents to suit them. The lack of a title other than "Special Toy Soldiers" obviously allows a great deal of flexibility on both sides. We will probably never know for certain. This is just one of the many little mysteries that continues to make collecting Britains the fascinating hobby we all enjoy so much.

With thanks to both Norman Joplin and Joe Wallis for comments and suggestions, Rob Wilson, July 2011.

COMPLETING THE LINE - BRITAINS SET NUMBER 1826 (Cont.)



Figure 1: Set #1826 – lower tray with Belgian Chasseurs and Carabinieri

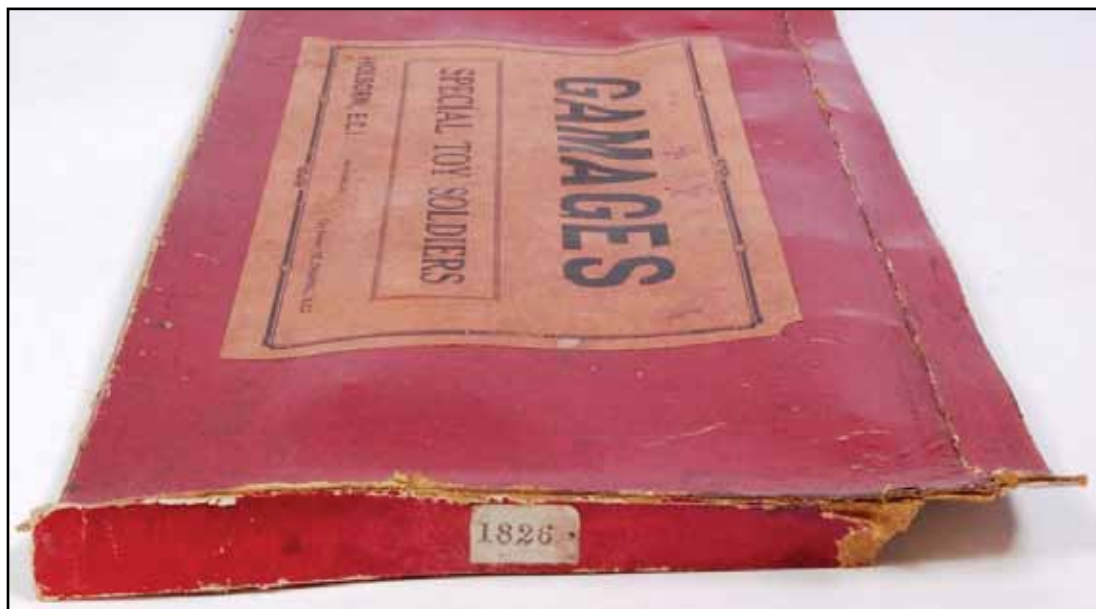


Figure 2: End label with typewritten set number



Figure 2: Upper tray with Infanterie de Ligne and more Belgian Chasseurs



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THE FRENCH NAVY IN COMPOSITION

By Vincent J Russo & Patrice Servais

I. Introduction

In our last article (OTS. Vol 35 No. 3 – Fall 2011) we continued our “exploration of the seas” by featuring The Dutch Navy during the period from 1939-1945.

We would now like to continue this theme, and for the purposes of this article, we have chosen for our discussion, The French Navy during the same 1939-1945 period, (World War II)

Also for this article we will exclusively utilize figures manufactured by the Durso Company of Lege Belgium to depict the French Navy personnel.

In 1940, Michel Klimov, owner of The Durso Company, simply took figures of The Dutch Sailors (which were introduced a year earlier), and just by using paint, converted them to French Figures.

Because these figures were “toys”, the children were indifferent to the fact that the uniforms were not exactly authentic.

In the Durso catalog, The French figures had a number starting with a “3” (while the Dutch figures started with a “7”)

Catalog Numbers in 1940 were as follows:

French Navy Standing

- 3510/1 Sailor on Guard, white
- 3510/2 Sailor on Guard, blue

French Navy Marching

- 3551/1 Sailor with Rifle on Shoulder, white
- 3551/2 Sailor with Rifle on Shoulder, blue
- 3555/1 Sailor with Slung Rifle, white
- 3555/2 Sailor with Slung Rifle, blue
- 3575 Officer with Drawn Sword

Sometime later (knowledgeable Belgium collectors place this production at either the late 1950's or in the early 1970's), probably at the request of French Collectors, Mr. Klimov created “new” figures of The French Navy, with “exact” details. He also added figures of Charles De Gaulle in a white “Naval” uniform.



Photo #1
Red “pom pom” painted on top of Dutch Sailor's Cap



Photo #2
Multi-colored emblem painted on side of Dutch Officers hat



Photo #3
“pom pom” on new uniform



Photo #4
“V” collar on new blue uniform



Photo #5
No “Ribbon” hanging from back of cap

THE FRENCH NAVY IN COMPOSITION (Cont.)

II. Background

In 1939, The French Navy was the fourth largest in the world, ranked behind The Royal Navy of England, The United States Navy and The Japanese Navy. It ranked ahead of The Russian Soviet Navy and The German Navy (Kriegsmarine).

It consisted of:

Aircraft Carrier (1)
Heavy and Light Cruisers (20)
Destroyers (71)
Submarines (78)
Ocean Liners (8)
Various other Craft (58)

(Many historians have since observed that , during World War II, The French Navy had probably the toughest role to play, in that they were “harassed” by nearly everyone, including the Allies).



Photo #6
Lieutenant-commander
with drawn sword



Photo #7
N C O officer
with drawn sword

was part of the “Hunt for the Graf Spree”, and participated in pulling off “The Miracle at Dunkirk”, where a number of its ships were lost.

In 1940, as The German Army rolled across France, The French Government “capitulated” and an Armistice was signed with Germany. This triggered the withdrawal of The French Fleet from the fight and the ships were widely dispersed to “safe havens”.

Some ships headed for ports in England, while others went to various locations, including The British controlled port in Egypt (Alexandria), To Dakar in French Algeria (Mers-el-Kebir), and to Toulon and other ports in France.



Photo #8
Sailor in guard, white



Photo #9
Sailor in guard, blue

It was at this time that Prime Minister Winston Churchill of England, refused to believe that the Germans would not use the remaining French Naval Force, which was substantial, for it's own purposes. Therefore even against the warnings of most of his Military Advisors, Churchill ordered the launching of “Operation Catapult” which was essentially to capture and/or de-mobilize the French Fleet.

Although very controversial, this proved to be very successful.

III. World War II – The Beginning

During the early stages of the War, the French Navy sailed alongside The Royal Navy of England, to protect trade routes in the North Atlantic, assisted the British during the allied campaign in Norway,

THE FRENCH NAVY IN COMPOSITION (Cont.)



Photo #10
Sailor marching with rifle
over shoulder, white



Photo #11
Sailor marching with rifle over
shoulder with pouch, white



Photo #12
Sailor marching with rifle over
shoulder, blue



Photo #13
Sailor marching with rifle over
shoulder with pouch, blue

IV. Operation Catapult

First, the ships berthed in England, were simply boarded and taken over by the British. Some resisted, such as the submarine *Surcouf* (The largest in the world at the time), resulting in a few French and British fatalities before they were taken. At this time, many French seamen rejoined the Allies and served as part of the "Free French Navy".

In Alexandria, because of the good personal relationships that existed between French and British Commanders who had co-operated together during the early stages of the war, French ships were "de-mobilized" without incident.

The most devastating episode in Operation Catapult was what is now known as "The Battle of Mers-el-Kebir", where after an unsuccessful attempt to have the French surrender their ships, a British Naval and Air Task Force attacked a major portion of the French Fleet, lying at anchor, resulting in the sinking of several French vessels and the death of nearly 1300 French Servicemen. Two British Air Crews were also lost.

The attack remains very controversial and divisive between England and France, even to this day. However it did dramatically demonstrate to the world and to the United States in particular, that England was determined to continue its fight against Germany, "to the very end".

V. World War II – The End

When France capitulated, one of the conditions of the armistice was that "Southern France" would not be occupied by the Germans, and would be governed by the French from Vichy. However, partly in response to the allied invasion of North Africa (Operation "Torch"), and because Hitler wanted desperately to increase the size and the effectiveness of the German Navy, on November 8, 1942 German Troops invaded the south of France but failed to capture a single operational French ship anchored in Toulon, mainly because French seamen scuttled and sank their own ships to keep them from falling into German hands.

THE FRENCH NAVY IN COMPOSITION (Cont.)

By 1943, most of the surviving French Naval units were being utilized by the Allies, and subsequently French Cruisers and Destroyers participated in Naval Operations in the North Atlantic and played a key role in the allied invasion of Normandy on June 6, 1944 (D-Day).



Photo #14
DeGaulle in white
with sword



Photo #15
DeGaulle in white
without sword

VI. Epilog

In all, France suffered the loss of about one-half of its Fleet during World War II.

VII. Durso Figures

As discussed earlier, in 1939 the Durso Company introduced figures of The Dutch Navy into their line (see photos in our previous article). Then in 1940, in order to increase sales, Mr. Klimov decided to use the same Dutch figures and simply “paint” a red pom pom on the top of the Sailor’s cap, and an emblem on the side of the Officer’s hat, to create a “French Navy”.

For the purposes of this article, we will only utilize figures from the “New” production to depict The French Naval personnel.

Catalog Numbers that were “assigned” to these new figures are as follows:

French Navy

- 2002/a Charles De Gaulle with sword, saluting, in white
- 2002/b Charles De Gaulle Saluting, in white
- 3510/1 Sailor on Guard, with ammo pouch, in white
- 3510/2 Sailor on Guard, with ammo pouch, in blue
- 3551/1a Sailor marching with rifle on shoulder, in white
- 3551/1b Sailor marching with rifle on shoulder, with ammo pouch, in white
- 3551/2a Sailor marching with rifle on shoulder, in blue
- 3551/2b Sailor marching with rifle on shoulder, with ammo pouch, in blue
- 3575/a Lieutenant Commander, marching with sword
- 3575/b NCO “Officer”, marching with sword

Note

Durso was not the only Belgium Company to make composition figures of French Naval Forces. Figures from the Belgium Companies “Clairon” and “GJ” are also known to exist. (perhaps the subject for a future article.)


VIII. Conclusion

Once again, The authors wish to express our sincere appreciation to “Old Toy Soldiers” magazine for the opportunity to showcase Belgium made composition figures.

IX. Acknowledgement

Photos by Veronizue Servais

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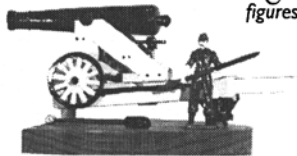
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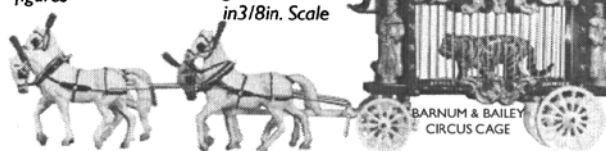
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MAKING A FRENCH ARMY KEPI FOR CONVERTING DIMESTORES

By Roger Dubois

Prior to World War II, the “Big-Four” (Barclay, Manoil, Grey Iron, and Auburn) American manufactures of toy soldiers produced scores of figures fashioned after World War I American troops, thereby giving children the opportunity to assemble make-believe battle scenes of the Western Front. Unfortunately, these make-believe scenes could never be fully realized because the same manufactures never made figures of Western European troops. Where were German, French, and British toy soldiers? How could the battles of the Western Front be reenacted with Dimestores if there were no European combatants?

Decades later when I began collecting Dimestores, that sad memory of not having European troops during my childhood came floating back. So in an attempt to “make things right”, I started converting some of my figures into World War I European troops.

The success of this project hinged on creating acceptable headgear that would clearly identify the nationality of a figure. After experimentation, a way was found to make a German Pickelhaube (spike helmet) from a Barclay tin helmet. How this was done is described in an earlier issue of OTS (v.35, n.2, 2011).

The next challenge was to fashion a French Army kepi (cap). Following several trials and failures, a cap was eventually made from an American campaign hat (Photo 1). And so the goal of this article is to describe how I convert an American campaign hat into a French Army kepi.

The following is a description of the materials, tools, and steps used to complete the job.

Materials: an American campaign hat (I cast my own, but they can be purchased from Ron Eccles); A & B Epoxy Putty; glass of water to wet the blade of a hobby knife; two-part epoxy glue with a five minute drying time; and some gap-filling putty.

Tools: a razor saw; hobby knife; a pair of wire cutters; motor tool with cutter bit; small flat file; and a fine sanding stick or fine sand paper.

Cutting, shaping, and trimming of fresh putty will be done with the wet blade of a hobby knife.

Once the cap is made, it will be glued on the head of a Barclay Sentry (736) (Photos 2 and 3).

This sentry was chosen for a very special reason: it is attired in the uniform a World War I French soldier. Besides wearing a greatcoat with puttees, a closer look at the front of this toy reveals a waist belt with a cartridge pouch attached on each side of the figure



Photo 1. American campaign hat.



Photo 2. Barclay Sentry (736).



Photo 3. Back view of sentry.

MAKING A FRENCH ARMY KEPI FOR CONVERTING DIMESTORES (Cont.)



Photo 4. Top of hat sawed off.

(Photo 2). At each pouch, a strap rises and extends over the shoulder to meet at an o-ring centered in the upper back of the figure (Photo 3). From the o-ring, a strap runs down and fastens at the waist belt, where in reality, a third pouch would have been attached. World War I French soldiers wore this assemblage of belt, straps, and pouches.

The way the sentry is outfitted raises an interesting question: why didn't Barclay complete the job by casting a kepi or an Adrian helmet on this figure's head? Barclay cast appropriate headgear for the Ethiopian (724) and the two Italians (726 and 727) at about the same time (by late 1935 or no later than January 1936) as it produced the sentry (1936). So why didn't they make a Poilu out of the sentry? I suspect we may never know the answer. (Dates and figure numbers are from Richard O'Brien's 3rd edition of *Collecting American-Made Toy Soldiers*, 1997.)

Making a French Army Kepi

A French Army kepi is a cap with a cylindrical crown, a flat top, and a front brim. The American campaign hat has a circular brim and a circular crown that comes to a point; the crown also has four indentations in it. So to make a kepi, the crown of a campaign hat needs to be built up with two-part epoxy putty and most of the brim needs to be removed.

Before beginning, I put on a dust mask and safety glasses, and then follow all safety precautions as noted in an earlier article (OTS, v. 31, n. 1, 2007).

1. The project starts by sawing off the tip of the campaign hat with a razor saw (Photo 4).

2. The four hat indentations need to be filled-in with two-part epoxy putty. I knead some putty and roll it back-and-forth on a clean hard surface to make a roll.

3. A small portion of the putty is cut from the end of the roll and applied to one of the four indentations (Photo 5). Then more putty is cut from the roll and applied to an adjacent indentation.

4. Once this is done, the putty in the two indentations is fashioned into a semicircle. As the semicircle is being shaped, care is taken to insure that the putty wall is perpendicular with the brim and does not extend beyond the base of the crown onto the brim. More putty is added where needed. Surplus putty, on the other hand, is laterally spread into an adjacent empty indentation. As work progresses, the top surface of the putty is periodically smoothed flat and made parallel with the brim. Once this shaping is completed, half of the filling work is done (Photo 6).



Photo 5. First indentation filled with epoxy putty.



Photo 6. Half of hat crown filled-in and rounded.

MAKING A FRENCH ARMY KEPI FOR CONVERTING DIMESTORES (Cont.)

5. Steps three and four are repeated to fill the remaining two indentations (Photo 7). However, while working on the second half of the crown, surplus putty cannot be spread laterally into a vacant indentation; instead, this putty must be carefully removed with a hobby knife.

6. The putty is left to cure over night.

7. While the putty is curing, the clothing of the sentry is painted horizon-blue while the shoes, belt, ammo pouches, and straps are painted black.

The next day, the hat is cured and looks pretty good. As a matter of fact, it looks so good that at times I have painted one to make it look like a straw hat with a black band and glued it on the head of a Barclay Nurse, which is a nice way to enhance this figure (Photo 8).

8. The next step is to remove the brim except for the front portion. To find the front, the hat is placed on the sentry's head and rotated around until the best fit is located. Once the best fit has been found, a pencil mark is made across the top front portion of the brim to remind me not to cut this part, which I have done on several occasions when the brim was left unmarked.

9. With a pair of wire cutters, the brim is cut away from the back of the hat (Photo 9).

10. Next, the two sides are cut off (Photo 10).

11. The corners are snipped as well as a bit of each side of the front brim (Photo 11).

12. The campaign hat is slowly turning into a cap. Using a motor tool with cutter, the edge of the hat is rounded.

13. Scratches are removed with a file (Photo 12).

14. To even out some slight surface irregularities, gap-filling putty is applied all over the cap (Photo 13) and sanded when dried.

15. The cap is primed, and when the paint has dried, the work is inspected. This is the moment of truth where I accept my work or stop to fix blemishes. If an irregular surface is spotted, then more sanding or more patching with gap-filling putty needs to be done followed by more priming and more inspecting. Fortunately, no imperfections are found.



Photo 7. A round crown has been made.



Photo 8. Nurse wears a converted campaign hat.



Photo 9. Back of brim cut away.

MAKING A FRENCH ARMY KEPI FOR CONVERTING DIMESTORES (Cont.)



Photo 10. Sides of the brim cut off.



Photo 11. Corners around brim snapped away.



Photo 12. Bottom edge of cap rounded off.



Photo 13. The red material is gap-filling putty.



Photo 14. Top of head sawed off.



Photo 15. Cap removed from fresh putty on head.

16. Although the cap sits properly aligned on the head of the sentry, it rests too high. Therefore, using a razor saw, a small portion of the top of the head is removed (Photo 14).

17. Now the cap sits lower and just about right. To insure a perfect fit, the opening at the front of the cap is enlarged ever so slightly with the motor tool cutter so that the hat will rest a little on the figure's forehead.

18. As it sits, there isn't much surface metal to glue the cap to the head. So the top of the head needs to be filled with two-part epoxy putty. But before putty is applied to the figure, two-part epoxy glue is thinly spread around the inside and along the top edge of the head to insure that the cured putty remains in place.

19. I knead enough putty to fill the head cavity and elevate the top of the head. After filling the head with putty, I wet the top of the putty and inside of the cap with water so that the cap will not stick to the putty.

Next, the cap is pressed down on the putty causing some of the putty to spread outward. The cap is then removed, and the excess putty is cut away.

20. The cap is pressed down again on the putty, fitted to my satisfaction, and removed leaving an impression of the shape of the inside of the cap on the putty (Photo 15). When glued, the cap will sit perfectly on the head.

21. After the putty has cured over night, the edge of the putty is painted brown to match the color of the rest of the hair on the head while the cap is painted horizon-blue with a black brim.

22. Once the paint has dried, the cap is glued to the head with a small amount of two-part epoxy glue. The finished figure is seen in Photos 16 and 17.

MAKING A FRENCH ARMY KEPI FOR CONVERTING DIMESTORES *(Cont.)*



Photo 16. Front of completed French soldier.



Photo 17. Back of completed French soldier.



Photo 18. Three possible ways to paint a French soldier wearing a kepi.

Painting a Figure Wearing a French Army Kepi

The sentry was painted in horizon-blue because the figure is wearing puttees. From late 1914 into most of 1915, the French infantry uniform was changing from its traditional red pants, red kepi, and dark blue coat, to the new horizon-blue clothing with puttees. While waiting for the Adrian helmet to come fully online, a horizon-blue kepi was worn. Therefore, the sentry in Photos 16 and 17 appears as a French soldier would have at the front line for a short period of time at the beginning of World War I.

On the other hand, I could have chosen a different figure, filed away the puttees or leggings, and painted it with red pants, red kepi, and a dark blue jacket as was done to the left figure in Photo 18.

A third choice was available. The figure could have been painted as a French Foreign Legionnaire serving in North Africa. A neck cloth made from epoxy putty can be attached to the back of the kepi as seen by the figure on the right in Photo 18.

Concluding Comments

How to convert a Barclay tin helmet into a German Pickelhaube was the subject of an article that appeared in an earlier issue of OTS (v. 35, n. 2, 2011). And as noted in that article, with a spike helmet in hand, it's easy to convert a Dimestore into a late 19th

century Prussian or an early World War I German soldier.

Now with the ability to construct a French Army kepi, Dimestores can also be converted into three French forces, reflecting different time periods and different geographical engagements.

Needless-to-say, all this converting could keep hobbyists busy for some time, providing them with the pleasure of seeing Dimestore figures dressed in foreign uniforms standing next to their American troops.

But there may come a time when some hobbyists might want to add to their collections Dimestores representing the final major power on the Western Front of World War I: the British. And so next time, a step-by-step description will be presented on how I scratch build a Scottish Glengarry on the head of a figure using two-part epoxy putty.

Questions? Comments? Suggestions? Mail them to me at dubois@umbc.edu or if you're at the next Chicago Show, stop by my room or table. It has come to my attention that some hobbyists who have tried to communicate with me by e-mail could not do so for some technical reason that I can't explain. If you were one of those, then please try again. I answer all e-mails.

Roger Dubois attends OTS Show each year and invites collectors to stop by his room, to view in person, his conversions.

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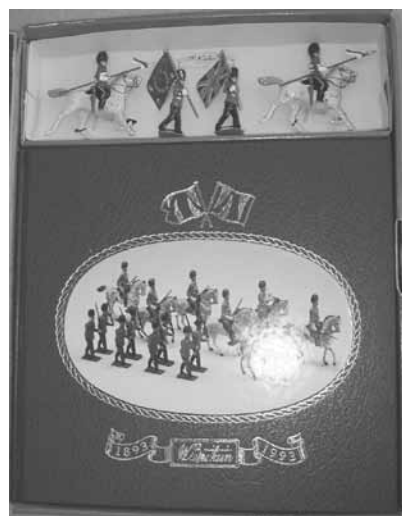
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MILLER ALIENS

By Steve Rhea

The J.H. Miller Company began in 1938 as a manufacturer of plaster (sometimes called “chalk”) Nativity figurines. They also made farm animals, some of which doubled as nativity stable figures, and a farmer and farmer’s wife. In the late 1940s Miller added a line of World War II soldiers which are highly detailed, and nicely painted. In 1957 Miller switched to the manufacture of wild animals, prehistoric animals and space alien figures. These were produced by a polyethylene plastic injection molding process, but they were not the “solid cast” plastics produced by Marx and others. Air was blown into the injectors, producing a “waxy plastic” type figure which had a honeycombed inner cavity. These figures are exceptionally well designed, and interestingly painted, but they often have very delicate limbs or other protrusions and the air-blown process produced very fragile figures that are hard to find unbroken these days.

Recently, I bought a few of the alien figures on-line, and soon, through diligent on-line searching, I had a complete set. These are the subject of this article. They came in two sizes: approximately 2.5 inches tall, which originally were priced at 10 cents, and 4 to 4.5 inches tall (or long, in some cases), which sold for 15 cents. The name of the home planet, star or system is in raised letters on the base of the figure.

The most descriptive adjective for the Miller aliens is “bizarre”. They are vaguely humanoid, but several are multi-headed or multi-limbed and they carry a fearsome array of high- and low-tech weaponry. There are eighteen figures altogether: one for each of the planets in our solar system except Earth, two different Moon Men and eight from planets or stars farther out.



Mercury, Venus and Mars



Moon Men and Orion



Jupiter, Saturn and Uranus

MILLER ALIENS (Cont.)



Neptune front view



Neptune rear view



Big Dipper



Milky Way and North Star



Two views of Betelgeuse

“Mercury” is a two-headed robotic-looking creature carrying a small pistol in one hand. “Venus” is a dome-headed creature with a boxy-looking weapon in his left hand. There are two small “Moon Men” figures: one has three large eyes and an elongated head sloping to a point at back that somewhat resembles a jet engine. The other wears a silver uniform and has a distinct ridge along the crown of his head. Neither carries a weapon. “Mars” is a green creature with a high-domed head and arrogant expression and is holding a silver bomb. “Jupiter” is an orange big-eyed alien with a long-barreled weapon. “Saturn” is a green-and-yellow insectoid with a weapon mounted on a stand. “Uranus” is one of the more outrageous looking figures: a massive pair of hairy legs surmounted by a spindly red torso with tiny arms and an egg-shaped head, and holding what appears to be a wooden club. This is the most easily broken figure. Easily the most fearsome of the aliens is “Neptune”: a beetle-like figure with six legs, a flat body, and a humanoid bald head adorned with a fearsome pair of pincers for jaws. He is also heavily armed with two ray pistols, one on either

side, with four feet on the ground. With all of those appendages, Neptune is also exceptionally hard to find in an unbroken state. “Pluto”, predictably, conjures up an image from Hades: a figure with a demonic horned head, a slithering serpentine body and a pistol in each of its two hands, and painted in bright reds and greens.

The aliens from outside the solar system are no less outrageous. “Orion” is a bright yellow alien with elongated head and body and a mouthful of sharp teeth, and is holding a wand of some sort. The “Big Dipper” is a mean-looking creature who is mostly head, and brandishing a pistol-type weapon. The “North Star” has a head and body that look like two discs attached after rotating one of them 90 degrees and holds a pistol in its right hand. The “Milky Way” is similar, but the disc head is flat on top of the body and each of his two hands holds a weapon. “Ceres” is a spindly black-and-silver creature propped up on a long weapon, and has three legs. “Nebula M 31” has two horned heads, wears high-topped boots, and is one of the few unarmed figures. My favorite

MILLER ALIENS (Cont.)

design of all the figures is “Betelgeuse”. This figure shows a blue alien holding a pistol in both hands and exiting from a silver spaceship.

As I remember, these figures first showed up in dime stores in the US in late 1957 (at least that was when they appeared in my home town). The first figures were the ones from our solar system, and the others were produced later. Just in time for Christmas, a set of 5 (or perhaps 6) figures was issued under the title “Earth Invaders”. This was a cardboard and bubble plastic “spaceship” with the taller Ceres figure at the rear, the other aliens placed in order of descending height, and the small North Star figure in the front, so that the clear plastic narrowed to a point like a rocket ship, and had painted cardboard fins.

The last figure in the series was a definite departure for Miller and, to the best of my knowledge, their only foray into merchandising. In 1958 a novelty song written by country music singer Sheb Wooley called “The Purple People Eater” reached #1 on US pop music charts. This song described an alien creature called the Purple People Eater who comes to Earth to become a rock star. Miller quickly issued a version of this alien. The purple figure has, as described in the song: “One big horn and one big eye”. The horn however, is not a pointed horn, but what looks like a coach horn, or bugle protruding from the creature’s head. It also has two tiny cherub-like wings, and is grasping a musical note in its right hand. Presumably, Miller paid royalties to Mr. Wooley, but I have never been able to confirm this.

I am also indebted to Bill Bollman, of Washington, DC for information on Miller molds. He actually has the original mold for the Purple People Eater and was kind enough to furnish the photos of the mold and a recast figure. There is a wealth of information on the Miller molding process at www.moldville.com.

This proved to be the last of the Miller aliens, or any of the figures. Miller continued production through 1959, and promotional sales material was issued for 1960, but the company effectively ceased operations in 1959. Still, the whimsical figures are wonderful collector’s items, especially given their rarity. I love mine, and will continue to acquire any I can find in good condition.



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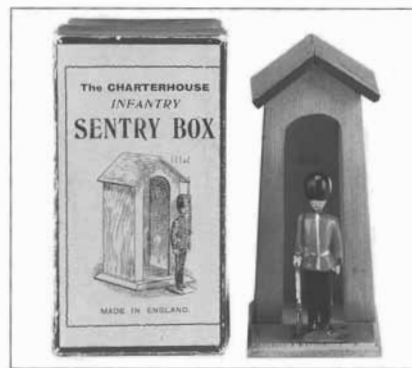
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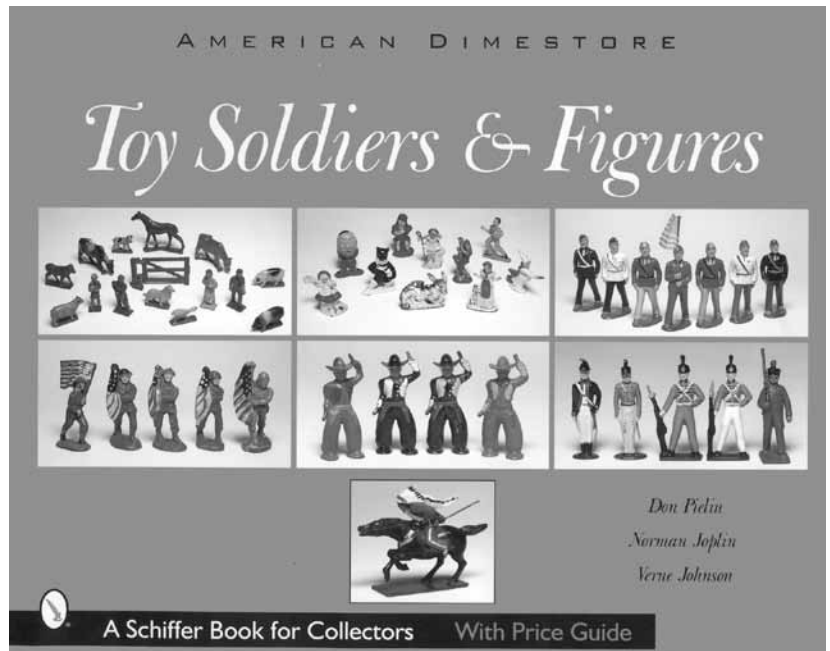
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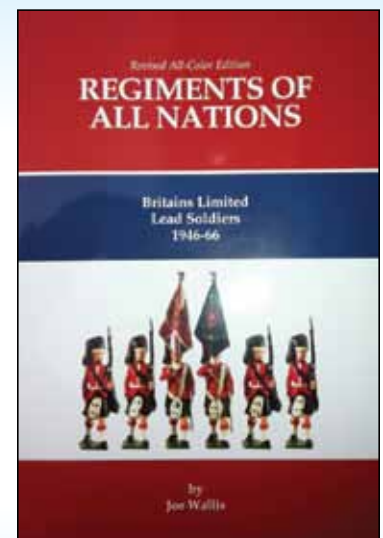
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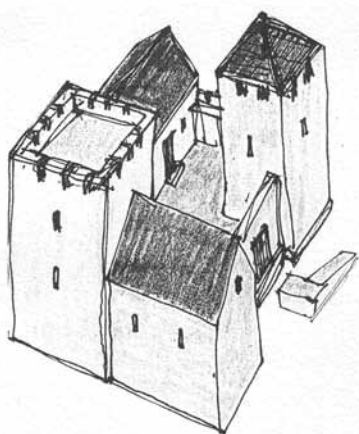
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September 22nd - Saturday. OTS at Chicago Toy Soldier Show The Single Figure Sale of the K Warren Mitchell Britains Collection and Inventory, 4th Floor Hyatt Regency Hotel Schaumburg
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September 26th - Wednesday. Vectis Auctions UK Toy Soldier Sale. Contact 44 1642 750616
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October 13th and 14th - Saturday and Sunday. 2012 Military History Weekend 10 am-5 pm and 11 am to 3 pm.
Holiday Inn Williamsburg, VA Contact Larry Weindorf 703-639-7316 info@larryslegion.com

October 14 - Sunday. Eurofigurines Toy Soldier Show Paris France Contact Philippe Albaret
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October 20 - Saturday. Old Toy Soldier Auctions /Live Auctioneers Britains New Toy Soldier Auction,
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October 20 - Saturday. Figuren Magazine Bad Nauheim Germany Contact Redaktion@figuren-magazin.de
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October 21 - Sunday. Ohio Toy Soldier Show Fort Rapids Indoor Water Park Columbus, Ohio.
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November 3 - Saturday. The Toy Soldier Museum Open House and Cellar Sale Cresco, PA
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November 4 - Sunday. 30th Annual East Coast Show. Hackensack, NJ. Contact 973-831-8900

November 4 - Sunday. Cantigny Classic Toy Soldier Show. Cantigny Park, Illinois.
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November 9 - Friday. Vectis Auctions UK Toy Soldier Sale. Contact 44 1642 750616 Email admin@vectis.co.uk

November 13 - Tuesday. Bonhams Toy Soldier Auction London. Contact Leigh Gotch 44 208 936 2839
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November 16, 17, 18 - Friday, Saturday, Sunday. Old Toy Soldier Auctions / Live Auctioneers.
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December 1 - Saturday. Toy Soldier Show London. Venue Change. Contact Guideline Publications
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March 10 - Sunday. 24th Annual West Coaster. Irvine Marriott, CA. Contact 760-758-5481

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NA237
Mounted Napoleon



NA237 portrays the Emperor on his favourite steed "Marengo". This figure is based on the famous painting by Meissonier the master of French military painting.

Alongside Bonaparte is one of his most

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