

The  
**Ontario  
 Model  
 Soldier  
 Society**  
 Founded 1962  
 www.omss.ca



## Monthly Newsletter for June 2020

### Monthly Meeting Dates for 2020

12 January 2020 - 9 February 2020 – 8 March 2020  
 5 April 2020 - 3 May 2020 – 13 September 2020  
 18 October 2020– 22 November 2020 - 13 December 2020

### Annual Show

Tentative Date 12 JUNE 2021

### Month Newsletter for June 2020

#### 2020 Executive

Keith Ritchie  
 President

Scott Milburn  
 1st vice president

Vacant  
 Andy Traverse

Gary Lenius  
 Secretary/Treasurer

Lorne Farr  
 Past President

Vacant  
 Program Chairman

Ian Pearson  
 Journal Editor

Scott Dummitt  
 Annual Show Chairman

Scott Dummitt  
 Newsletter Editor/ Media  
 Officer

Dave Norman  
 Facebook Page Manager

Frank MacKay  
 Calendar Co-ordinator

Jeff Duncan  
 Club Table & Donations

OMSS Archivist  
 Ian Pearson

Next meeting...

**Sunday, 13 September 2020**

Branch 643 Royal Canadian Legion | 10 Jutland Road Toronto  
 Meeting starts at 1:00 pm. Doors open 11:00 am



### *Letter from the President*

We are entering the third month of the COVID-19 lockdown. Things are easing up, but there is still a long way to go. I am disappointed that we have not been able to get together for our meetings and for the annual 'ON PARADE' show and competition, but it is outside of our control. I, and I am sure that this goes for all members, miss the social exchange of views and ideas.

Nonetheless, I am heartened by exchanges of emails between members, and I encourage others to also communicate via whatever means suits you. We will continue the newsletters through the summer, and a Journal will be coming shortly. I invite all to share their thoughts – and articles – for both. We will continue to monitor things, and hopefully we can get back together sometime in the fall.

In the meantime, re-connect with your toy soldiers (and tell us about it). Remember, there is no concern about social distancing and no restrictions on gathering sizes for your toy soldiers, and they are, especially in these times, members of your household.

***Keith Ritchie***  
***OMSS President***

### **Message from the “ON PARADE” Chairman**

Well with the COVID-19 Pandemic still running rampant around the world and throughout Canada, it seems the OMSS Executive’s decision to cancel this year’s show was the right one to make. I am sure we are all disappointed that the show had been cancelled but who could have foretold what this tiny little virus was going to do throughout the world. The club took a bit of a hit, but not a large one, when we cancelled. We had paid for advertising in the form of flyers and an ad in Toy Soldier & Model Figure magazine. In the case of the latter we had them add a “SHOW CANCELLED” banner at the last moment, which helped get the word out about our decision to cancel.

We have offered a full refund to any vendor who asked for one; however we plan on putting up vendor tables by \$5.00 starting next year and told any vendor who left his payment with us for the year that they would not have to pay the increase. We have also offered a full refund on the “Meet & Greet” tickets and this can be picked up from Gary when we resume meetings later this year.

There is some good news at the end of this message. We are well prepared for next year’s show. Exhibitors and competitors alike should be well aware of the restrictions that were to be initiated this year in respect to displays being no larger than 4’ by 2 ½’ in area. This is due to the reduced display area. We have the room layout all ready to go and we even have a tentative date discussed with Humber College of 12 June 2021. Granted things are rough right now, but we will rebound from this set-up.

### **OMSS Members Interview at ON PARADE 2019**

If you were at the set-up on the Friday before last year’s show, or even around later in the day during ON PARADE 2019, you couldn’t help notice a camera crew filming members of the society, especially Oleg Sukruto a former member. I received a link to the website that has the complete interview of our members and a history of how Oleg got started in collecting back in the Soviet Union. It’s quite interesting is around a half hour long. There are some great shots of our show and some personal opinions about the hobby itself. Link to Interview: <https://crazycanuckcollections.com/collections/tin-solders/>



## **Club Members Speak-up About How they are Keeping Busy with their Hobby**

Last month we asked OMSS members to talk about what they are doing with regards to the hobby, while practicing “Social Distancing” during the COVID-19 pandemic. We received some interesting answers and so are going with a second installment;

### **Stuart Hessney - Tales of Social Distancing From Upstate New York**

I’m writing these lines in mid-April. My wife, Sally, and I are very fortunate to have jobs that have allowed us to social distance and work from home since March 9. But things are surreal. Just the other day, for example, New York State’s governor declared wearing face masks mandatory in public situations. It’s bizarre to go grocery shopping in a store full of people who look like masked robbers.

Still being pretty much stuck at home has its benefits. Suddenly, it seems like I have more time to spare on my toy soldier collection. I have been doing some overdue unpacking, a little inventory and lots of rearranging. I imagine that most of us have kept adding things to favorite displays until they reach critical mass or don’t quite make visual sense anymore. Ever have that feeling of “where can I fit in one more set” or simply “squeeze in one more Zulu?” Stu do! But I love a challenge. Ever since I was a very little boy, setting up toy soldiers has always been my most sublime pleasure, so right now that part of my life is like a little bit of monkey heaven.

Besides my day job, my role as editor of U.K.-based Toy Soldier & Model Figure magazine keeps me plenty busy fielding email, researching, writing and editing because I must always have the *next* issue in gear. I am also very privileged because I am in constant touch with makers and fellow collectors from all around the globe who have become my friends. For instance, here I am in my little bubble at home and I can reel off COVID-19 crisis-related tidbits like knowing that the shops remain open a world away in Tasmania despite other restrictions there.

Ironically, on the very morning I sat down at my computer to write this piece, the first email I read was from my friend Andy C. Neilson, the Hong Kong-based cofounder and creative director of King & Country Ltd. He put things into timely perspective so well that I teared up because it’s on my mind too.

*“This current epidemic has created all manner of disruption all over the world that will take all our efforts to overcome in the days, weeks and months to follow,” Andy wrote. “That’s just one of the myriad of reasons to continue to enjoy and treasure our very unique hobby and our collections.”*

*“In this crazy, interconnected, highly contagious world we’re presently living in, toy soldiers — either making them, collecting them or a combination of both is like a little island of sanity and humble pleasure in a sea of gloom ‘n’ doom.”*

Well said Andy. So very well said!



L-R: Scots Guards with Queen’s and Regimental Colours



Delhi Dubar

## **Lorne Farr**

Before the emergency, I would keep interesting articles on the hobby to read when i got the chance. Usually, I do not have time to read the articles. Now during the emergency I am going through the articles.

## **Alex Monsour**

What impact has the pandemic had on my model soldier hobby? Well I can say they refuse to practice social distancing and remain adjacent to each other in the cabinets. I work for an essential manufacturer and despite the new rules have not seen any significant gain in free time. Looking ahead to our June show in 2021, I thought I could paint my wooden log house purchased from Michaels that fits so nicely with my French and Indian war series. However, I need paint and am not prepared to purchase a colour from an online picture. So it waits for the re-opening of retail businesses. I have noticed as a Facebook user that the members of several soldier manufacturer groups that I belong to have lots of time. They are posting photos of their new dioramas that they have completed. Or even just rearrangement of their shelf displays. Its great for inspiration and enjoyment.

As a collector, I have used some of my time to check out ebay and various sellers (including Scott J. Dummitt Presents!) to see what is appearing on the market. Through a news release I learned that First Legion, whose high quality soldiers tend to be on the pricier side, was struggling with production due to the pandemic. To thank their global customer base for understanding, they decided to have a massive inventory sale in April and put about 800 pieces on sale up to 45% off. Toy Soldier Club, from Quebec City, who faithfully attends our shows as a vendor and introduced me to First Legion a few years ago, is the only Canadian dealer. Through them I was able to purchase some. I spent an evening reviewing the sale items, selecting a dozen and then narrowing those down to four. My daughter, the inheritress of the collection which she says goes up for sale the day after my funeral (if not the day of), gave me permission to buy one more – a flag bearer of the 16<sup>th</sup> century Holy Roman Empire. With the delays in the global postal system, I may have quite a wait for their arrival.

Starting in September, I will be taking over the OMSS newsletter from Scott, who has produced it for the last four years. Scott has a distinguished naval service record. But he is handing control to a civilian bureaucrat who watched Officer and a Gentleman as a teenager and swore he would never enter the armed forces to be treated like crap in boot camp. My hope is to present a newsletter that is worthy of my predecessor's quality and continues to serve as an effective OMSS communication tool.

## **Scott Dummitt**

Well life seems to go on even with the social distancing. I started a winter project in December 2019 and finished just around March. My project was not only renovating, but it encompassed my hobby as well. I first emptied my hallway and then patched up cracks, and installed an electrical outlet in the floor where I planned to put a curio cabinet I purchased last year. After repainting the downstairs and upstairs hallway, I started on display cases and a new wardrobe. Any of you with older houses, mine is around 90 years old, will experience not having hall closets for your coats and boots. After assembling one I bought from Canadian Tire, I was ready to work on the hobby stuff. First off I renovated a display case I had purchased in the 1980s. It had seen a lot of years and better days after four moves. I removed the wooden shelves and put in shelving brackets. I added a 33" x 33" mirror backing, four new glass shelves and a set of three LED lights. I also added three new glass shelves to the 6 foot curio cabinet I had earlier purchase and plugged in the overhead light into the outlet I had earlier installed. Then the fun part started. I went through boxes of

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figures I had put away and brought them out in all their ceremonial glory. Now I have a wonderful little display of Queen Victoria riding in her carriage in Edinburgh (at least that's how I tell it), I have regimental march pasts of both the Black Watch and the Cameron Highlanders. My King George VI and Queen Elizabeth in the State Coach have made reappearance and so has my collection of Fort Henry Guard figures. The curio cabinet has a large display of various Scottish figures as well as the Last of the Mohicans, dashing along James Fennimore Cooper's classic novel. Other sets include the mounted band of the Life Guards, the French Navy's Pipes & Drums and the band of the Highland Light Infantry. I finished decorating the hall using a side drum of the Buffs, donated by Andy Traverse, prints of various military drummers and Drum Majors, ice bucket drums and a couple of Wolsley Helmets. While the weather is still up in the air, I plan on starting a few more figure painting projects. There always seems to be something I can assemble or paint, so as I said, "life goes on".



### Bill Wyatt

My first indication that this spring was not going to go the way I expected was when my son cancelled a planned lunch. He explained that his boss was just back from Wuhan, China, and had not finished his fourteen days of isolation yet, and so it would be best to wait and see before we met. At about that time I was painting three Chelsea Pensioners from the huge pile of castings Jeff Duncan had been selling at the Club table.

I then began painting a Lancer band of seven mounted figures from Prince August castings which I had made in the fall. These took some time to clean-up, prime and paint as 21<sup>st</sup> Lancers. When looking at 21<sup>st</sup> Lancers which I had painted last year in order to match details, I noticed that on them I had missed the stripes on the trousers, and so I went back and did them too. That completed the work that I had planned for the winter months and so I looked around for more to do.

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I had some rough castings of three different red coat figures: three 1812 Coronet recasts, seven recast Britain's (44004), and a few recasts of a figure I bought from Ron Hutchison, c. 1775. I started on them. I then paused on that endeavour to work on a diorama of the British soldiers leaving Quebec in 1872 based on a print I picked up of that scene. It is a project that I have always planned to make for the show; I have all the figures but one ready in my collection of Fort Henry Guards. Previously, this winter, I had got as far as working out the scale of the background walls and gate from which the figures appear, and the lineup of the marching troops. As I struggled with deciding on the level of detail on the gate, and the materials, and cutting arches through the Styrofoam, I reflected on the fact that all the work I was doing, or going to do, had to do with a background set, and not the actual toy soldiers. It just seemed like too much effort for one day's showing. I can not say that I have put the project aside as it is still covering a table in the basement, but I went back to painting the red coats and that is where I am now.

Somewhere in this time I also managed to buy, in a local auction, a Ducal band of the Scots Guards in greatcoats along with a matching set of six guards as well as some other Ducal figures. I also tried to catch up with labeling the sets on my shelves. But now spring is here and yard work is cutting into toy soldier time, really slowing me down. That and reading.

### **The JOURNAL has a new Temporary Editor**

Ian Pearson has taken over the JOURNAL until Brendan Hogan returns from his military duties. Ian needs articles submitted to him at: [ian.pearson560@gmail.com](mailto:ian.pearson560@gmail.com). Please send your articles in by the end of September as he hopes to have a JOURNAL ready for 15 October this year.

### **On Facebook?**

Make sure and check out our Facebook group maintained by Dave Norman. There are lots of interesting postings. [www.facebook.com/groups/577999975631964/](http://www.facebook.com/groups/577999975631964/)

**Whats New in the Hobby – by Scott Dummitt** It seems that manufactures for the most part are still getting items out to the retailers. Team Miniatures has added some wonderful Italian Bersaglieris to their Peking 1900 issue. There are figures released both in the Blue & Khaki uniform. In addition they have added a German Marine Officer & Standard bearer as well. John Jenkins has released a wounded drummer set to their 62<sup>nd</sup> Regiment of Foot series and several new Norman and Saxon warriors. Thomas Gunn Ltd. has a new line of SS mess men to go with K&C's "Eagle's Nest" set. K&C has just released a female trio of ancient Egyptian females, a Australian Light Horse set, a matte series of Royal Marines on parade, and a new set of "On the Streets of Hong Kong". My favourite however is TM's 2<sup>nd</sup> Boer War series which has two RCR privates, Gordon Highlanders and British Infantry, as well as a selection of Boer Commando's.



Left: RCR 2<sup>nd</sup> Batt. Private, 2<sup>nd</sup> Boer War

Below: Italian Bersaglieris in blue uniforms c. 1900



**The newsletter is edited by Scott Dummitt.**

**News items and notices can be submitted to [gijoe@kos.net](mailto:gijoe@kos.net) or 705-939-1028**

**Articles must be submitted no later than 14 days before monthly meetings.**

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**Starting with the September Edition, please send your articles to Alex Monsour at: [artmons@rogers.com](mailto:artmons@rogers.com)**