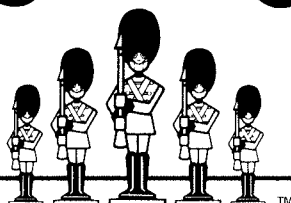


Winter
2010

The Journal for Collectors

Volume 33 Number 4
\$10.00

OLD TOY SOLDIER



R.J. RYAN & CO. FOOTBALL PLAYERS



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R.J. Ryan Football Players

Photo Courtesy Russ Bednarek

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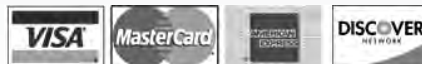
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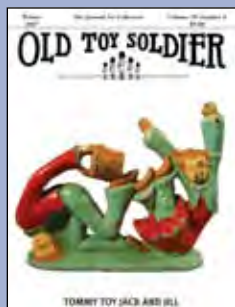
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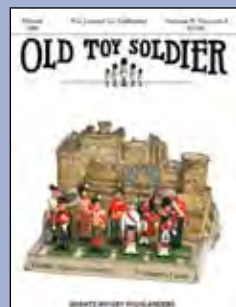
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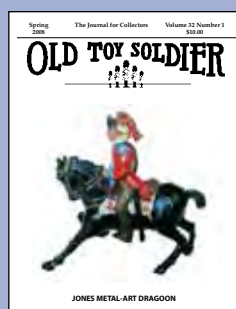


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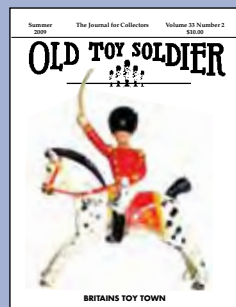


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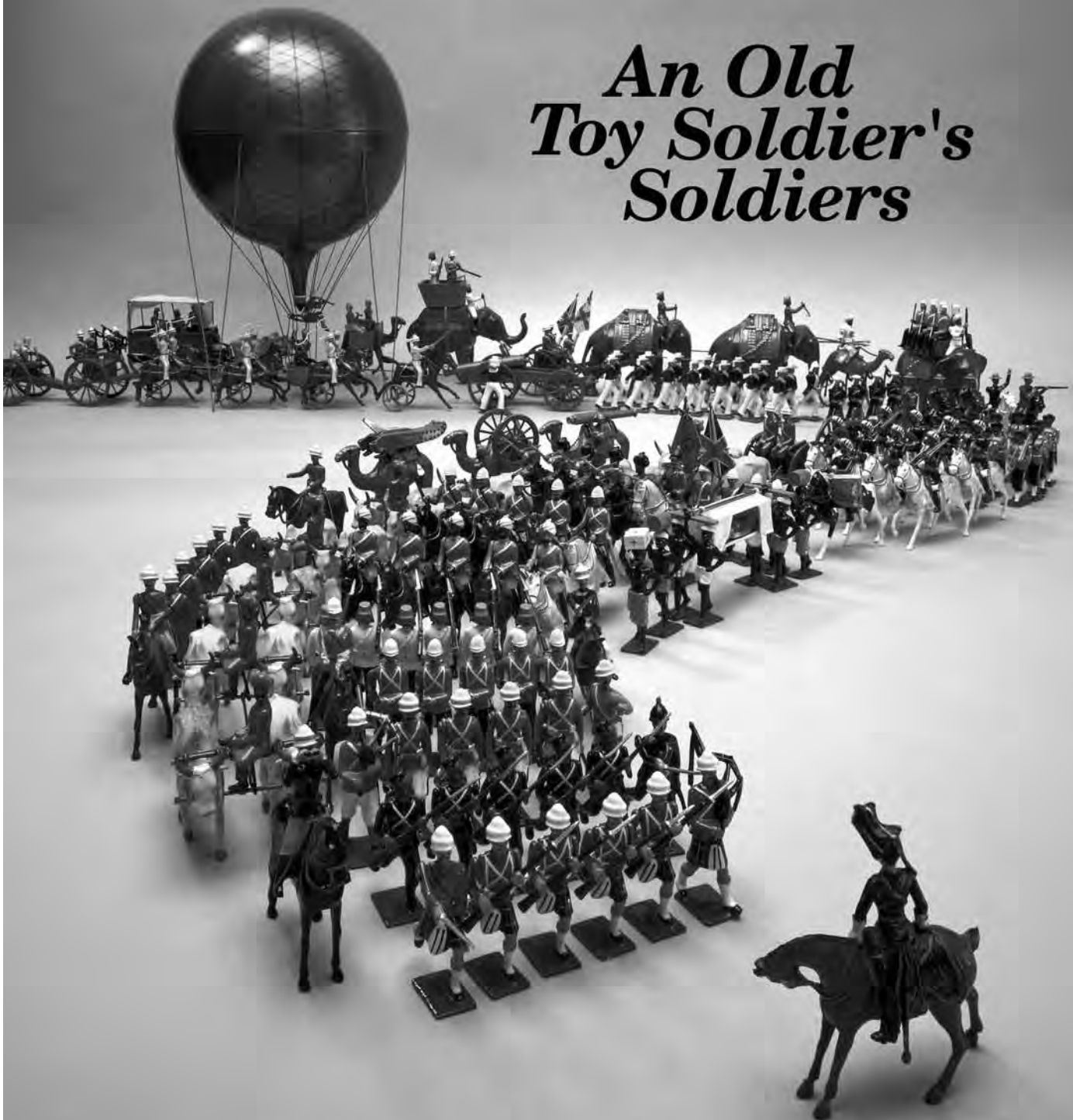
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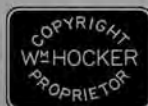
An Old Toy Soldier's Soldiers



Time was a toy soldier knew what it meant to be a toy soldier. All spit and polish, bright shiny uniform, lean and rugged, big pink cheeks, manual-of-arms, upright and proper even in the din of battle. Most new toy soldiers - a sorry lot. No group discipline, dull and wrinkled uniforms - refugees from some old diorama. And fat. Half seem to be dying. Can't speak English - Russian or Chinese more'n likely.

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THINGS AREN'T ALWAYS WHAT THEY APPEAR TO BE

By Russ Bednarek



R.J. Ryan & Co. Set

Through the years a number of rare and unusual figures have adorned the cover of *Old Toy Soldier*. These figures are typically unknown paint variations or pieces not known to exist until their discovery by some diligent collector. Being collectors, we all hope that someday we will be fortunate enough to find a previously unknown figure, a figure that will bring recognition to our personal collection and stand as a tribute to our collecting prowess. In early 2009, I was fortunate enough to experience this thrill. My discovery was not limited to an individual figure, but that of an entire company.

Like all collectors I search the Internet for items to add to my personal collection. I was searching the on-line auction catalogue of a sports memorabilia company when I found a lot containing metal football figures. Clicking on the picture allowed me to view all eleven of the offered figures. They evoked a familiarity to me, I knew I had seen them somewhere before. I consulted several books in my reference library, searching for any photographs of figures that mirrored those offered in the auction. I finally found a match; a single photograph of a group of four football players that were all identical to those shown in the auction lot. The caption below the photograph indicated the figures were Sheila football players. Interestingly enough, on the same page of the book was another photograph of six football players also attributed to Sheila. These half dozen figures were the blocky style sculpted by Jack Worthington. Was it possible that Sheila manufactured two distinct styles of football players? It certainly appeared so. My further research found sources that indicated that the figures identical to those offered in the auction were called Sheila Second Version figures.

I'm not a Dimestore collector, but I knew that Sheila Second Version football figures are worth quite a bit. My interest in the set was purely capitalistic. It was my intent, should I win the lot, to take it to the Chicago Show and sell it for a nice profit to finance my planned purchases.

The final day of the auction I placed my bid, at the minimum estimate. The rules of the auction stated that bidding could be extended beyond the 9:00 P.M. deadline. In order for this to happen a bid would have to be placed on any lot in the auction between 8:46-9:00 P.M. A bid in this time period would extend the auction another 15 minutes. After watching the bidding deadline extended for almost an hour past 9:00 P.M., I placed a second bid on the lot and went to bed, resigned to the fact that if I got the figures fine, if I lost them, so be it.

I received an email the next morning indicating that I was the winning bidder, (I was the only bidder on the lot) along with payment instructions. Within a week of the auction the figures arrived. As I unwrapped each figure, I examined it for any damage and to assess it's condition. The last figure to be examined was the tallest figure, the quarterback. Looking over the figure I turned it upside down to look for any markings on the underside of the base. There I found a paper label with the following printed on it;

Manufactured By
R.J. RYAN & CO
Frankfort, Kansas
C-1951

THINGS AREN'T ALWAYS WHAT THEY APPEAR TO BE *(Cont.)*

The conflicting information was truly puzzling. On one hand I had several print sources declaring the figures to be Sheila Second Version, yet the physical evidence showed the figures were made by the R.J. Ryan & Co.

Once again I consulted my reference library, this time focusing on anything related to the R.J. Ryan & Co., but with no results. A search on the Internet revealed several R.J. Ryan & Co., none however having anything to do with the manufacture of metal football figures. I decided to vary the theme of my Internet search, in hopes of uncovering any pertinent information. I sent numerous emails to sites that I thought looked as if they may be relevant to my quest. Many of my emails resulted in dead-ends, but when conducting research, sometimes you get lucky.....and I did.

I received a reply from a government office employee stating they had no record of a R.J. Ryan & Co., but growing up she remembered a Robert Ryan. Soon I had two phone numbers in my possession; one for a Robert Ryan, the other was that of his son. I first decided to call the son. I identified myself and the reason for calling him, "did your father ever make metal football figures?". His response, "Oh yeah..... the football players" was exactly what I had hoped to hear. I asked several follow up questions regarding the figures, but the son remembered few details. Respecting his father's privacy, I asked if it was permissible for me to call his father and do an interview. My request was enthusiastically approved of by the son.

My next call, to Robert Ryan, confirmed that he was indeed the owner of the R.J. Ryan & Co. The mystery had been solved. The Sheila Second Version football player figures were not Sheilas at all; they were the creation of Robert J. Ryan. It was at this point that I knew I had made a great discovery, and that the history of the R.J. Ryan & Co. needed to be documented by myself.

During the course of following months I conducted several phone interviews with Bob, who couldn't have been more gracious and helpful. Often times Bob's responses to my questions raised additional issues and questions regarding the company's production history. Bob's recollection of information from 50 years ago and more was amazing.

Bob is not a collector of toy soldiers, but as a child had played with Dimestore figures. Recalling his

childhood figures, Bob decided he wanted to create football figures. At this time home casting was a very popular hobby. Unfortunately no one made molds to cast football figures. Undeterred, Bob discovered the Metal Cast Product Company of New York.

Metal Cast Product made their own figures, mostly copies of Manolis and Barclays. In addition, they also catered to the home casting hobby by selling stock molds of various figures. Customers could cast their own figures, and go into business for themselves if they so chose. Customers could also request special figures cast for them, and Metal Cast Product liberally "borrowed" customer ideas.

Mr. Ryan contacted Metal Cast Product inquiring if they would make some molds for his football figures. Metal Cast Product replied that they could indeed make them, but would need drawings of the proposed figures. Bob submitted five sketches of his figures from which molds were to be made. Based on Bob's drawings, he soon received the five bronze molds from Metal Cast Product that he would use to hollowcast his football figures. We know that the molds were designed and made specifically for Mr. Ryan since examination of all Metal Cast Product catalogues show no molds or castings of football players.

By 1951, with his newly created molds in his possession, Bob was ready to begin his new venture. Fortunately Bob had employed two attorneys to copyright his figures and molds, insuring they would be his property and preventing Metal Cast Products from using his creations.

All casting was done in Mr. Ryan's garage utilizing a propane fueled furnace and blower. Bob recalled "having to work fast" during the casting process and over the years "about a dozen or so" people helped him cast. Using a low grade zinc/aluminum mix, the figures could be quickly cast and the molds opened by being hit with a wooden hammer. Successfully casting hollowcast figures requires much skill and practice. Mr. Ryan had varying degrees of success hollowcasting as he remembers two pounds of metal were required to cast a complete set of eleven figures. Hence, collectors will find figures that are hollowcast, semi-solid and solid. Once the figures cooled and were cleaned, it was time to paint them.

Painting was the most time consuming step in the production process. Bob and his wife did all of the

THINGS AREN'T ALWAYS WHAT THEY APPEAR TO BE (Cont.)

painting. Different types of paint were tried, especially those that were fast drying. Experimenting with different painting techniques that provided quick results such as brushing, dipping and spraying were utilized. Paints were enamel and came mostly from an automotive store as these tended to be the most durable. Most often, white was applied by spraying. In the beginning most of the figures were painted in two to three colors with the pants, jerseys and shoes painted first. Helmets, faces and any uniform striping were done last. Uniform numbers were problematic. Decals, stickers and painting were all used to varying degrees of success, with painted numbers being most durable but more time consuming.

After the paint had dried, each figure received a final inspection before being individually wrapped. After being wrapped, each figure was placed into a cardboard compartmentalized box for shipping. The box was similar to a Christmas ornament box. Although there were plans for box artwork, this concept never came to fruition.

Advertising was done in local papers, (see photo), and by word of mouth. Sets consisted of eleven figures utilizing the five different sketches Bob had drawn and were sold for \$3. Almost all orders were specialized as customers wanted figures of their favorite team. Some individual pieces were produced for special occasions. These were not painted but plated and were used for football banquets as awards and table centerpieces. Mr. Ryan's most famous customer was the legendary Oklahoma coach Bud Wilkinson. Wilkinson was the Oklahoma head coach from 1947-1963. During that time Wilkinson won three national titles in 1950, 1955 and 1956. His 47 game winning streak from 1953-1957 is still a record. Wilkinson's 1955 team is widely regarded as one of the greatest teams in college football history. Coach Wilkinson ordered several of Mr. Ryan's sets and used them as visual teaching/coaching aids with his staff and players. Mr. Ryan, a Kansas fan, begrudgingly painted the sets in Oklahoma colors and sent them off to Wilkinson. How much Mr. Ryan's product contributed to the 47 game winning streak and 1955 and 1956 Championships is unknown.



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The set is one of a kind. Truly a collectors item. Order a set in your very own colors today! Or order an unpainted set and paint your own team colors! Great gift for the hobbyist!

Newspaper ad

THINGS AREN'T ALWAYS WHAT THEY APPEAR TO BE (Cont.)

A complete set of R.J. Ryan & Co. figures will have the following eleven figures:

Lineman - six per set, in a three point stance. 50mm to top of helmet.

Center - one per set, both hands on ball. 55mm to top of helmet.

Halfback/Linebacker - two per set, standing, hands on knees. 77mm to top of helmet.

Running Back - one per set, running, one foot raised, ball in right arm. 75mm to top of helmet.

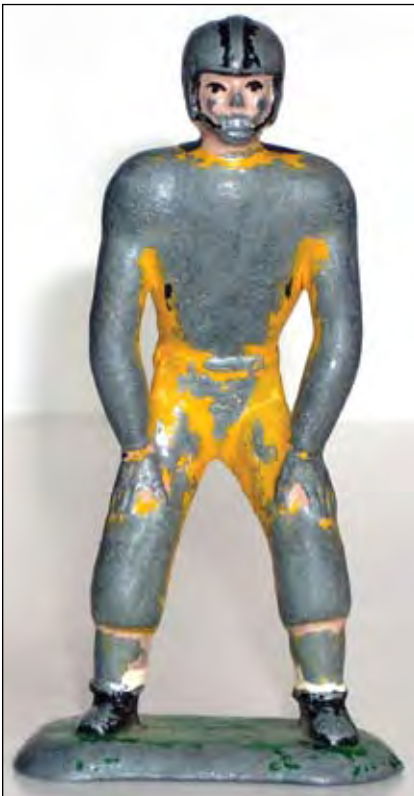
Quarterback - one per set, ball in right hand with ball on shoulder ready to throw. 83mm to top of helmet.



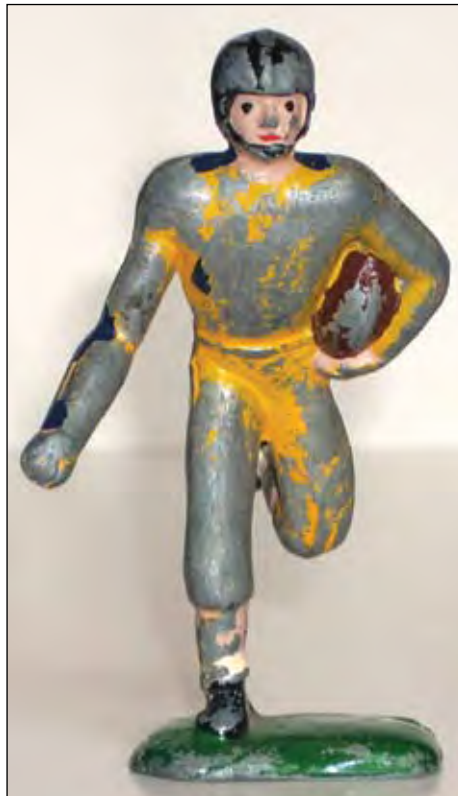
Lineman



Center



Halfback-Linebacker



Running Back



Quarterback

THINGS AREN'T ALWAYS WHAT THEY APPEAR TO BE (Cont.)

The entire set matches well size-wise with the exception of the Quarterback who dwarfs his teammates, (see photo). As previously mentioned, collectors will encounter hollowcast, semi-solid and solid figures. Remember that the vast majority of these sets were special orders so any color combination of the uniform is to be expected.



Size Comparison



First Version Label

The first sets were painted in blue or red jerseys with white pants. As the popularity of the product grew, customers requested their favorite team, the result being a much more custom paint scheme. Mr. Ryan saw what he envisioned initially as a simple toy evolved to a more sophisticated product.

On the bottom of the base of the Quarterback figure a label was affixed. This was the only figure that the label was placed on. Two versions of this label were used and will aid in dating the age of the figure. In the First Version (see photo), the words, "MFG BY" and "copyright 1951" will be handwritten in addition to Mr. Ryan's full name and address. The Second Version, (see photo), has all words and numbers printed.

Production of R.J. Ryan & Co. figures began in 1951 and ended in 1957 when Mr. Ryan's election to public office necessitated in a move of residence. Regarding the number of sets produced, Mr. Ryan stated that, "a couple hundred" were made and sold. An additional method to help date the figures is the appearance of a facemask painted on the piece. In 1954, due to the rising rate of alarming facial injuries, the facemask was affixed to the helmet as a protective and preventive measure. Some sets may have the facemask painted on.



Second Version Label

R.J. Ryan figures have been erroneously identified as Sheila Second Version figures. We now know that Sheila never produced Second Version football players as the figures are R.J. Ryan & Co. due to the 1951 copyright by Mr. Ryan and the lack of football figures and molds in the Metal Cast Product catalogues.

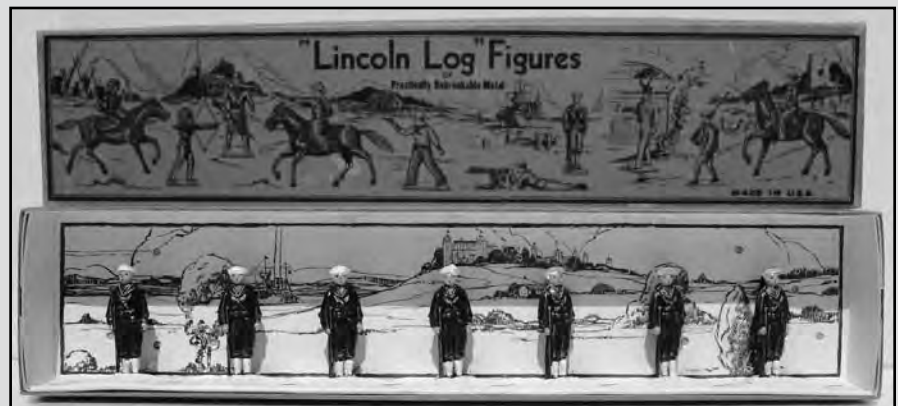
I would like to thank Rodney Hopson for graciously supplying a photo of the First Version Label. Also, thanks to Ron Eccles who answered my questions regarding the Metal Cast Product company and older molds. Finally, a sincere thank you to Mr. Robert J. Ryan. Mr. Ryan patiently answered all my questions, that at times I am sure he thought would never end, and for my requests of examples of advertisements. I would also like to thank Mr. Ryan for allowing me to document the history of his toy figure company; R.J. Ryan & Co., and securing his place in American toy figure history.

The author would welcome hearing from collectors who may have R.J. Ryan & Co. figures in their collections. The purpose would be to help further document the products and history of R.J. Ryan & Co. You may contact the author at; rbednarek@wi.rr.com

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BRITAINS PARADE SERIES SET #480

FILLING IN THE LINE

By Joe Wallis

During the 1930s, decreasing sales accompanied the Depression, or the “Great Slump” as it was termed in the United Kingdom. One venture by the firm of Britains Limited to attract new customers and to appeal to previous buyers to make additional purchases was the release of the Parade Series from 1931-1935.

The new Series included Sets 438 through 459 and Sets 479 through 490. Frederick Charles Pryke, the Office Manager, filed an application for a patent on January 4, 1930 on behalf of Britains Ltd. for “a Supporting Board for Toy Soldiers.” Patent Number 346,424 was approved on April 7, 1931. The concept in the patent specification covered the small slotted strips that Britains now introduced for eight-piece infantry sets and used throughout the 1930s, while the standard single-row cavalry were now fitted into cut-out openings in the backing card. The packing innovations saved the time required to tie down the most prevalent sets’ contents with string—although the larger display boxes still employed the older method, and tying down with string was readopted postwar for all sets.

Patent Number 346,424 also applied to a baseboard with slots to hold figures upright inside a box. These Parade Series boxes were 2.75 inches deep—accommodating figures standing up on the green slotted tray within the box, which was about 18 inches long and had a standard label (probably designed by T.J. Scrine). War gamers or boys playing with soldiers could lift and move an entire contingent of infantry easily without having to pick them up one-by-one. Cavalry could not fit onto the slotted baseboard unless they had a base. As a result, the Parade Series sets that featured mounted officers used either the fixed-arm type with the horse’s head down (employed in early sets of the West India Regiment of Set #19, the Mountain Artillery of Set #28, or the Royal Sussex Regiment of Set #36), or adapted Second Grade mounted officers (such as for U.S. Infantry Doughboys). In either case, a base was attached to the two rear legs of the horse. Britains had years before used Charles William Beiser’s patented design with rectangular metal clips attached to a baseboard for Sets 148 and 149 between about 1907 and 1918, but they had not applied the idea to having deeper boxes where all of the figures in the set could be

easily taken out of the box and moved en masse on a baseboard.

With this backdrop, it is exciting that a group of Black Watch Highlanders marching, Black Watch pipers, and a mounted Black Watch officer was recently found by Norman Joplin in a lot being offered in the upcoming May 2010 Auction of the Don Thompson Collection by Old Toy Soldier Auctions USA. The head-down horse’s right rear leg is missing, as is the base for the rear legs. The fixed-arm mounted officer wearing trews and a feather bonnet leads twelve marching Black Watch Highlanders in feather bonnets with red hackles, and seven pipers in feather bonnets with red hackles. The set can be dated to 1934 or 1935 because pipers with feather bonnets rather than Glengarry caps were not designed and sold by Britains until 1934. The marching Black Watch only appeared otherwise in Parade Series Set #449, or postwar as a component of large Display Set #73.

The only details “out of joint” are the number of officers and the total number of pieces found. The catalog describes Set #480 as costing 4 shillings 9 pence and consisting of “The Black Watch, with Pipers and Mounted Officers” (see accompanying listing from the 1935 catalog). The auction lot contains 12 men, 7 pipers, and only one officer for a total of 20 pieces, instead of the 18 pieces listed in the 1935 catalog, and it lacks the box that would ratify identification. However, there was no other set with more than one Black Watch piper except the postwar Black Watch Pipe Bands in Sets 2109 and 2179 that featured multiple pipers. Even more interesting is that the mounted Highlander officer is not the officer casting with a moveable arm riding a walking heads-up Scots Grey horse that appeared in Sets 437, 2062, 2126, 2168 and Picture Pack 845-B. It is a unique figure that represents the only occasion that the head with the “flying” bonnet tails was used apart from the charging Highlanders in Sets 11, 15, 88, 2062, 2126 and Picture Pack 1352-B.

While I have only seen the photographs of this group of Highlanders, it appears very likely that Norman has discovered Set #480 of the short-lived Parade Series.

BRITAINS PARADE SERIES SET #480 (Cont.)



Set #480



Mounted Black Watch Officer



Black Watch Pipers



Showing Head from Charging Highlander



Black Watch

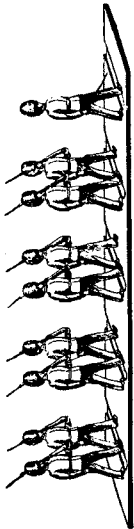


Mounted Officer Black Watch

BRITAINS PARADE SERIES SET #480 (Cont.)

The "PARADE" Series OF METAL SOLDIERS

Best Quality. Standard Size.



The illustration above shows the unique method of attaching the soldiers to the specially designed baseboard, which is so arranged that it in no way interferes with their use in the ordinary manner, as they can be removed or replaced at will.

BRITISH ARMY				
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438	2	0	Grenadier Guards	9
449	2	10	Black Watch, The, High-landers...	13
480	4	9	Black Watch, The, with Pipers and Mounted Officers	18
482	6	6	Gordon Highlanders with Pipers and Mounted Officers	26
446	2	10	Scots Guards	13
442	2	0	Infantry, British (Khaki)	9
450	2	10	Infantry, British (Khaki)	13
439	2	0	Middlesex Regiment, The	9
481	3	11	Middlesex Regiment, The, with Buglers, Drummers and Mounted Officers	18
490	5	9	Middlesex Regiment, The, with Buglers, Drummers and Mounted Officers	26
448	2	10	7th Royal Fusiliers	13
440	2	0	7th Royal Fusiliers	9
441	2	0	Gordon Highlanders	9
447	2	10	West Surrey Regiment	13

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PATENT SPECIFICATION

Application Date: Jan. 4, 1930. No. 409/30. 346,424

Complete Left: Nov. 4, 1930.

Complete Accepted: April 7, 1931.

PROVISIONAL SPECIFICATION.

A Supporting Board for Toy Soldiers.

WE, FREDERICK CHARLES PRYKE, a British Subject, and BRITAINS LIMITED, a corporation organized under the laws of Great Britain and Ireland, both of Lambton Road, Hornsey Rise, London, N. 19, do hereby declare the nature of the invention to be as follows:—

The invention relates to supporting boards for toy soldiers and other articles having thin-edged bases or flanges, or thin projecting parts, such as the legs of a toy horse, the boards serving to hold the articles in packages or boxes, or for purposes of display, and in some cases also for holding them while in use.

According to the invention the board is made with shallow cavities or slots having under-cut edges, so that flanges or other thin portions of the articles can be slipped under the said edges.

One method of constructing such a board consists in folding a strip of card-board lengthwise, and fastening the two leaves together by means of clamps or equivalent devices, leaving a slight clearance between the leaves, the strip having along one of its longer edges slots, so that when the strip is folded these slots form the cavities referred to. The said cavities terminate at one edge of the board, and allow the flat bases of metal toy soldiers to be slipped between the two folded leaves, the soldiers standing in the slots.

Another method consists in using three sheets fastened together to form a board of three layers, the intermediate sheet having slots terminating at an edge of the board, and the top sheet having similar slots placed over these, but narrower. The bases of toy soldiers can be slipped from the edge of the board into the wider slots of the intermediate sheet, and are retained therein, against upward pull, by the edges of the narrower slots.

Another method, which is for example appropriate for supporting toy horse soldiers, consists in fastening a top sheet provided with apertures upon a bottom sheet, with sufficient clearance or looseness between the sheets to allow the legs on one side of each horse to be slipped between the two sheets, the horses and soldiers then lying partly within the apertures in the top sheet. The bottom sheet then forms a background against which the figures are viewed, and the apertures in the top sheet may be of such shape as to give this background an attractive or striking outline. A convenient modification of this method consists in using a corrugated bottom sheet, which may be stiff or soft, the corrugations affording clearance for those parts of the figures which are slipped between the sheets.

Dated this 4th day of January, 1930.
For the Applicants,
HERBERT HADDAN & Co.,
Chartered Patent Agents,
31 and 32, Bedford Street, Strand,
London, W.C.2.

COMPLETE SPECIFICATION.

A Supporting Board for Toy Soldiers.

WE, FREDERICK CHARLES PRYKE, a British Subject, and BRITAINS LIMITED, a corporation organized under the laws of Great Britain and Ireland, both of Lambton Road, Hornsey Rise, London, N. 19, do hereby declare the nature of the invention and in what manner the same is to be performed, to be particularly described and ascertained in and by the following statement:—

The invention relates to supporting boards for toy soldiers having thin-edged bases or flanges, or thin projecting parts, such as the legs of a toy horse, the boards serving to hold the articles in packages or boxes, or for purposes of display, and in some cases also for holding them while in use.

[Pric 1-1]

2

346,424

According to the invention the board comprises a stiff elongated bottom strip or sheet and a stiff elongated upper strip or sheet lying thereon and fastened at intervals, thereby by staples, the upper strip or sheet having a plurality of slots therein open to one edge of said strip or sheet so that flanges or other thin portions of the articles to be slipped between the adjacent surfaces of the strips or sheets.

One method of constructing such a board consists in folding a strip of card-board lengthwise and fastening the two leaves together by means of clamps or wire staples or equivalent devices leaving a slight clearance between the leaves, the upper leaf having slots opening along one of its longer edges, so that when the strip is folded these slots form the cavities referred to. The said cavities are closed at one edge of the board and open at the other edge and allow the flat bases of metal toy soldiers to be slipped between the two folded leaves, the soldiers standing in the slots.

Another method consists in using three sheets fastened together to form a board of three layers, the intermediate sheet having slots terminating at an edge of the board, and the top sheet having similar slots placed over these, but narrower. The bases of toy soldiers can be slipped from the edge of the board into the wider slots of the intermediate sheet, and are retained therein, against upward pull, by the edges of the narrower slots.

Another method, which is for example appropriate for supporting toy horse soldiers, consists in fastening a top sheet provided with apertures upon a bottom sheet, with sufficient clearance or looseness between the sheets to allow the legs on one side of each horse to be slipped between the two sheets, the horses and soldiers then lying partly within the apertures in the top sheet. The bottom sheet then forms a background against which the figures are viewed, and the apertures in the top sheet may be of such shape as to give this background an attractive or striking outline. A convenient modification of this method consists in using a corrugated bottom sheet, which may be stiff or soft, the corrugations affording clearance for those parts of the figures which are slipped between the sheets.

In the annexed drawing, Fig. 1 is a plan and Fig. 2 a section on line 2-2 of Fig. 1, of a board formed of two layers, Fig. 3 is a plan and Fig. 4 is a section on line 4-4 of Fig. 3 of a board formed of three layers. Fig. 5 illustrates the modification as for example for holding toy

horse-soldiers before referred to, and Fig. 6 is a similar illustration showing a board with corrugated bottom sheet and Fig. 7 is a cross-section thereof on line 7-7. In Figs. 1 to 4 A represents the bottom sheet or leaf, B the top sheet or leaf, C the slots in the latter, and D wire staples for securing the sheets or leaves together. E in Figs. 3 and 4 illustrates an intermediate sheet.

In the device as in Figs. 5 and 6, A' illustrates a plain or flat bottom sheet and A'' a corrugated bottom sheet, and B' represents the top sheet with apertures C' therein.

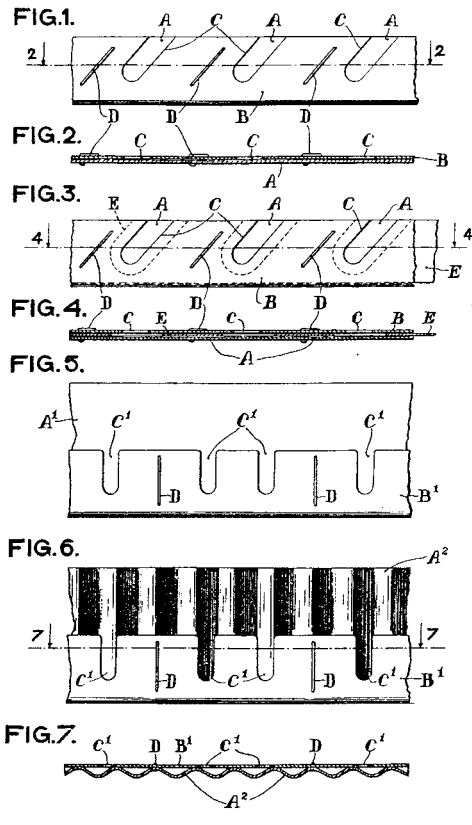
We do not claim broadly a base of board comprising a slot into which an article or its flange foot can be slid so as to prevent it rising from the base or board as we are aware that such devices have been commonly used in cardboard boxes as for example for transport of gas mantles, nor do we claim broadly a board for supporting toy soldiers or the like having holes into which the bases of the toys may be pushed so that the material at the edges of the holes will overlap the said bases and so retain them, nor do we claim a holder made up of a base board to which is adhesively fixed a centre board cut out to form a series of arms or divisions and a top plate with arms, said top plate having a number of slots, as we are aware that such a device has been used for storing microscope slides, but:—

Having now particularly described and ascertained the nature of our said invention and in what manner the same is to be performed, we declare that what we claim is:—

1. A supporting board for toy soldiers having thin edged bases or thin projecting parts such as the legs of a toy horse, consisting of a stiff elongated bottom strip or sheet and a stiff elongated upper strip or sheet attached thereon by staples, the upper strip or sheet having a plurality of slots therein open to one edge of said strip or sheets so that the aforesaid bases or projecting parts may be slid therein and frictionally held between the adjacent surfaces of the strips or sheets.
2. A supporting board as in Claim 1 and for the purpose set forth in which the slots are arranged at an angle to the longitudinal axis of the board.
3. A supporting board as in Claim 1 or 2, comprising also a third sheet with slots wider than the toy bases interposed between the bottom and upper sheets.
4. A supporting board as in Claim 1, 2 or 3, in which the bottom sheet is corrugated.

346,424 COMPLETE SPECIFICATION

1 SHEET



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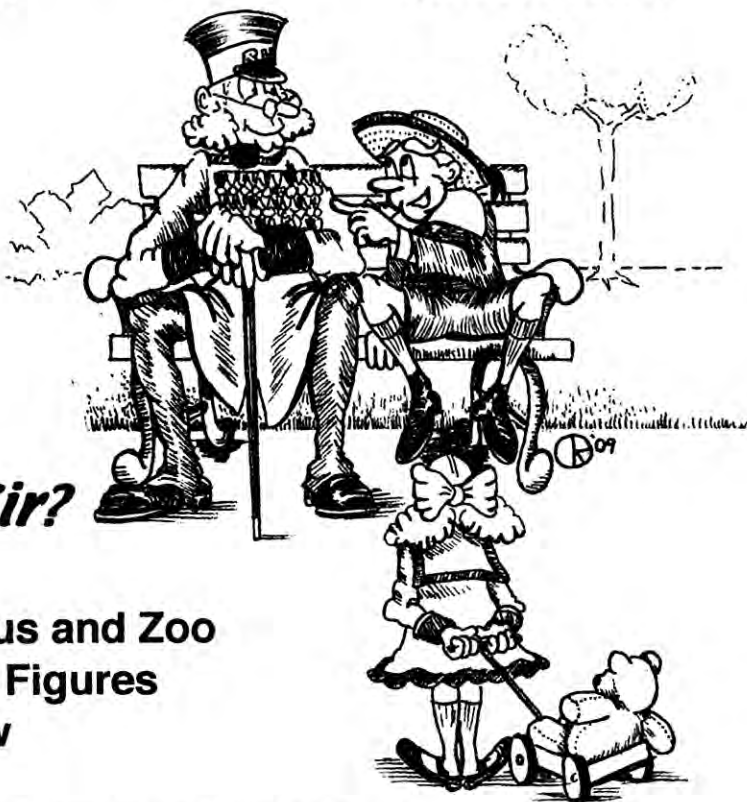
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SHOW REPORT

THE 2009 W. BRITAIN LONDON COLLECTOR'S EVENT

On December 4 the 2009 W. Britain London Collector's Event was held. With great trepidation and much reluctance W. Britain had to relocate our popular London event to a new venue this year. For the last three years it had been held at The Guards Museum but due to capacity restrictions we moved it to the Victory Services Club, a larger venue also in the heart of London. To add a bit of variety to the evening we engaged the services of six superb reenactors, dressed in full kit with lots of extra equipment - even a WWI Vickers machine gun! They were dutifully posted by the appropriate range and made quite an impression. We had a Napoleonic era Gordon Highlander, American Civil War Confederate and his wife, Zulu War 24th Foot Corporal, World War I Corporal and a World War II Bren Gunner. Well versed in their impressions, they all mingled with our guests and gave an excellent account of themselves and the period they were representing.

Midway through the evening one of our regular attendees caught me and explained that he almost did not come this year since the venue had moved, but decided to give it a try and brought his ten year old grandson with him. And he had to admit that it was one of the most interesting events he had been to and that his grandson was having the time of his life. The three hours flew by in a flash and we did not even get a chance to try out the Vickers.

The expanded space also allowed for some very impressive dioramas that attracted a lot of attention. The big announcement and preview was of our new War Along The Nile range with the first British and Mahdists from the



A Young Collector gets some instruction



Ken Osen discusses the merits of his sculpting with some collectors



Collectors examining the new figures

SHOW REPORT (Cont.)



The evening in full swing

Relief of Khartoum series on display. Also on display were new 2010 items including an American Civil War Rucker Ambulance and scenic accessories for Rorke's Drift and Isandlwana.

The pre-production auction generated some healthy bidding with all of the pieces going for well above their reserve prices. This year also saw the culmination of this series of event pieces – a three piece collection of figures depicting the Coldstream Guards fifes and drums from 1815. At the end of the day a little over 200 folks showed up for the event and 400 tickets were sold, making this a successful event and pleasant gathering for all who could attend.

The 2010 event will be at the same location on December 3. Tickets sold very quickly so once we make the official announcement on 2010 please do not hesitate. The 2010 event will be limited to 400 tickets.

W Britain Staff & Re-enactors



Re-Enactors at London Event



AUCTION PREVIEW

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AUCTION PREVIEW (Cont.)



Mignot



Timpo



Britains Wild West



Britains Pre War



Britains Pre War Set 89



Britains Pre War



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Britains Pre War



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AUCTION PREVIEW (Cont.)



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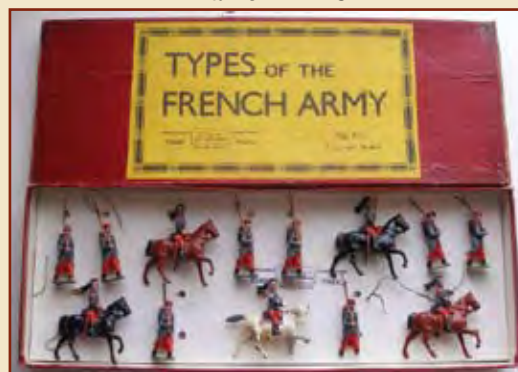
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AUCTION REVIEW

Old Toy Soldier Auctions November 2009. Review of significant prices realized (excluding buyers premium) from The James (Doc) Wengert and Vincent C. Banker Collections.



Lot #5 Britains Egyptian Camel Corps
\$550



Lot #128 Britains Set # 2093
Berkshire Regiment Band. \$1200



Lot #406 Heyde EXCEPTIONALLY RARE
Set # 1387. Old Volunteer Corps in Original
Box with insert card. \$3250



Lot #361 Britains Set # 1398 VERY RARE
Sports Model Open Tourer Motor Car White
and Red. \$700



Lot #14 Britains Set # 134. Japanese Infantry Charging
in Original "Butterfly" Box. \$575



Lot #83 Britains Set # 101 Life Guard Band. \$2300



Lot #385 Heyde Napoleonic Old Guard Marching with Mounted and
Foot Officer and Drummer. \$1200



Lot #73 Britains 39a Royal Horse Artillery light harness Khaki Gun Team
with Galloping Officer and Escort. \$850



Lot #89 Britains Set # 144 Royal Field Artillery Gun Team
with Mounted Officer. \$650

AUCTION REVIEW (Cont.)



Lot #635 Herald VERY RARE Store Farm Display Tied in Original Box. \$2100



Lot #621 Britains EXCEPTIONALLY RARE H.R.H. The Prince of Wales in Uniform of the Welsh Guards with Original Box. \$2000



Lot #288 King & Country RARE Set # AN07 Arnhem Ambulance Jeep with Original Box. \$600



Lot #449 Britains Set 1550 Exceptionally Rare Noah's Ark with Noah, Wife and 22 Animals. \$5000



Lot #204 KRAUSE Germany VERY RARE British Medical Grouping \$1800



Lot #286 King & Country Exceptionally RARE Set TK011 Austin K2 Ambulance Gloss Finish, Green Version only 20 made. \$1200



Lot #411 Spenkuch VERY RARE Frederick the Great and his Guards, Two African Drummers, Flag Bearer, Man with Pike and 10 at the Slope. \$3750



Lot #16 Britains Set # 137. Army Medical Service with Nursing Sisters and wounded in Original Box. \$600



Lot #344 Britains Set # 2153 Band of the Royal Marines Tied in Original R.O.A.N. Box RARE 1957-1960 Plastic Drum Version with Tenor Drum. \$750

BOOK REVIEW

WOLLNER

History & Catalogue of a Viennese Toy-Soldier Manufacture

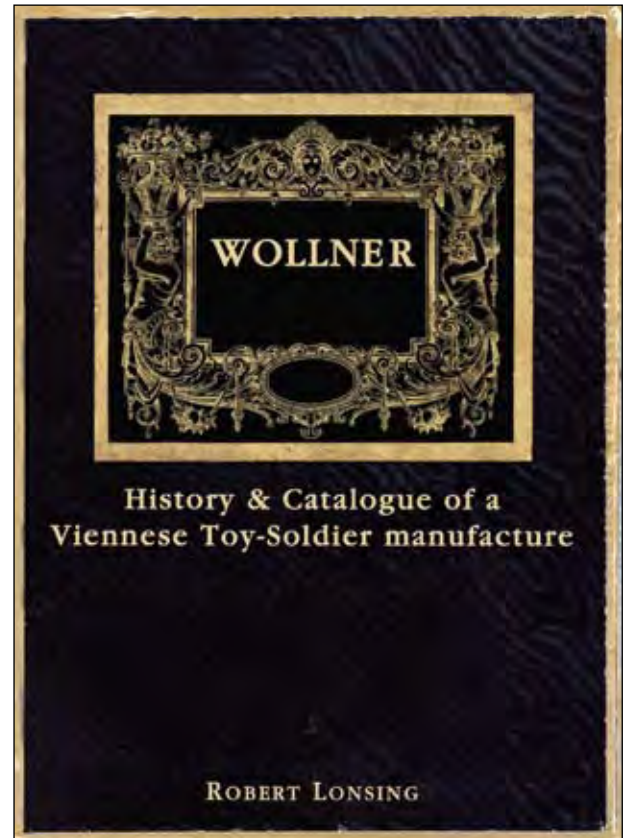
By Robert Lonsing

Reviewed by Russ Bednarek

Mention German toy soldiers and the figures of Lineol, Elastolin and Heyde immediately come to mind. The massive output of these firms dominated the collecting market in Germany and her surrounding States in the late eighteenth and early twentieth centuries. The history and production of the afore mentioned companies have been the subject of several books.

Numerous smaller Germanic toy soldier companies came and went as they competed for a share of the toy soldier market. Several of these firms became quite successful: Spenkuch, Haffner, Noris, Krause and Wollner. Developing charming, high quality figures, the history and production records of these lesser known companies are often non-existent, making research extremely difficult.

Despite the lack of documentation, prominent Wollner collector, Robert Lonsing has written "Wollner: History & Catalogue of a Viennese Toy-Soldier Manufacture". It is the opinion of this reviewer that "Wollner" is one of the finest toy soldier books to date. Most toy soldier researchers rely heavily on past catalogues or price lists to aid in researching the history of a past toy soldier manufacturers. Remarkably, Wollner never produced a catalogue or price list, thus placing



Mr. Lonsing at a distinct disadvantage. Undeterred, Mr. Lonsing pressed forward and began to document Wollner production figure by figure. The author had to explore and utilize other sources of information due to the lack of a catalogue and price list. Lonsing was able to use several alternative sources of original artifacts to help him piece together the history and production of Wollner.



BOOK REVIEW (Cont.)

Existing original molds helped establish the size and subject matter of Wollner figures. These molds were found in several private collections and also at a company that still produces the Size 2 Wollner figures.

The examination of vintage boxes yielded much information. Labels on the boxes provided additional information in regards to size and number of figures in the box. The size of the box was indicative to the number and type of infantry and cavalry figures contained in the set. A number code provided a box size, figure size and composition of figures.

Original figures from Mr. Lonsing's extensive collection helped to establish Wollner production. Other Wollner collectors offered their collections for study and examination by Mr. Lonsing.

The investigation of vintage toy catalogues provided another source of Wollner figures. These catalogues frequently showed Wollner figures in boxed sets. Toy shops often varied the number and composition of the types of figures offered in boxed sets to be competitive with their peers. The study of these catalogues revealed additional Wollner figures to add to the master list of figures produced.

The discovery and examination of an original order and delivery book from 1910-1912 helped document an immense number of sets of all six sizes of Wollner figures. Using this book as a guide, it is estimated that Wollner produced and delivered 26,000 boxed sets, almost 500,000 figures during this time period.

All the previously mentioned sources were intensely examined as Mr. Lonsing began to catalogue every figure and set offered by Wollner in all six sizes, I-VI.

The first part of "Wollner" deals with the Wollner family history, molds, manufacturing, painting and figure sizes. Additional chapters explore vintage boxes and labels, box sizes, and the Wollner numbering system and illustrations. Each page has both German-English text. Numerous color photographs are liberally and strategically used to help compliment the excellent text in the first twelve chapters.

The remaining 200 pages are devoted to the catalogues of Wollner figures; one for each of the six Wollner sizes. Collectors will be delighted with the impressive amount of photographs. The left-hand page will have a set of figures lined up in linear fashion, one figure behind the other. This allows for up to eight different sets to be shown on a single page. Figures

in the catalogue may be in color or black and white. Color indicates an original Wollner figure while black and white is for figure(s) painted by a collector or an unpainted casting.

The right-hand page will have the descriptive text directly across from the corresponding set shown on the left-hand page. A vast amount of information is provided within the minimal text; name shown on the box label, figure size, special painting, original engraver, assigned catalogue number and types of figures. This format is repeated for all six of the Wollner figure sizes. Mr. Lonsing further enhances the reader's experience by frequently placing numerous color photographs of original boxed sets on the text pages.

As the catalogue progresses to the larger sized figures, the number of color photographs of original boxed sets dramatically increases. Unpainted castings and accompanying components are also provided for study.

After reading and examining "Wollner", one can truly admire Robert Lonsing's commitment to researching and documenting every facet of the history and production of Wollner toy soldiers. The author exhausted every source available to him even interviewing remaining members of the Wollner family. An example of this extraordinary commitment to detail is obvious in Mr. Lonsing's study of the Wollner boxes and labels. How many toy soldier books devote any space to boxes? It takes Mr. Lonsing three chapters to examine vintage boxes, labels and even original packing materials. Such is Mr. Lonsing's dedication and devotion to detail.

"Wollner" is more than 300 pages long with over 800 photographs. Robert Lonsing's flawless and meticulous research combined with hundreds of excellent color photographs have resulted in one of the best toy soldier books ever published. Mr. Lonsing has certainly set a new standard in toy soldier research and publication. "Wollner" belongs in every toy soldier enthusiast's library.

Thank you to Mr. Lonsing who generously supplied a copy of this superlative book for review.

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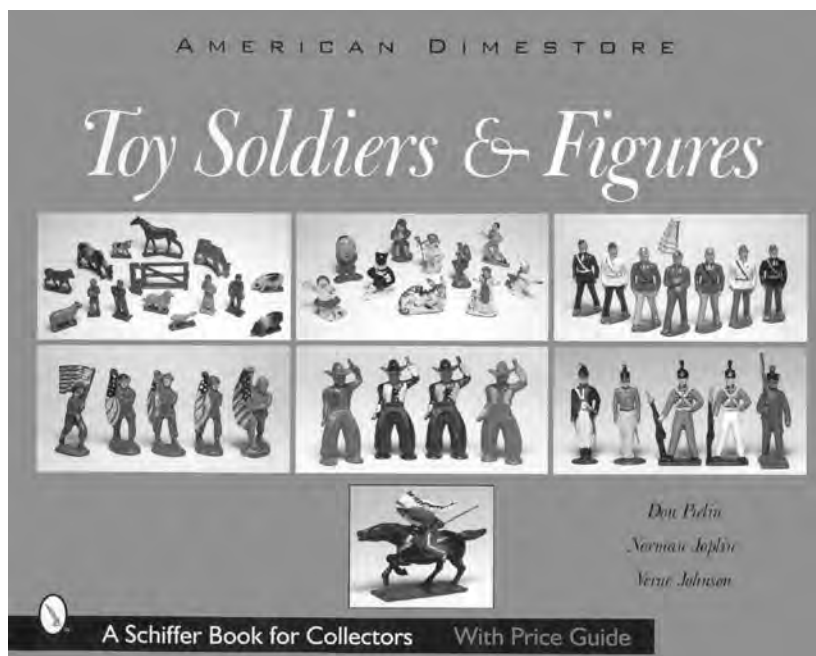
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BOB HORNUNG.... Collector/Dealer & Exceptional Artisan

By Louis S. Steinberg

Part I...The building of a Dimestore collection; becoming a Dealer; changing directions



Bob the Ultimate Craftsman

As for background, during the late 70s and early 80s when Dimestore toy soldiers were approaching the pinnacle of collecting popularity, various descriptive lists of "figures for sale" would arrive in our mail boxes on a rather consistent basis. The youthful recalling's of "Sending Away" were again being ignited with exhilaration.

Those printed lists of toy soldiers that we received via our good ol' postman, however, were the important reins of the harness guiding us to our relished collectible wants and wishes throughout the last three stanzas of the twentieth century.

Mail order thus became the pith for the collector while also developing, along the way, adjunct friendships as its more welcomed extension. After all, those hobbyists everywhere in the country that found the collections to buy and then circulated their sales lists were looked upon as the experts.

They sorted out and uncovered the rarities and began to recognize variations within many of the pieces.

The early toy soldier magazines and periodicals of the period featured articles and advertising related to all aspects of collecting Dimestore military and civilian pieces. Dealers had captured their audience with offerings of every grade of available figure and complementary soldier item.

These were the years when Dimestore dealers reigned the aisles of national and local shows. The vast acceptance of those original five-and-ten-cent-store figures we remember buying and playing with in our far removed childhood was our reality "Romper Room" of the era.

Some dealers did offer repaired and repainted pieces or solid castings of rarities. Many times this helped to fill in a collection until an original update was located. Although, now and then, someone even went so far as to represent them as original and were summarily outed and disgraced.

A handful of dealers, as I have been documenting in past issues, ventured into producing new lines of Dimestore styled figures to correlate with the older originals. These newbie's soon would command almost comparable pricings, since in most cases their production was often very limited.

Robert Lee Hornung was for over ten years a Dimestore toy figure Dealer **par excellence!!**

Bob, the son of Leo and Clara Hornung, was born in 1947 in Cincinnati, Ohio. In growing up there, he remembers his youth, like between eight and twelve years old, and mentions, "I used to have Cowboys and Indians when I was a kid. Although, when I went nearby to my grandfather Urban's house, I really had the most fun. He had an old homecast mold, and whenever I visited him, we would make and paint toy soldiers. I collected lots of them.

"My father, Leo Hornung, was another kind of artist. As a model maker by profession, working with sheet metal, he could fabricate from any representative design its prototype. I'd say he could make about anything out of wood or metal.

"As for my mother, she also was considerably an artist and could make anything she wished from gingerbread houses to a complete clothes wardrobe. I'm

sure I drew my own talents from that gene pool."

The high school years passed fast for Bob. He was always occupied with things to make. After high school he attended the University of Cincinnati for three years until he was drafted during the Vietnam War. He said, "Now there were some interesting stories...but, not for this article."

With Bob's departure from the Army and upon returning home to Cincinnati, he went to work for the A B Dick Company as a service technician. Within a year he left and started his own printing press sales and service business, Graphic Equipment Service.

He said, "In starting that first business, I couldn't afford continuing my original hobby of collecting coins, but I did find toy soldiers and they were very much cheaper. In those days, I wouldn't pay more than two dollars for any figure, and I really bought many. I've collected them since 1978."

BOB HORNUNG.... Collector/Dealer & Exceptional Artisan (Cont.)

The turning point year of '78 was significantly venturous. Bob had sold the equipment service business and opened Tri County Furniture Refinishing. Speaking with much pride, he states, "I built that business into the largest antique furniture restoration business in Cincinnati!"

Although Bob's leisure time interests, when business allowed, were many, ie: antiques, art glass, stones, Rookwood pottery, lapidary arts, along with history and travel, and of course, still coins. Who knew it would become toy soldiering that won over as his preeminent hobby?

Bob cited, "I started selling toy soldiers in '78 and have set up at every Chicago Toy Soldier Show since it began in 1980. By the mid '80s I had collected multiples of nearly all the Barclay and Manoil figures.

"Fortunately, I had discovered and been able to buy several huge collections. The largest in 1985 was close to 12,000 figures. They had been stored in an attic since 1957. Never played with. Mostly Mint. Only used by the owner for window displays. So, I knew for a fact that they were all originals. For another fact, I had no room to move in my house.

"I supplied other vendors with literally hundreds for their own lists. The figures were so plentiful, they only had to let me know what they needed."

My own personal commerce with Bob began in early '84. I had received his five page, hand printed letter, not only answering my question regarding a box of tents made by Jaymar, but including several lists of his own wants. The resolve was a most equitable trade.

My buys and trades with Bob continued through the years. However, my own affinity became obsessive with the conversion of Dimestore figures, not only my

own, but also to those of others. Bob had fashioned a unique WWII Pontoon set with two figures. That was another nice trade.

He states in a Fall '86 list under New Developments, "As most of you know, I occasionally do a bit of converting and manufacturing. My latest conversions are now ready. They are a WWII soldier marching with slung rifle and ammo belt around his neck and a duplex antiaircraft team." I had to have both for my own collection.

It was also in '86 that Bob treated himself to his first personal computer. List making was made much easier and tracking sales and buyers was a large benefit. How was it ever done before?

A summer list in 1987 announced, almost hidden near its end, the termination of his trial run in accessory production. He declared, "This is the last of twenty painted, papier-mache and wood trench sets made by me. Included is an Artillery Emplacement; Long and Short Trench Section; Bunker; MG Nest; Ladder and Ten Sand Bags....Too much work! There will be no more."

Now here's a timetable aside....Then, in January 1988, "WHAM BANG!!" Richard O'Brien *decisively redefined our hobby with his first book of five hundred and six pages, announced by Books Americana..."the most comprehensive book on Dimestore toy soldiers ever published."*

"Collecting Toy Soldiers, An Identification And Value Guide," *instantly became the sought after authoritative and most inclusive reference, on the subject of American made and select foreign toy soldiers. It was not just the abundant listing pages of the tome. It was the histories of the companies; the bountiful pictures numbered and captioned; the figure's suggested worth; and, the acknowledged contributions from the broad collecting community.*

The joy of collecting in using O'Brien's guide nurtured our education on the wide range of Dimestore figures that had been produced. It became exciting when hearing of a new find. Even today, it is not unusual to be updated by someone's archeological Dimestore disclosure.

A new guidebook for collectors was introduced in mid 1989. **"Beton Basics,"** was a twenty-eight page work of information about Beton toys. It included images of over 175 different toys from military to circus, along with sections on history, versions and colors. Its author....Bob Hornung.



WWII Crewmen Positioning a Pontoon Boat

BOB HORNUNG.... Collector/Dealer & Exceptional Artisan (Cont.)



Engaging the Enemy and Radioing Coordinates



Starting the 1984 Production of Fighting Yanks

In thinking a few years back, Bob says, "I started producing my new line of Dimestore size **Yanks** in 1984. I made Dimestore's because that was what I was collecting then. There were fourteen different **Yanks** patterned after the WWII bloused-pant-look, yet wearing the WWI helmet.

"The Germans are coming!" was announced in early '90. "I am currently in the process of converting all



Germans Advancing to Fight American Yanks



Germans Suffer Casualties Combating Yanks



The Yanks Now Beginning to Gear-up the Action



"More Yanks" Training for the Coming Battles

of my **Yanks** into German troops just right to engage your Dimestore Army."

I ponder. What do you believe to be the most ambitious and challenging thing you have ever seen made within the entire hobby of toy soldiering?? Could it be some mammoth museum diorama of any period and scale, or even the most detailed of sailing ships with a full complement of seamen??



Writing Home About the Yanks Final Offense

Now, my vote is indisputably Bob Hornung's "piece de resistance" work of impeccably exquisite art, unpretentiously named....**My Soldier Shop**, circa 1990.

The complete miniature **Soldier Shop** was only available by special order and delivered within several months. Its overall size of twenty inches long, twelve wide and twelve high was quite amply sufficient, but stuffing it full of inventory became a herculean task.

BOB HORNUNG.... Collector/Dealer & Exceptional Artisan (Cont.)



The Complete Toy Soldier Shop Displaying Its Massive Inventory

Bob's advertising flyer explained, "Complete **Toy Soldier Shop** with customized door and full glass display windows. Interior with shelving and display case. All cabinet work done in walnut, cherry or mahogany. Walnut and cherry burls are also used to enhance drawers and doors.

"**Shop** comes complete with all twenty sets of soldiers, as well as a hundred other items, including tanks, planes, ships, Knights, Arabs on camels, castles and anything else that may fit. I fill every nook and cranny."

The twenty sets of tiny, tiny toy soldiers were 5mm scale. That's right...five mm's...meaning as, Bob writes, "the height of a hatless man is approximately $\frac{1}{4}$ of an inch and hand painted with minute details. Then, permanently fixed into a hand-made red cardboard box with a printed label very similar to sets of old Britain's."

Many **Soldier Shops** were sold. At the time the ticket price was \$1,500.

Also offered by the "maestro of miniature" was a most unique tiny, about eight mm, book bound in leather with an embossed soldier posed at present arms in 24 carat gold overlay. Inside are pages that contain a brief history of toy soldiers and numerous illustrations. It is difficult for me to even imagine such a minuscule publishing.

The tiny sets of figures also were sold separately. Bob explains, "I don't always carry a stock of all sets. If I'm out of one, patience is required. My eyes will only let me make these sets about once a year."

The recessionary economy of the country in the early 90's influenced toy soldiering as it did everything else. Bob's Soldier List of early '91 tells, "that since last summer I have been having trouble finding soldiers, and although I have done this list for over seven years without dropping anyone, the cost of sending out over two hundred lists showing a much smaller offering is not so sales effective."

A change in business direction was beginning to happen, coinciding with the general waning of collector interest in Dimestore figures.

The Soldier List of June 1991 began, "Friends...I have been a part-time Dimestore toy soldier dealer for over 10 years. During that time I have accumulated many rare and choice figures. Some which took long negotiations or great luck to acquire.

"This brings me to the current situation. Today's business climate is slow, and I have children about to enter college. After long thought and many tears...I have decided to sell my collection.

"This does not mean that I will leave the scene of toy soldiers. I will just have to start over and find them all again.

"In sorting the figures, it was evident that I couldn't bear to depart with many of them. Eventually, I wound up keeping nearly half. However, have no fear. This list should have something for everyone."

The series of **Yanks** had been produced for six

BOB HORNUNG.... Collector/Dealer & Exceptional Artisan (Cont.)



*The Castle, One of Several
Scenic 12 x 24 Backgrounds Introduced by Bob*



*No Man's Land, a Barren Wasteland Background
Depicting the Grief of War*



*A New Series of Pewter Cast Trees, Large and Small,
Along with Plants*

years and had expanded to eighteen figures. Sales, however, had dropped off.

"This and modifying my interests has prompted me to suspend production and destroy the molds," laments Bob.

"It was not until 1997 that I sold our restoration business. That was when I finally decided to pursue toy soldiering, design and production, on a full time basis. Thus, *Hornung Art* was launched. My Knights, foot and mounted, became very rewarding.

"I also added a new Series of six Backgrounds. Great for a backdrop in a display, or the start of a diorama. These will give some excitement to your toy soldier displays. Plus, the largest selection available anywhere of fifty-three new items of semi flat trees, large and small, along with plants and cacti. Each cast in Pewter and painted to a high standard," Bob continued.

Returning to the beginning of this article.... Bob married his childhood sweetheart, Sharon Ash in 1971.



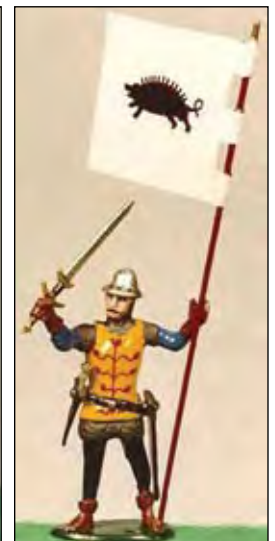
A USA Heyde Style Circus Set Reproduced by Hornung Art

Spiritedly he pronounces, "She is still my wife and girlfriend. We are blessed with four children, two boys and two girls. Only the sons are artists. Both better than their Dad. (There goes that progressively active gene pool.)

"We do a lot of art shows in Cincinnati and have won numerous first, second and honorable mentions awards for both toy soldiers and my jewelry creations."

Dimestore collectors in unison are not only a fan of the hobby... but, also an avid fan of Robert Lee Hornung.

Part II, as Bob pulls another arrow out of his quiver, this future article will recount the further production undertakings of *Hornung Art* into the kingdom of 54mm Knights and sundry artistic endeavors. Don't miss it!

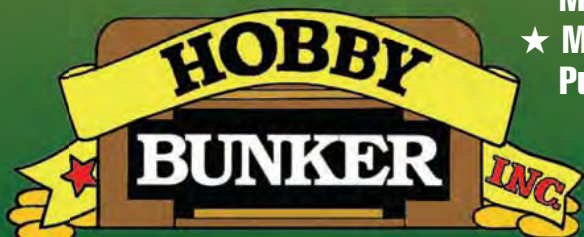


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The Sun Rubber Company's Armored Brigade

By John Stewart

At the end of World War II, the Sun Rubber Company of Barberton, Ohio produced two unique toy rubber military vehicles based on actual pre-war U.S. Army hardware. While the Sun Rubber vehicles are relatively easy to find themselves, they represent one vehicle (the M3 White Scout Car) that saw relatively moderate use during the war, and another (the M2 medium tank) that saw none at all. What these toys represent, and possibly why they were manufactured, is the topic of this article.



Sun Rubber's Armored Brigade

The Sun Rubber Company was located in the north-eastern Ohio city of Barberton, from 1923 until 1975. After several unsuccessful products, the company began making rubber dolls and accessories. Selling through dime-store chains, such as the ubiquitous F.W. Woolworth's, Sun Rubber prospered. By introducing a line of sturdy toy cars and trucks, American children found dependable and inexpensive toys that helped the company weather the Depression.

After the start of World War II rubber was in great demand by the military. The material restrictions put in place on April 1, 1942 turned Sun Rubber Company from a manufacturer of playthings to a producer of critical parts for various weapons systems. Among Sun Rubber's wartime production were oxygen masks, respirators, rubber gloves and self-sealing fuel tanks for combat aircraft. One freakish item developed and produced was a Mickey Mouse gas mask (apparently for children). Only 1000 of these were ever made.

At the end of hostilities in 1945 Sun Rubber, like so many other U.S. manufacturers, sought a quick transition back to civilian products. Soon dolls were once again on their way to their new moms and the company launched a successful line of Disney products. It was during this period that the M3 Scout Car and M2 medium tank toys were introduced.



M3 Scout Car (photo H.P. Ganesha)

M3 actual Scout Car was developed for U.S. Army service in 1938, although full production did not begin until 1941. The M3 was a four wheeled vehicle powered by a 6 cylinder gasoline engine of 110 hp. It had a crew of one driver and up to seven passengers. It was utilized in its originally intended role in scouting operations, but also used for a variety of other purposes including as an ambulance. Close to 21,000 units were produced between 1941 and 1945. The M3 design influenced the design of the famous M2 and M3 U.S. halftracks as well as the later Soviet BTR-40 armored car.

The M2 medium tank was an ungainly vehicle developed in the late 1930's by the Rock Island Arsenal of Illinois, and in part, manufactured by Chrysler Corporation. The high profile tank sported a small boxy turret which mounted a 37 mm gun and at each of the four corners of its central hull sponson it bristled with four 30 cal. machine guns. There were also two additional upward firing 30 cal. machine guns out of the top of the hull sponsons and two more 30 cal. machine guns in the hull on either side of the driver. The M2 had an amazing eight machine guns. All of this firepower was manned by a crew of six. The five ton tank was powered by a 400 hp radial engine and the tracks rode around three vertical spring suspension assemblies. Only 94 of these odd vehicles were ever produced. Considered a failure, the M2 nevertheless provided the lower hull test bed for the Lee-Grant series of tanks and later the famous Sherman.

As to the toys themselves, one sees quite well designed models of the actual vehicles. There is accuracy in the dimensions that is not seen in any of Sun Rubber's previous vehicles toys. Interestingly, while both the actual M2 tank and M3 Scout car measured approximately 17.5 ft (5.5 m) long, the toys are of

The Sun Rubber Company's Armored Brigade (Cont.)



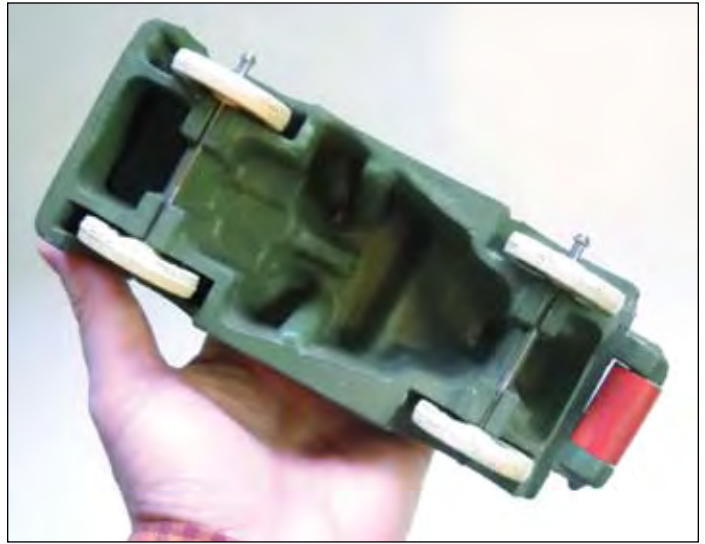
M2 Medium Tank (photo Ray Veydt)

two different scales with the M2 being slightly smaller than the M3. Both work relatively well with 1/32 – 54 mm figures, but better (as far as looks goes) with the usual 3 – 3½ inch dimestore size soldiers.



Dimestore Battle

The tank measures approximately six inches long by three inches wide and four inches to the top of the 360° rotating, solid, rubber turret. The Scout car measures almost seven inches in length but just over 2½ inches wide and 3¼ inches at its maximum height. The difference in scale is obvious in the size of the small tank commander atop the M2 turret and the four gunners hunched over the weapons in their distinctive turned up collars and odd Star Wars stormtrooper like helmets. Additionally, it must be noted, that these vehicles were built with play in mind. The thickness of rubber is impressive and the vehicles are reinforced with rubber 'cross bracing,' the rubber wheels and axles they're attached to are very sturdy. On the underside, one will find the company's markings which read, "MFD BY THE SUN RUBBER CO BARBERTON O USA."



Reinforced underside

Sun Rubber painted both the tank and scout car in red or in one of two shades of green. The Scout car comes with or without the de-ditching roller and with either black or white wheels. The green tanks have a yellow turret and the red model comes with a tan turret. The tanks come either with or without silver painted sponson gun mounts and silver wheels and black (with red tank) or red suspension (with green tank).



Tanks compared

The green vehicles appear to have been molded in a previously green dyed rubber while the red vehicles are molded in black and sprayed red. The turrets on the tanks are painted over black rubber. Both the red and green Scout cars have silver machine guns and other highlights such as headlight mountings and radio equipment. The green Scout car soldiers wear red helmets.

The Sun Rubber Company's Armored Brigade (Cont.)



Green M3 with white wheels



Green M2 with painted highlights



Red M3 with black wheels

Perhaps what is most intriguing about these post war Sun Rubber vehicles is the question as to why these two, and only these two, vehicle types were produced. Neither vehicle is representative of primary U.S. fighting vehicles of WW II. True, the M3 Scout car eventually saw approximately 21,000 units produced, but compare this with the more famous M2 and M3 halftracks of which a combined total of approximately 65,000 were produced. Or compare the M3 output with the staggering number of over half a million jeeps churned out during the war. The numbers with regard to the quirky M2 medium tank are even more mystifying. Over 30,000 medium Sherman tanks headed off to war while only 94 (!) M2 tanks were ever produced and none ever having fired a shot in anger.

It is easy to speculate about all of this. Perhaps Sun Rubber decided in the late 1930's or early 1940's to get into military toys. Auburn already had rubber soldiers and at this time only one rubber tank (another oddball; the Marmon-Herrington light tank) on the market. The molds are made and then war erupts. Sun Rubber Company switches to wartime production of necessary wartime material on an around the clock basis. The war ends, troops come home, the

Barberton, Ohio factory has a huge payroll and tons of rubber on hand or on the way. In order to retool, and quickly, the old molds are dusted off and production begins on these obscure vehicles in a big way. We do know, thanks to Richard O'Brien, that these vehicles appeared by 1946. How long the production was, is uncertain.



From OTS v 28 #3 Fall 2004

It is also interesting to see that the Sun Rubber Company used their green rubber stock to portray one side in any potential toy battles, and to paint their black rubber stock in a contrasting red color. These colors predate the escalation of the cold war, so perhaps they recall Red versus Blue war games held before the Second World War. Nevertheless, both red and green forces display U.S. markings.

Unfortunately these were the only vehicles Sun Rubber produced at this scale and high standard. The company forged ahead with their Disney products and revitalized doll lines; eventually, the company folded in 1975. How many toy tanks and Scout cars is not known. They are not entirely rare at this point, but they are well worth considering for a part in any American military dime-store collection as representative of the look of the pre-war U.S. Army as seen through eyes of toymakers.

Feel free to contact me with any further insights regarding these vehicles at jkstewart@frontiernet.net or 1953 S Shore Dr, Worthington, MN 56187.



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✂ CORRECTION ✂

The article on BARCLAY'S BIKES by Stan Alekna that appeared in the Spring 2009 Vol. 33 Number 1 edition contained an error. The photo of the policeman above the caption **B93b Unmarked** is really **B93B**. The photo of the policeman above **B93B** is really **B93b Unmarked**.

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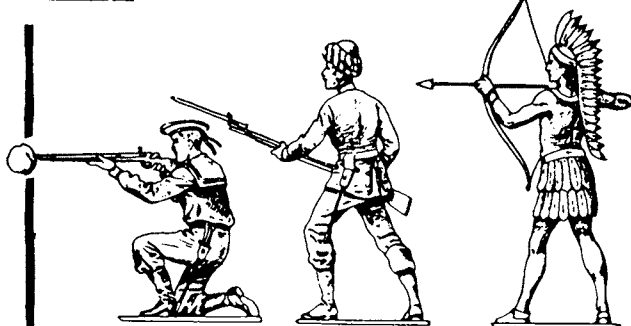


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GENERAL INSPECTION-NEW PRODUCT REVIEW

Grenadiers, Zouaves and The Lindy Hop

Reviewed by Russ Bednarek

CBG Mignot continues to expand the diversity of their existing ranges with several new exciting releases. In addition to these sets a new and exciting civilian range consisting of couples performing different dances has been launched. A total of eight of these new offerings were available for this review: three Napoleonic era, a Second Empire set and, last but not least, the four new pairs of dancing couples.

Starting with the Napoleonic sets, there are two additions to the Grenadiers of the Guard: *Grenadiers en tenue de Campagne* and *Grenadiers en tenue de Route*. The *Grenadiers en Campagne* set is in the typical grenadier uniform, but has blue instead of white pants with light blue gaiters. The officer wears the *chapeau* in lieu of the bearskin hat and has his saber drawn in one hand, and holding onto the scabbard with the other. A nice touch to the campaign dress is the rolled greatcoat worn over the shoulder by the officer. The set of *Grenadier en Route* again has the grenadiers with blue pants and light blue gaiters and all figures wearing the dark blue greatcoat. The officer continues to wear the *chapeau* carrying his sword and scabbard as in the previous set and is wearing his greatcoat. The final



GENERAL INSPECTION-NEW PRODUCT REVIEW (Cont.)

Napoleonic offering is the band of the *Pupilles de la Garde*. The *Pupilles* were young orphans of military families. They were placed in easy garrisons while they received an education and training. The twelve piece set is expertly rendered with the bandsmen dressed in their green coats trimmed in yellow, white pants and a fur busby. An excellent choice of Napoleonic instruments; bassoon, serpent and cylindrical bass drum adorned with a gold Imperial eagle really capture the feeling of the period. To add to the uniqueness of the band, a bandsman carries the oriental *chapeau chinois*, a staff with ornate bells and horse tails.

The Papal Zouave set is a most unique offering. The Papal Zouaves formed the defense of the Papal states, that are territories under the direct sovereign rule of the papacy. Created in 1861, the regiment was mostly volunteers of single Catholics and fought in the Wars of Italian Unification. The Papal Zouaves had a distinct international flair the majority of the ranks being Dutch or French. Prussians, Poles, Spaniards and even Canadians served until it was disbanded during the Franco-Prussian War when the Prussians occupied Paris. The enlisted men are dressed in a light gray zouave uniform with a matching kepi replacing the *chechia*. The red trim on the pants and jacket is outstanding and accurately portrayed, and the *tombeau* trim on the jacket helps to capture the unique style of the uniform. The officer and banner bearer are in the same style zouave uniform as the enlisted men, but in medium blue color. The braiding on the jackets of these figures is more intricate and equally well executed.

The remaining four sets are the beginning of a new civilian range of dances; Tango, Polka, Charleston and The Lindy Hop. Obviously each set is composed of a dancing couple. The dress of the dancers is painted to the highest quality and is appropriate to the era of the dance. The sculpting and

poses of the figures is so well done that it convincingly captures the dancers in mid-step. Each couple is on a single base except for the Charleston couple. The most impressive set is "The Lindy Hop", which was created to celebrate Charles Lindbergh's Atlantic crossing in 1927. The woman wears a white blouse and hat with a black and white checked skirt. Her partner wears a vest and pants with the identical black and white checked pattern. The painting of this checked pattern is truly outstanding. The quality of painting is equally strong in the three remaining sets of dancing couples. This series is very innovative, capturing a subject matter that no other manufacturer has done. Given Mignot's creative talents, this range certainly holds much promise. Can the Twist be featured in a future set?

As always, the quality of the new sets is of the highest degree, which is the norm for CBG Mignot. This interesting group of releases is sure to please the most discerning collector. Those who wish to purchase these new releases are encouraged to contact Jack Carleton who is the sole agent of CBG Mignot/Lucotte. Mr. Carleton offers superb service and is able to answer any questions you may have.

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INDIANS UNCOVERED

By Steve Balkin

During the Great Depression and earlier, cottage industries sprung up using Schnieder/Schierke molds as well as those made by the A.C. Gilbert, who produced home casting sets. I can recall a woman coming to my shop some 25 years ago with sets made by her grandfather during the Depression. He would cast and paint the figures, then tie them in shirt boxes and stand on street corners at Times Square and Wall Street selling them to support his family. Years earlier in the 1970's, I had purchased some very crude boxed sets sold to support patriotism during the Great War.

Recently, I received a call from a woman, who wanted to show me a group of toy Indians that her late father had collected. She brought them in later that day and I opened the box. My first glance told me that these figures were painted in the 1930's or before. Sorting them out there were the obvious Britains Ltd. and Heyde's, then the six sided Schnieder/Schierke bases. Next were a group of 40mm figures of iron. I had the feeling that I had seen some of these in the past 40 years, but wasn't certain of their origin. So my hunch is that they

are Grey Iron even though further investigation in O'Brien and other sources did not come up with any matches.

The next group of 54mm semi-rounds was even more elusive. Once again I had seen them depicted in some reference years ago, but could not recall where. In the group depicting an encampment what caught my eye was a brave with a tomahawk attacking a tree stump, perhaps for firewood, next to a chief seated smoking his pipe and a squaw reaching for her child. They have a naïve quality that I found fascinating. Again I would suppose that they are of German origin.

At the turn of the last Century, a love affair of the American West developed in Europe inspired by the grand tour of "Buffalo Bill Cody", who brought his "Wild West" show to the capitals of Europe. This created a craze not unlike the Beatles arrival in New York in the 1960's. In Germany the stories of author Karl May inspired the creations of the West by Elastolin and Lineol composition figures, as well as those mentioned above.



INDIANS UNCOVERED (Cont.)

It is believed that indigenous people of Siberia crossed the frozen Bering Sea some 10,000 years ago and developed unique and varied cultures usually determined by the food supply. These cultures evolved for thousands of years without foreign intervention save the Norsemen and possible the Basques, until the advent of Columbus and the Spanish Conquistadors. Thor Hyerdahl's voyage of the Kon Tiki in 1947 gave credence to the Trans Pacific migrations to the west coast of South America. In the early 1500's native Americans were brought back to the court of Ferdinand of Spain as trophies. This began a period of exploitation for the next 500 years, where technology and disease wreaked havoc on the native American peoples. Yet the spirit of these people are celebrated, both in literature and motion pictures and the wonderful toy representations that we enjoy today.



Steve Balkin is owner of Burlington Antique Toys - NY. See ad in this issue.



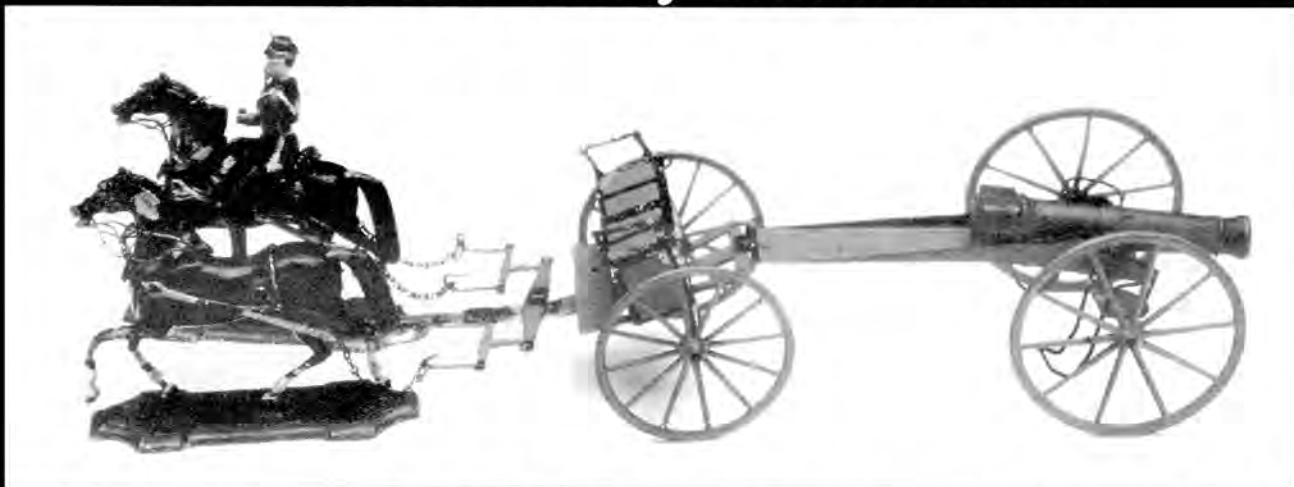
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WARTIME PUZZLES

WWII's Most Popular Home Time Activity

By Jack Matthews



Photo 1

One of the worst offenses a youngster could commit during the war was to jostle the card table or other surface on which the omnipresent, incomplete puzzle was laid out. Usually this resulted in messing up the completed portion, knocking pieces on the floor and having to spend time looking for them. There was nothing worse than losing pieces of a puzzle on which the family had spent days.

By the thirties, interlocking pieces puzzles had been around for over two centuries. The years of the Great Depression ushered in what has been called the biggest jigsaw puzzle craze in the nation's history. *Business Week* magazine referred to it as the "Jigsaw Jag". The weekly sales of jigsaw puzzles throughout the United States in 1932-1933 reached six million, a figure not since matched.

After WWII started, the public eagerly sought puzzles with wartime themes, and there were a multitude of experienced manufacturers to supply this demand. The early rationing of gas and the severe travel restrictions produced the major home front impetus for puzzles, games and books. Several game companies, including Parker Brothers and Milton Bradley, made wartime puzzles, as did the major book publishers.

Unlike the content of many games and punch-out sets, wartime puzzles didn't disappoint.



Photo 2



Photo 3



Photo 4

WARTIME PUZZLES

WWII's Most Popular Home Time Activity (Cont.)

WWII puzzles can be divided into two categories. The first, designed for use by children five to eight years of age, contains some of the best and most colorful artwork. These puzzles, which usually came several to the box, were smaller, about ten-by-sixteen inches, and contained about two dozen large-sized pieces, a number well within the younger child's attention span (Photos 1-4) and retailed for fifteen cents. See ad, photo 5.

American Boy and Girl Picture Puzzles with box art of A.C. Weems' famous painting, "Tomorrow's Pilot" is a personal favorite. Weems' painting captures the child's wonder of those years (Photo 6). Larger puzzles that were designed for mom and dad and the older children form the second broad category. Among the major manufacturers were TUCO; Jaymar; J.D. Hart; Guild; J.Pressman & Co., Inc.; Whitman; Dell and Perfect Picture Puzzles (Photos 7-9). TUCO puzzles are probably the most sought after by today's specialists. While complete, boxed puzzles are still quite cheap on eBay (\$5-15). TUCO's go for double the price (Photo 10).

Geography has never been as popular with kids as it was during WWII, and as in earlier times, map puzzles were big sellers. The "Patchwork" (Photo 11) map puzzle kit was the most unusual of all. The box contained four envelopes with ten-by-eighteen-inch airplane puzzles made of very thin cardboard. When these four puzzles were reversed and put together, they formed a giant 20"x36" map of the world containing over 1300 pieces. The distributor claimed over 90,000 were sold for a dollar during the



Photo 5



Photo 6



Photo 7



Photo 8

WARTIME PUZZLES

WWII's Most Popular Home Time Activity (Cont.)



Photo 9



Photo 13



Photo 10



Photo 11



Photo 14



Photo 12



Photo 15

WARTIME PUZZLES

WWII's Most Popular Home Time Activity *(Cont.)*



Photo 16

first month. Our example illustrates an interesting piece of WWII ephemera but certainly a very poor quality product.

The production of puzzles by book publishers Whitman, Dell and Saalfeld was a natural tie-in. Whitman, a subsidiary of Western Publishing Company started making puzzles in 1925. Many of the illustrations used in the puzzles were taken from Whitman's popular wartime series of illustrated aircraft books for children, now among the cheapest and most readily available.



Photo 17

Saalfeld's "Liberators of the World" puzzle showing Roosevelt and Churchill is one of the most difficult of wartime puzzles to obtain in good condition (Photo 12).

Various kinds of small game "puzzles" that were of a jigsaw nature were sold in five and dimes, drug stores and gas stations. Typical examples are the small "Slidem Solitaire" puzzles and others shown in Photo 13. They were tough to do and were based on the centuries-old Chinese puzzles.

Enclosed, hand-held BB and marble puzzles and games (I put them in both categories) in which the object is to get ball bearings, marbles or other items into holes or slots on a small colorful board, go back many generations. Usually the games were enclosed in five-by-three-inch metal boxes. Both World Wars had numerous versions. Two cardboard, glass and marble types sold by Modern Novelties, Inc. of Cleveland, Ohio, "Put the Yanks in Berlin" and "Trap the Jap in Tokyo" (Photo 14) are still easy to find. Later war items included "Trap the Jap" and "Atomic Bomb" (Photo 15). Surprisingly, the latter was made by the famous manufacturer of children's chemistry sets, the A.C. Gilbert Company of New Haven, Connecticut. See also photos 16-18).



Photo 18

WARTIME PUZZLES

WWII's Most Popular Home Time Activity (Cont.)

Finally, small mailable boxes of puzzles and games for servicemen were popular and gave many hours of pleasure to military personnel stationed in remote overseas bases. They show up regularly on eBay (Photo 19). Most WWII puzzles for adults that are complete and in very good condition still are modestly priced; missing pieces reduce the price accordingly. Boxed sets of multiple children's wartime military puzzles sell for somewhat more. Since the latter fall more into the toy category, box art and the condition of the box are more important.

While boxed puzzles don't exactly fall directly into a toy soldier collection, I have found the packaging so colorful and indicative of the overwhelming patriotic mood of the times, they really fit in as background pieces in a dimestore collection. In fact, that's what got me collecting WWII toy games, puzzles, books, etc. in the first place. They really look neat on the shelves or framed when assembled (Photos 20-22).



Photo 19



Photo 21



Photo 20



Photo 22



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THE EARLIEST-KNOWN AMERICAN-MADE TOY SOLDIERS?

by Richard O'Brien

In November, 2009 I heard from Bill Hanlon. Bill is the fellow collector who first let us know about the existence of Universal Plastics, and later provided the ad and the Dun & Bradstreet report that pretty much clinched the story of how Universal's molds wound up with Beton.

This time Bill had another eye-opening find. Very, very early American toys, made of pewter, and perhaps the first-known American-made toy soldiers. He'd bought a collection of soldiers and other toys in an estate sale from Bonham's auction house in San Francisco. The other toys in this collection were also very early, Bill told me, from about 1900 or earlier.

At the bottom of the box he received were these toys and other related castings (all of them in pewter) in a small rectangular box bottom, whose sides were held together with a paper tape. Bill can't help wondering if this may have been the original bottom. The backs of these, by the way, are flat and without any design.

Bill gets high marks for his subsequent research. He researched absolutely everything possible. He hoped to find a marking on one or more. Finally, he did on a fire pumper, but he couldn't make it out. It looked to him like a P, an I, and an inverted V. But along the way he looked through a book by Louis Hertz, probably "The Toy Collector", published at a time when books on toys were very, very scarce. There in the volume was an illustration of a train, with the letters "P I A" on the side of the passenger car. Now it all began to make sense.

Bill had heard of Peter F. Pia. Me too, when I did my research for "The Story of American Toys". Pia, of Italian extraction, began his long-last-



The entirety of the trove. The fire pumper at top right is marked P I A. Photo by Bill Hanlon

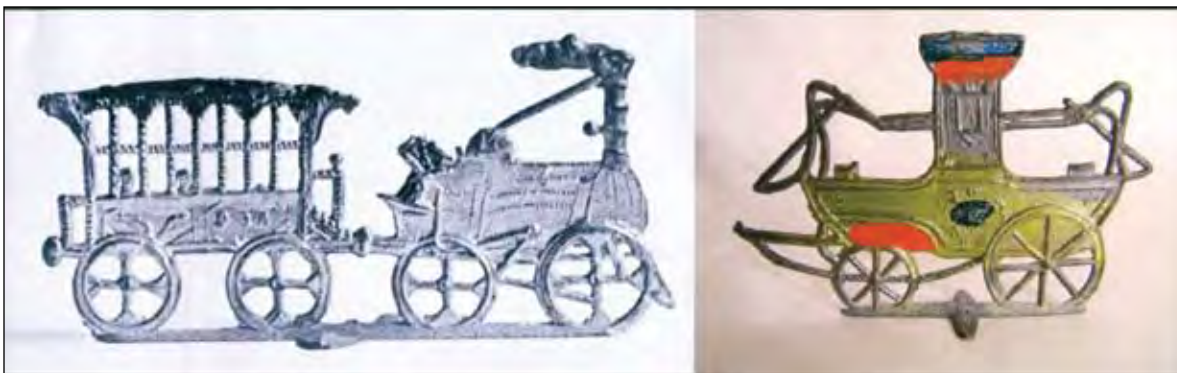


The Monitor and the "Iowa". Since the latter was christened that on May 15, 1869, it's obvious this toy had to come after that date, but probably not much after. Photo by Bill Hanlon



The military, presumably from Peter F. Pia of New York. A headless soldier, a half-headed officer with the inscription "U.S. Cavalry", and one of the two cannons in the find. Photo by Bill Hanlon

THE EARLIEST-KNOWN AMERICAN-MADE TOY SOLDIERS? (Cont.)



The train by Peter F. Pia on the left, as seen in Louis Hertz's book, with the P I A marking on the side of the passenger car, and Hanlon's pumper with P I A in the small blue section between the two wheels. Photo by Bill Hanlon

ing business of making pewter toys in 1848. Much of it was dollhouse furniture. When I heard about Pia, I tried to see if he'd ever made soldiers. At the time I could find nothing.

Italian immigrants were often illiterate. This may explain, assuming it was made by Pia, the notation "U.S. Cavalry" on one of the two soldiers in the batch. I've often seen Cavalry misspelled as Calvary, but never this way. A number of the non-toys seem to be religious, and probably Catholic in nature, as Pia would probably have been.

Bill went back to Bonham's for provenance. They told him these were "the childhood toys of a very prominent East Coast family", and that the owner was not a collector or dealer. "He was a rather old and dear friend of someone close to Bonham's".

Pia's address was 5 Beekman Street, and Bill further found that this ten-story structure was the third city building to have an elevator installed. Two other addresses, apparently for Pia at the same time, were 127 and 129 White Street. Bill guesses that Beekman was Pia's home and the other addresses his work area and perhaps a store-front shop.

When were these toys made? Well, we have a clue with the "Iowa". Bill found the vessel's original name was the USS Ammonoosuc, launched on July 21, 1864. (Images of it can be found on Google.) It was re-christened the Iowa on May 15, 1869, so we know that year is obviously the earliest we can date this toy from, and probably not much later than that. Bill says the stars on the Monitor's flag (note the firing cannons) "are in a random pattern, which looks more like an effort to mimic the Union flag at the time". Thus it's conceivable that some of these war toys date back to the Civil War.

The size of the items in this collection can be related to that of the fireman. Bill says he stands three inches tall, pretty close to our beloved dimestores height. Bill also notes that the figures are extremely fragile, may be only slightly thicker than German flats, and that the fireman may have been holding a trumpet in his right hand.

So here we have what may be the earliest-known American-made toy soldiers, civilian, ships, cannon, etc. Any even earlier claimants out there?



The headless soldier and a fireman, who is three inches tall. He may have been holding a trumpet in his right hand. Photo by Bill Hanlon

Richard O'Brien can be contacted via kokywriter@windstream.net.



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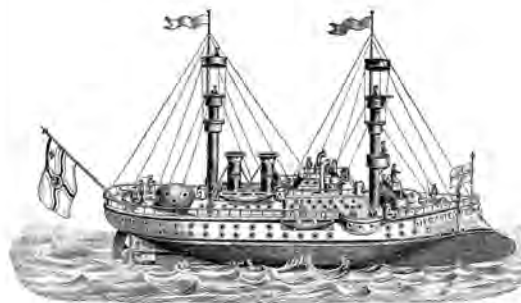


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GREAT MINDS THINK ALIKE or TRI-ANG -v- ELASTOLIN

By Allen Hickling

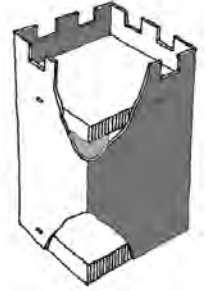
In the late 1950s and early 1960s, just before the advent of plastics as a basic material, two of the giants in toy fort manufacturing – O & M Hausser from Germany and Lines Bros Ltd of England – competed on a level playing field for the first time. This ‘level playing field’ came about as the two in question found themselves producing remarkably similar products.

It was clearly a decision by Hausser (Elastolin) which set it up, because Lines (Tri-ang) had been making their forts that way since before the Second World War (1939 to be exact). But how it came about is anybody’s guess. It is difficult to believe that they just wanted a trial of strength.

Just how two serious competitors ended up with virtually the same product smacks of the Coke versus Pepsi war to me. Initially each claiming to be better than the other – with small but significant differences – but ending up ignoring one another. Marketing as though the other did not exist.

The forts were as near as anything the same size (see example comparisons below), and the construction was identical. It was really quite basic: cardboard was the main covering material, framed around wooden formers (see diagram) – square, rectangular and round – and stapled or nailed in position. There was a main building at the back,

some towers and a gateway at the front, linked up with courtyard walls (all with the standard but soon to become out-dated nail in a hole method of location) – and of course a ramp to get up to the courtyard level. They even had a metal drawbridge, albeit of different widths.



There were still some differences of course. Tri-ang had their ‘upside-down saucepan’ cannon to defend the walls, while Elastolin featured a large tower at the front wall (later produced (19630 with a rather slimmer one of the same height)). They had ramps of different proportions with drawbridges of different widths (this was due to the fact that they had already used them on their other forts). One difference here was in the design of most of the later Elastolin ramps which had no level piece at the top, so that they had no flexibility in their placement.

They were painted with a textured sort of paint (the texture was slightly different but also remarkably similar), but their colours differed considerably. Tri-ang favouring their white or grey fort with pink and green ‘camouflage’, while Elastolin were much more impressive with colours



Elastolin No. 870 (first version)

Hausser : Elastolin No: 870

Overall height	10¼" or 260mm
Overall breadth	18" or 460mm
Overall depth	14½" or 370mm (not incl. ramp)
Height of base	3½" or 90mm



Tri-ang No. "Z" Fort (second version)

Lines : Tri-ang No."Z"

12" or 305mm
18" or 455mm
14" or 355mm (not incl. ramp)
4" or 100mm

GREAT MINDS THINK ALIKE or TRI-ANG -v- ELASTOLIN (Cont.)



Elastolin No. 871

Hausser : Elastolin No: 871

Overall height	9½" or 240mm
Overall breadth	14" or 355mm
Overall depth	10" or 255mm (not incl. ramp)
Height of base	3" or 75mm

ranging from a basic terracotta to blue, with red, yellow and green 'vegetation'. They both had yellow or mauve (which may be a re-paint) courtyards and they sat on a green box/base with red and yellow highlights.

There were also production differences. In 1939 Tri-ang had four models (sizes), which became three in their series after the war, of which the "W" was the smallest and "Z" the biggest. However Elastolin produced six forts (three in 1956 and three in 1960), generally all much the same size but with different layouts of towers and buildings – except for the smaller one.



Tri-ang No. "Y" Fort (second version)

Lines : Tri-ang No."Y"

9½" or 240mm
14½" or 360mm
12" or 305mm (not incl. ramp)
4" or 100mm

Of course neither relied solely on this one type of product. Tri-ang marketed wood, plywood and hardboard constructed products, as well as rubber moulded castles. Elastolin had wooden products as well as those made of the their original composition material.

So who actually won this particular contest is not known – it may have been a draw. It came to an end when they both abandoned the contest.....whether this was by mutual consent, or they just got tired of it, we may never know. But who was the winner? That Elastolin made the right choice is evidenced by the fact that they survived ten years longer, although there were undoubtedly other factors at work influencing that particular outcome.



Elastolin No.872



Tri-ang No."Z" Fort (first version)



Tri-ang No."W" Fort

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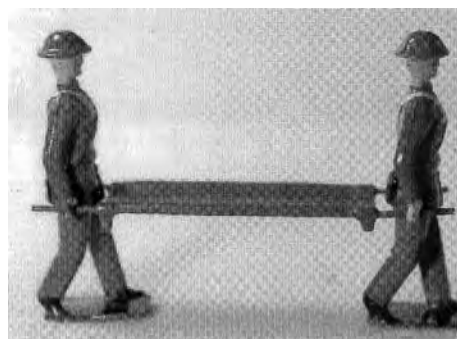
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Bill Holt & Holts Hobbies -in Retrospect

By Norman Joplin



Bill Holt

“A Hobby of Gentlemen” That is how Sharon Holt, Bill Holt’s widow described the Toy Soldier Community during my visit to Longwood, Florida to assist in the cataloguing of her late husband’s collection

Bill died in April 2009, aged 71, my visit was rather more poignant as it was in November and near to his birthday. The “Hobby of Gentlemen” comment was in recognition of all the toy soldier dealers and collectors that Bill and Sharon had met over their many years of visiting toy soldier shows throughout the USA, promoting and selling Bill Holt’s unique line of “New Dimestores”.

Although my visit was intended to assist in inventorying and assessing the Holt collection of old and new toy soldiers, it transpired that the day turned out to be one of nostalgic memories and fun remembrances, joined by Steven Holt and family friend Jennifer Bell. Many stories and experiences were shared by the Holts with regards to the times spent in the hobby.

Although no longer with us Bill was there in spirit but at the same time and in retrospect, he enhanced the hobby by leaving many toy soldier treasures to be discovered. As well as his superb product and special figures designed and co produced by Frank Poeth in the Netherlands, some real gems of reference material came to light.

Perhaps Bill Holt’s greatest claim to fame outside of the toy soldier world was that he was commissioned to produce his Holts Hobbies Dimestore toy soldiers to be used in the 1992 movie “Toys” starring Robin Williams.

Whilst assembling a group of items from the collection I found a picture of a young boy in an army uniform, it



Bill Holt as a child “Skeeter”



All of Kookon sketches



Bill Holt’s work bench

Bill Holt & Holts Hobbies -in Retrospect (Cont.)

was inscribed on the back "Skeeter" I showed it to Sharon and Steven only to find out that it was indeed Bill Holt as a child "Skeeter" having been his boyhood nickname.

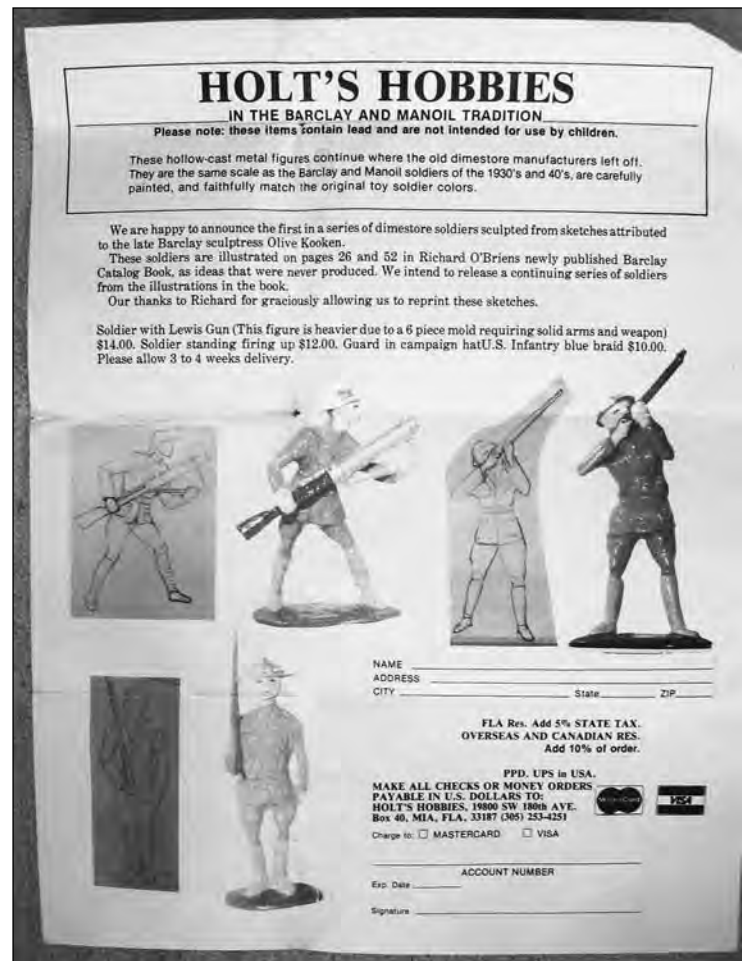
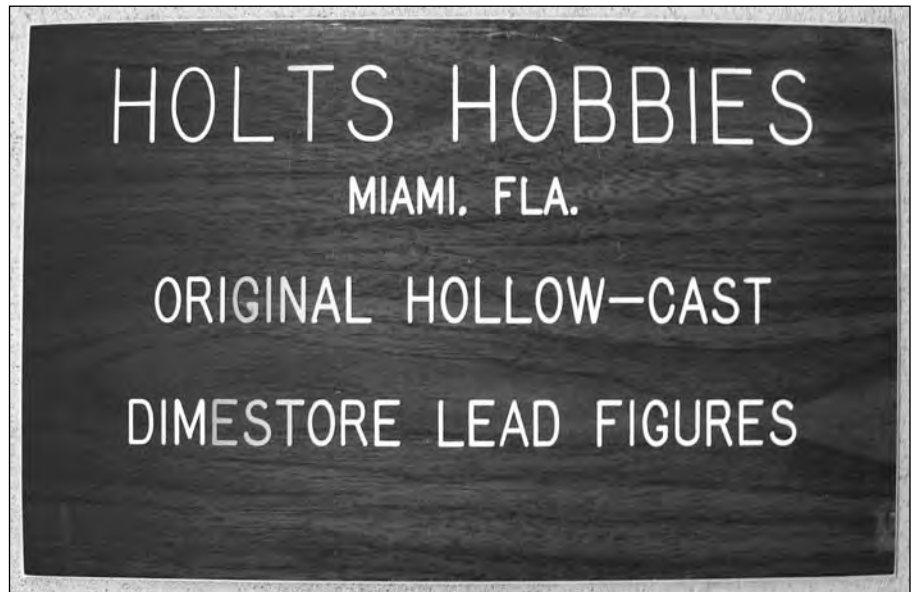
Bill's workshop and molds were still in the family home as was his Holts Hobbies business sign from his Miami days, but the greatest find of all was the sample drawings that I found that originally came from Richard O'Brien some years ago and apparently were never published. The sketches were by sculptress Olive Kookan and were part of a number of designs never put into production by Barclay.

Bill was in the process of creating his Holts Hobbies version of some of the items that can be seen in the accompanying illustration of the sketches. A number of other sketches are still to be uncovered within the Holt residence and a subsequent article in OTS will hopefully feature these.

In a letter sent to his many customers in 1990 Bill recounts how his introduction to toy soldiers had come at Christmas 1941 in Clinton, Iowa when his parents had set up a Barclay Hospital, with a #199 tent, stretcher bearers, wounded and a profusion of Beton soldiers still in their original colorful packaging.

1984 and a visit to a Miami Beach Antique show with Sharon rekindled the memory of that Christmas in 1941 with the discovery and purchase of the same #199 tent together with 16 Barclay Soldiers. Bill had discovered that there were collections out there but was uncertain about how to find more to add to his new collection. Inspired by the find Bill set off to produce his own range and the rest, as they say is history.

By coincidence OTS recently received from Texas collector and OTS subscriber Richard Donnelly a copy of a poem by Bill Holt, written in 1984 and reproduced here with thanks to Richard for sharing it.



Bill Holt & Holts Hobbies -in Retrospect (Cont.)

WHEN SOLDIERS RULED THE BEDROOM FLOOR



THE RAINY AFTERNOONS WE SPENT
IN GOLDEN DAYS OF YORE.

WITH CHILDHOOD FANTASIES PLAYED OUT
UPON MY BEDROOM FLOOR....

AS MANOIL ALLIES WAITED THERE,
CARRIER PIGEONS FILLED THE AIR

TO BRING THE GENERAL UP-TO-DATE
REQUESTING HELP (IF NOT TOO LATE!)

WE'D RUN A SHEET ACROSS TWO CHAIRS
TO BLOCK EACH OTHERS SIGHT

OF HOW WE SET OUR ARMIES UP-
(SECURITY WAS TIGHT!)

WE MADE OUR FORTS OF WOODEN BLOCKS
AND LINCOLN LOGS™ AND RIVER ROCKS,
WHILE EACH WOULD BOAST IN CHILDISH PRATTLE
THAT HIS WOULD STAND UP BEST IN BATTLE!

OLD EASTER GRASS AND HAIRNETS PLUCKED
FROM BOXES IN THE GARAGE

WERE SKILLFULLY LACED AND CAREFULLY PLACED
PROVIDING CAMOFLAUGE.

WHEN EVERYTHING WAS SET TO STAY
(AND OFTEN IT TOOK HALF THE DAY),

EACH MAN IN POSITION, AND PILED AMMUNITION,
THE CHAIRS WERE PULLED AWAY.

MANOIL CANNON FINED THE AIR

WITH FIRECRACKERS ARMED WITH CARE

(AND MOM WOULD SHOUT FROM WAY DOWNSTAIRS
"NOT INDOORS, BOYS!")

WE'D SIGH, ALTER 'OUR BATTLE PLAN,
EXPOSING EACH AND EVERY MAN,

AND BRING ABOUT THE LAST DECISION-
MATCHSTICKS FIRED WITH GREAT PRECISION!!!

THEN OUT FROM MOTHER'S HAIRNET GROUND
A WINDUP TANK SO TIGHTLY WOUND

IT CLIMBED THE BASTIONS EASILY
TO KNOCK DOWN STANDING INFANTRY.

AS WE GREW OLDER, WE WERE BOLDER
WITH OUR LEADEN MEN,

AND OFTEN USED OUR B.B. GUNS
TO BRING THE BATTLE'S END.

AT THIRTEEN YEARS, MYSELF AND PEERS
(WE WEREN'T VERY WISE)

WITH CHERRY BOMBS AND SLINGSHOTS FORCED
OUR SOLDIERS LAST DEMISE.

SURVIVORS HAVE BECOME ANTIQUES

WITH PRICES SURE TO RAISE THE BROW.

WHAT WAS A DIME HAS COME IN TIME

TO BE OF VALUE NOW.

I HADN'T SEEN MY TROOPS EXCEPT
IN TOY SHOWS NOW AND THEN.

I'VE BOUGHT A FEW SO I CAN HAVE
THOSE MEMORIES AGAIN.

NOSTALGIC MEMORIES TO ENJOY

OF HOW IT WAS TO BE A BOY-
REVIVE THOSE GOLDEN DAYS OF YORE

WHEN SOLDIERS RULED MY BEDROOM FLOOR.

WOUNDED WERE CURED BY DR. BROWN
(HE DID HIS VERY BEST)

WHILE DR. WHITE RELIEVED AT NIGHT
TO GIVE HIM NEEDED REST,

A NURSE WITH SOUP HAD JOINED THE GROUP
TO FEED THE AILING MEN

AND TREAT THEIR WOUNDS SO THEY'D SURVIVE
TO JOIN THE FIGHT AGAIN.

BARCLAY'S SOLDIERS, GREY IRONS, TOO.
WITH AN AUBURN RUBBER TEAM

FOUGHT HAND IN HAND TO GAIN THE LAND
OF ENEMY ESTEEM.

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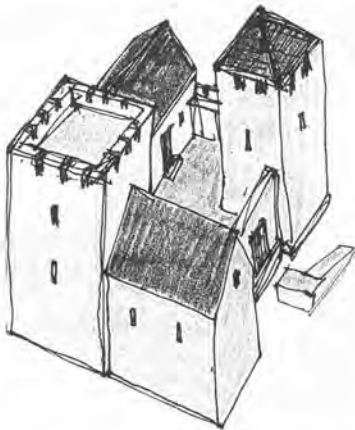


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2010

February 20 -Saturday. 29th "Cabin Fever" Heart of the South Toy Soldier, Military Miniature Show and Sale. 9am-3pm. Annandale VFD Community Center Contact Ed Gries 201-257-2687 Or 201-342-6475

February 21-Sunday. Northern Virginia Little Giant Toy Train and Action Figure Show and Sale. 9am-3pm. Annandale VFD Community Center Contact Ed Gries 201-257-2687 Or 201-342-6475

February 28 – Sunday. West Coaster 21st Annual Toy Soldier and Miniature Figure Show. 9am-3pm. The Irvine Marriott Hotel. 18000 Von Karman Avenue. Irvine, CA. Contact Old Toy Soldier Home 760-758-5481.

March 7- Sunday. New Jersey Toy Soldier Show and Sale. 9am-3pm Crowne Plaza Hotel Two Harman Plaza Secaucus NY. Contact Ed Gries 201-257-2687 Or 201-342-6475

March 27- Saturday. The Toy Soldier Show London. Royal National Hotel, Russell Square. Contact King and Country. www.thetoysoldiershow.com

April 18- Sunday. Indy Toy Soldier Show. Sheraton Inn North 8787 Keystone Crossing, Indianapolis. 10am-3pm Contact Barry Carter 765-345-5665. **See ad in this issue**

April 18- Sunday. North East Toy Soldier Society Annual Show. Burlington Marriot, Massachusetts Contact Matt Murphy for more info- Hobby Bunker 781-321-8855 matt@hobbybunker.com

April 24 - Saturday. BMSS. British Model Soldier Society Annual Event. 75th Jubilee. Holiday Inn Bloomsbury, London. Contact Arthur Smith (44) 208-856-0064

April 25- Sunday. 3rd Annual Gettysburg Toy Soldier Show and Sale. 10am-3pm. Gettysburg Hotel (Best Western) One Lincoln Square Gettysburg. PA. Contact Carl Hoegermeyer 215-974-5606 or Wayne Stevens 717-253-7228.

April Date to be announced. Vectis Toy Soldier Auction. **See add in this issue for contact details and information**

May 1 - Saturday.

Old Toy Soldier Auctions USA. The Bill & Don Thompson Collection, The John Graham Part 3 Collection and Various Properties. 600 + lot Toy Soldier and Figure Auction. Live Auctioneers.com and oldtoysoldierauctions.com Contact Ray Haradin 1-800-349-8009 or Norman Joplin 262-692-3913 email raytoys@aol.com or otsauctionsusa@yahoo.com SEE AD in this issue

TOY SOLDIER SHOW & AUCTION CALENDAR 2009-2010 (Cont.)

May 6- Thursday. The Toy Soldier Museum Open House and Cellar Sale

1343 Paradise Falls Cresco, Pa. 10am-4pm. Contact Jim Hillestad 570-629-7227

Email jimhill@ptd.net

May 7 Friday and 8 Saturday. MFCA – Miniature Figure Collectors of America, Valley Forge Convention Center. The 69th Annual MFCA Show 1160 First Avenue King of Prussia, PA 19406

May 16- Sunday. Ohio Toy Soldier Show. The Galaxy Restaurant. 201 Park Centre Drive.

10am-3pm. Contact Doug McClure 330-722-7675 dmccclure1@zoominternet.net

May 29/ 30 –Saturday. Sunday Texas Toy Soldier Show. Menger Hotel, San Antonio, Texas.

Contact Nick Versteeg Toy Soldiers of San Diego. 760-723-6583 www.sdsoldiers.com

June 26th - Saturday. The Toy Soldier Show London. Royal National Hotel Russell Square

Contact King and Country. www.thetoysoldiersshow.com

September 11- Saturday. Norman Joplin's Old Toy Soldier and Figure Show. Holiday Inn.

Bloomsbury, London. Contact info@normanjoplin.com www.normanjoplin.com 262-692-3913 or 01926 496062 in the UK

September 26 - Sunday. OTSN. Old Toy Soldier Show Chicago. Hyatt Regency Woodfield.

Schaumburg, Illinois. Contact Don Pielin 630-497-1239. Email dimestores@aol.com

www.toysoldiersshow.com

October 30-Saturday. The Toy Soldier Museum Open House and Cellar Sale 1343 Paradise

Falls Cresco, Pa. 10am-4pm. Contact Jim Hillestad 570-629-7227 Email jimhill@ptd.net

December 4 -Saturday. The Toy Soldier Show London. Royal National Hotel, Russell Square.

Contact King and Country. www.thetoysoldiersshow.com

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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This series is gratefully dedicated to the memory of the 47,000 American airmen of the 8th Air Force who gave their lives during the air war over Europe in World War Two.

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