

FEATURE



An evocative and amusing set produced to mark the 20th anniversary of The Toy Soldiers of Wm. Hocker, Proprietor, illustrates how some things never change as adults start playing floor wars with an upset young boy's toy troops.



Unwrapping Christmas Day toys bring joy to children in a vignette by Trophy Miniatures of Wales Ltd.

Thoughts on Collecting

James H. Hillestad offers an introspective view of our hobby.

Text and Photos: James H. Hillestad

Patrick Willis, the creative force behind UK-based Sarum Soldiers, shared the following in June 1996:

What makes us collect toy soldiers? What led Churchill, H.G. Wells, and Forbes of the eponymous magazine, to buy and collect toy soldiers?

What is the charm in the little tin men that makes sober businessmen, successful doctors, hardened lawyers, staid bankers, become passionate collectors?

Perhaps we all have a basic desire to lead our armies in triumphant campaigns. Perhaps it's the pure nostalgia for lost glory and a world in which the good guy always wins.

Whatever the reason, whether we are young or old, we share the magic of the miniature world where ordered ranks stand arrayed

in splendor, where battles rage but no one is hurt, and where the sun never sets on ancient kingdoms.

Psychologists have said that most of the social and intellectual skills we need to succeed in life and work are first developed in childhood play. Watching TV, playing on the computer or handheld device, or sitting in the car being shuttled around town, are not conducive to a child's development. Kids need unstructured, open-ended play.

One mother said with a sigh, "What happened to imaginative play? There's no just 'pretend' anymore, it's all programmed and orchestrated."

Toy soldiers offer a healthy alternative. They provide an imaginative and creative environment that stimulates cognitive development.

And what better way to introduce history to a young person in your life! [END](#)

Tranquility abides at home in a living room scene featuring figures by Phoenix Models complete with a toy castle.

ABOUT THE WRITER

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

