



The writer's collection includes a reproduction of a Roosevelt portrait by James Montgomery Flagg.



A 1904 TR campaign ribbon from the writer's collection.

One of a Kind: Teddy Roosevelt

The Toy Soldier Museum's Jim Hillestad pays tribute to an inimitable American icon

TEXT AND PHOTOS: JAMES H. HILLESTAD

Born into a wealthy family in New York City Oct. 27, 1858, Theodore Roosevelt Jr. attended Harvard College. While there, TR wrote a book, "The Naval War of 1812."

Roosevelt was fascinated by naval power. In 1897, he was appointed as assistant secretary of the Navy by President William McKinley.

In February 1898, the battleship USS Maine mysteriously blew up in the harbor of Havana. With 260 Americans dead, McKinley bowed to public pressure and declared war against Spain, which was widely blamed for sinking the ship.

Roosevelt was eager to go to war. He had grown distraught over the ad-

ministration's reluctance to intervene militarily.

Roosevelt was quoted as saying, "McKinley has no more backbone than a chocolate éclair."

After resigning his desk job at the Navy Department, TR secured a commission in the U.S. Army as a

lieutenant colonel. In San Antonio, Texas, Roosevelt set up a training ground for his ragtag regiment of Ivy League football players, Texas Rangers, ranchers, cowboys, Indians and assorted Western roughnecks.

He also promptly telegraphed Brooks Brothers in New York City and ordered for himself a new khaki uniform for the Spanish-American War.

HOORAY FOR GERONIMO!

In 1905, Geronimo took part in Roosevelt's inaugural parade in Washington, D.C. The Apache warrior, now elderly and a prisoner of war, rode a pony down Pennsylvania Avenue, inspiring cries of "hooray for Geronimo!" from spectators.

ROUGH RIDERS

The official name of Roosevelt's regiment was the 1st U.S. Volunteer Cavalry. But given the unusual makeup of the unit, the public and the press christened it the "Rough Riders."

Keenly aware of his own lack of mili-



Manifest Destiny portrayal of Teddy Roosevelt by Sarum Soldiers.



Vintage Ogdens' Tobacco Co. cigarette card picturing Roosevelt along with Spanish-American War figures by W. Britain depicting a U.S. Marine Corps NCO and Roosevelt in khaki.



The Toy Soldier Museum collection includes a memorial porcelain tribute issued on the occasion of Roosevelt's death.

ROOSEVELT'S WORDS TO THE WISE...

- "Believe you can and you're half-way there."
- "If you kick the person in the pants responsible for most of your trouble, you wouldn't sit for a month."

Roosevelt and Rough Riders made by King & Country Ltd. exclusively for its sister shop Kings X Toy Soldiers in San Antonio, Texas. The shop is located inside the Menger Hotel, which TR used as his headquarters for recruiting the 1st U.S. Volunteer Cavalry. (Photo Courtesy of King & Country Ltd.)



tary knowledge, Roosevelt delegated command of the regiment to his close friend Col. Leonard G. Wood, who had experience fighting Geronimo and the Apaches in the Southwestern United States. To this day, the Army maintains an active training facility at Fort Leonard Wood, Mo., where the writer “enjoyed” basic training.

On July 1, 1898, with the Rough Riders supported by black troopers of the 10th Cavalry (Buffalo Soldiers), Roosevelt drove the Spanish out of their positions on Kettle and San Juan Hills just east of Santiago de Cuba, the island’s second largest city.

Well pleased with his success, Roosevelt enthusiastically trumpeted,



Spanish-American War Roosevelt and dynamite gun by Trophy Miniatures of Wales Ltd. The gun used compressed air as a propellant to fire a shell filled with dynamite.

A LIFETIME OF ECLECTIC ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- A year after graduating from Harvard College, Roosevelt scaled the 15,000-foot Matterhorn in the Alps.
- Roosevelt was the first president to visit a foreign country and the first to ride in an automobile.
- In 1904, Roosevelt promoted the Roosevelt Corollary, intended as an addition to the Monroe Doctrine. The goal was to give the United States “international police power” to put an end to chronic unrest in the Western Hemisphere. It was tied to the belief in Manifest Destiny regarding the territorial expansion of the United States.
- Roosevelt was instrumental in the 1906 passage of the Pure Food and Drug Act, putting in place many safeguards that Americans take for granted today.
- Roosevelt negotiated an end to the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-05, and became the first American honored with the Nobel Peace Prize.
- TR acted to recognize the fledgling country of Panama and negotiated control of the Canal Zone. He pushed to see the Panama Canal built. It was one of the grandest engineering feats of the 20th century.
- Considered the father of the modern U.S. Navy, Roosevelt persuaded Congress to provide funding for modern, steel-hulled battleships.
- A fervent environmentalist, Roosevelt used his executive power to protect nearly 230 million acres of land. TR signed into law the creation of five national parks — an American innovation copied by countries around the world.

FEATURE



POCONO PARADISE VALLEY

The Toy Soldier Museum is located in the beautiful Pocono Mountains of Pennsylvania. The region is known for its clear, cold trout streams which have attracted fly fishermen since the 1850s. Among them have been Buffalo Bill, Annie Oakley and Presidents Benjamin Harrison, Calvin Coolidge and, according to some, Theodore Roosevelt. Union Civil War hero Gen. Phillip Sheridan was so impressed with the surroundings that he dubbed it "Paradise Valley."

"It's a grand time to be alive. A bully time!"

POLITICAL ASCENT

Roosevelt returned home a hero. He was elected governor of New York state later in 1898. He became McKinley's Republican running mate in the 1900 election. Their ticket won in a landslide.

President McKinley was shot and wounded by an assassin while attending

the Pan-American Exposition in Buffalo, N.Y., Sept. 1, 1901. He died the following Sept. 14, making Vice President Roosevelt the 26th president.

Roosevelt took the oath of office at age 42, becoming the youngest president in U.S. history. He won election as president in 1904.

Writer, soldier, statesman and conservationist Teddy Roosevelt died in 1919 at age 60. ■

MEMORABLE ANECDOTES

- In 1912, the Progressive Party nominated Roosevelt as its presidential candidate. In recognition of his habit of likening himself to a bull moose, the party adopted that proud, ferocious animal as its symbol. At the convention, TR encouraged his supporters saying, "Look out Republicans and Democrats — the Bull Moose is loose!"

- On Oct. 14, 1912, at a campaign stop, Roosevelt was shot in the chest by a would-be assassin. Nevertheless, he appeared the next day before a crowd and delivered an 80-minute speech. "Friends," he said upon reaching the podium, "I shall ask you to be as quiet as possible, for I have

been shot, but it takes more than that to kill a Bull Moose."

- Despite the USA's acquisition of Puerto Rico and the Philippines, Roosevelt said in his flamboyant way, "I have about as much desire to annex the Dominican Republic as a gorged boa constrictor might have to swallow a porcupine."

- On the marriage of his oldest daughter Alice, Roosevelt said, "I can do one of two things. I can be president of the United States or I can control Alice. I cannot possibly do both." Alice was known for her independent ways, including puffing on cigarettes in public and riding around with men in automobiles.

TEDDY BEAR STUFF

Teddy bears have President Theodore Roosevelt Jr. to thank for their delightful name.

During a 1902 hunting trip in Mis-



issippi, Roosevelt refused to take what he considered to be an unsportsmanlike shot at a trapped bear. The occasion was immortalized in a celebrated political cartoon created by Clifford K. Berryman for The Washington Post.

Morris Michtom, owner of a candy shop in Brooklyn, N.Y., placed two stuffed toy bears made by his wife in his shop window. They were an instant sensation, leading him to mass-produce them. The German company Steiff followed suit and teddy bears became an international phenomenon.

Teddy bears have retained their popularity. In 2000, Workman Publishing Co. dedicated its teddy bear calendar to Roosevelt. For the month of October, they

selected a Spanish-American War setting, using toy soldiers provided by writer Jim Hillestad.



ABOUT THE WRITER

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