



Diorama depicting dog show excitement rising in an Aldershot park circa 1928.

# Putting on the Dog in Miniature

The Toy Soldier Museum's James H. Hillestad pays tribute to dogs and their two-legged friends

TEXT AND PHOTOS: JAMES H. HILLESTAD



Pooches and their people await their turns for stardom.

**D**og shows were born in the Victorian era and spread from Britain around the world. The first known official show was held in Newcastle, England, U.K., in June 1859. Paris followed in 1863. The premier American event began in 1877, sponsored by the Westminster Kennel Club.

The events appealed to the public as entertainment, and showing dogs allowed all to join in polite competition. The shows and the publicity surrounding them made it fashionable to own a dog.

With that in mind — and considering my great enjoyment of the 2000 U.S. movie “Best in Show” — I set out to capture the excitement and glamour of a dog show in



Aldershot, England, circa 1928. Most of the 54-mm figures, both canine and human, were the work of Bill and Kay Speer trading under the name of Royal Express Ltd.

Who would have thought that doing a diorama of a dog show would be such fun! ■



A saxophone player puts on the dog and all that jazz.



The town band provides musical accompaniment for the festivities as the park is going to the dogs.



Squire Silas Dobson II and his hound.

The mockumentary "Best in Show" focuses on five entrants competing in a prestigious dog show. Anyone who hasn't seen it would enjoy a howling good time!



Light fare is served to dog show attendees.



Classic cars are an added attraction at the dog show.



Two canine competitors — and perhaps their owners too — are stricken by love at first sight.



Two dogs and their owners at sixes and sevens form a vignette called what else but "The Entanglement."



"And the winner is ..."



**ABOUT THE WRITER**

James H. Hillestad is a military historian and proprietor of The Toy Soldier Museum in Cresco, Pa., USA.

**Ever Notice How Dogs Resemble Their Owners?**

By James H. Hillestad  
 "Dogs look like their owners — it's a scientific fact," David Robson wrote in a BBC Future online article.

As confirmation, Robson suggested, "Go to any park and you will see the strange phenomenon of canines and their owners."

Michael Roy of the University of California was one of the first psychologists to put the idea to the test. He went to three dog parks, then photographed the pooches and their owners separately.

Then Roy asked a group of subjects to match them up. Despite no additional clues, he found that they were able to work out which pooch lived with which owner with reasonable accuracy. ■



Note the resemblance between this 19th-century British light infantry officer and his bulldog in a 54-mm vignette from The AeroArt St. Petersburg Collection.



Writer Jim Hillestad with his beloved pack of Norwegian elkhounds. See any resemblance?