

The Ontario Model Soldier Society

Founded 1962
www.omss.ca



2022 Executive

Keith Ritchie
President

Scott Milburn
1st vice president

Andy Traverse
2nd vice-president

Gary Lenius
Secretary/Treasurer

Lorne Farr
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Vacant
Program Chairman

Brendan Hogan
Journal Editor

Scott Dummitt
Annual Show Chairman

Scott Milburn
Newsletter Editor

Dave Norman
Facebook Page Manager

Frank MacKay
Calendar Co-ordinator

Jeff Duncan
Club Table & Donations

OMSS Archivist
Ian Pearson

Newsletter for December 2022

Monthly Meetings for 2022

Annual Christmas Luncheon Sunday, December 11th
Branch 643 Royal Canadian Legion 110 Jutland Road Toronto
Doors open at 11:00 am.

OMSS Ottawa meetings have resumed in person gatherings with continued Meet and Greet and Swap Meets by Zoom which are open to all OMSS members. For an invite and link or more information, please contact Bob Thompson at Thompson_robert@rogers.com.



President's Message – December 2022

It is now December of 2022. This is my last President's Message, after three – interesting, tumultuous and challenging – years.

We have stuck through it together, and I am proud that, all things considered, the OMSS has weathered the (COVID) storm fairly well, and is in good shape for me to hand things over to the incoming executive. As Past President in 2023, I will be giving my support to Scott M. and his team. I am sure you will do as well.

I will reminisce on the past three years at the December meeting, but I recognize that not all of you will be there. We should look back at how we have pulled together throughout the pandemic, with communications through the newsletter and the Journal. We quickly converted to online Zoom meetings and Swap Meets thanks to Bob Thompson of the Ottawa Chapter. We established and executed on the OMSS Underground Railroad, to facilitate sales and trades. When allowed by Provincial protocols and Legion rules, we restarted in-person meetings, paused again, and restarted. We had our annual "On Parade" shown in June of this year. While smaller than past shows, it was well attended and was successful in many areas, and lessons learned will be reflected in next year's show.

We are finalizing our history book. At the same time, we are evolving as a club. In part, we must do so due to various pressures, internal and external. The club and the hobby is aging in many respects. We remember the members that we have lost in the last three years, as well as those gone before – but who still inspire us. At the same time, we are picking up new members, and some who are stepping up.

I could not have made it without the help of my Executive, the Show Committee, the Calendar Committee, the Archivist, the Ottawa Chapter, and of you the membership. I offer my thanks to all. *(continued next page)*

President's message, conclusion

However, attendance is down. This is somewhat understandable, as we are still not fully done with COVID, and we are seeing a surge in colds, flus and other illnesses as we enter winter.

Understandably, your and your families' health, is paramount. Nonetheless, I will still convey a message that we need active participation in the club. As I have found out over the years, and especially over my 3-year tenure as your President, you will get out of the club what you put into it. It is a theme that I and Donnie talked about quite seriously, and that I have previously spoken about.

I hope to see as many of you as have decided to join us for our traditional Holiday Lunch at the December meeting. And to all, stay safe, and my best wishes for the holidays and a hope for a Happy New Year in 2023.

Club Auction Report by Gary Lenius



At the November 13th meeting we held our first auction since 2019. A total of 64 lots were put up for sale. While this was down from our usual 100 or so lots from past auctions there were some really nice items and some spirited bidding.

60 lots were sold for a total price of \$1,837.

Sales of items from the draw table yielded \$236.

Frank MacKay did a great job as our auctioneer keeping things lively and getting lots of participation.

Also due thanks are Mike Chrus and John Hambly who served as our runners.

The settling up handled by yours truly went smoothly thanks to the computer application I developed a few years ago.

Thanks to all who participated.

Here's a link to an interesting online article about lead and plastic toy soldier collecting that was published September 2022.



<https://www.valuemystuff.com/us/blog/a-buyers-guide-to-plastic-toy-soldiers>

What's New in the Hobby: December 2022 – by Scott Dummitt

Well it appears, and rightfully so, that the British Toy Soldier Company is the first of the manufacturers to come out with something for our new King. This first set is interesting in so many ways. First off it depicts something seldom seen in the toy soldier world with troops “Grounding Arms” as well as troops giving “The Hurrah”. The Guardsman tying off the Royal Standard is another nice touch, and something I do not recall seeing before with British sets, but there is an ethnic mixture of the figures. Something that shows the diversity of today's standing Armed Forces in all the Commonwealth countries. There will be six sets in all including a not yet pictured “Garner King of Arms”. A three piece Guardsman set will run approximately \$75.00 - \$80.00 Cdn.

These sets will be available sometime in December. Another figure that will be added to this series is “The Garner King of Arms”. The Garner Principal King of Arms is the senior King of Arms, and the senior Officer of Arms of the College of Arms, the heraldic authority with jurisdiction over England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Last month I told you about the new 71st Regiment (Fraser Highlanders) of Foot figures that John Jenkins Designs was releasing from the Battle of Cowpens. Another unit that fought for the Crown during the American Revolution has also just been introduced. The King's Royal Regiment of New York (The King's Royal Yorkers) were commanded by Sir John Johnson during the Revolution and asserted themselves well. Jenkins has released two of these figures in time for Christmas. They retail for approximately \$119.50 Cdn.

Thomas Gunn Miniatures has announced that they will be releasing a US 155mm Howitzer in the near future. The first variant will come with a set of four USMC Winter Crew as they were seen in Korea. Gunn intends to release a WWII version and an Indochina version later on in the upcoming year. Price is yet to be determined.



**The Proclamation of King Charles III by
THE BRITISH TOY SOLDIER COMPANY**



John Jenkins Designs new King's Royal Yorkers



Gunn's 155mm Howitzer Set

The small Christmas truce of World War II



It is commonly known that in December 1914, an unofficial Christmas truce occurred in the No Man's Land between German, French and British forces along the Western Front. Singing Christmas carols, the soldiers climbed out of the trenches and forged small temporary bonds of brotherhood. Unfortunately, this brief armistice was not sanctioned by commanders and fraternization with the enemy was strictly prohibited. However, 30 years later during the Battle of the Bulge in World War II, a small Christmas truce happened for three American and four German soldiers.

On Christmas Eve in 1944, a young boy named Fritz Vincken and his mother Elisabeth were staying in a small cabin in the Hürtgen Forest, mere miles from the Belgian border. Waiting anxiously for his father's return for the holiday, he heard a loud knock at the door. Instinctively protective, his mother blew out the candles in the front room and pushed him aside to answer the door. Standing before her were two American soldiers, with a third laying severely injured in the snow nearby.

Not understanding English, the elder Vincken froze in the doorway. Noting the Americans were armed, yet did not force their way into the cabin, she relented and told the men to come in. Although none of the soldiers spoke German, one spoke enough French to communicate with their hosts. After getting separated from their battalion, the three troops were left wandering the forest for days. Hypothermia, exposure, hunger and battle wounds were taking their toll. Realizing the poor condition of the men, Vincken sent her son to fetch the rooster and potatoes she had been saving for a special Christmas meal as she began bandaging up the injured man.

As the Fritz prepared the table for their guests, there was another loud knock at the door. Expecting more Americans, he flung the door open and saw four German soldiers standing before him. His mother quickly went outside to defuse the situation. The quartet had also lost their regiment and were seeking shelter. When asked if they could stay, she told them they were more than welcome; however, there were three others inside who were not considered friends of Germany. Because it was Christmas Eve, she explained, there would be no bloodshed in her home. As the incredulous Germans stood speechless, she instructed the men to leave their weapons outside and join them for dinner.

She hurried inside and explained the situation to the American GIs. They handed their weapons to their host, which she placed outside. When the Germans walked in, an air of tension and suspicion filled the room. Vincken began dishing up what food she could, while one of the German men looked at the wounded American. Speaking in English, he explained the young man's injuries were not infected and he needed rest. The tension in the room was replaced with tentative trust and weariness from the war.

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A small Christmas truce - conclusion



At dawn, realizing they would all be departing around the same time, the Americans were trying to find their way back to the Allied lines. When asked if they should head toward Monschau, the Germans advised them to go elsewhere as it had been recaptured by the Germans. As they began to leave, Vincken handed the men their weapons and gave motherly advice to stay safe and return to their respective homes. She watched as the men set out in opposing directions toward their battle lines, none chasing after the other.

While not quite on the same scale as the Christmas Truce of 1914, this small offering of peace meant the difference between life and death for these seven men and the Vincken family.

*This is an edited version of an article published in **Stars and Stripes Europe** on December 2021, based on the retelling of the events by Franz Vincken and originally published in Readers Digest.*



Reminder

We will be holding our annual Christmas luncheon on **Sunday Dec 11, 2022.**

A Swiss Chalet dinner will be served for those that previously signed up to attend.

If you have not already paid, please ensure you pay your \$20.00 to cover the cost of your meal to Gary on the day of the luncheon.

The Legion bar will be open for cold refreshments.

The club will have coffee and tea available for purchase too.

Attendees are encouraged to bring along some dessert treats to share amongst fellow club members at the luncheon.

ON PARADE 2023 – Sunday June 10, 2023

Well with the New Year approaching quickly we want to bring all our OMSS members up to date with the progression of ON PARADE 2023. Things have unfortunately not worked out with the new booking staff at Humber College so we will be back at the Royal Canadian Legion, Branch 643 at 110 Jutland Avenue in Etobicoke again for our show. While we were scaled down a bit last year, we managed to fit in 34 vendor tables plus room for competition and displays and even a little dining area. The Legion also affords us easy access to an Interac machine which helps those attendees that didn't quite bring enough cash to restock their bankroll. Parking was tight, but once again we managed with parking on the street and at the Day Care Centre.

A few changes to the show in 2023 will be the hours, which for General Admission has been reduced from 10 am until 3 pm. The Display & Competition table area per entry has been increased from 2 ½ feet x 4 feet, to 2 ½ feet by 6 feet. We are also giving priority to vendors who attended the 2022 show for table space availability.

Once again we have a block of rooms available at a reduced price at the STAY INN (416 – 259-7899) in Etobicoke. With the reduction of restriction of Covid protocols tourism and bookings have picked up again in the GTA area. This year's discount is not as good as last year but still there is approximately a \$25.00 difference in rooms if you book early and tell them you want the OMSS show rate. This rate will not be offered after March.

Finally, I have talked to Ken & Ericka Osen from William Britain Limited and they are hoping to return to our show again. They have a busy schedule themselves this coming year as Britains is celebrating its 130th year of production. One of the highlights for us Canadians is that they will be releasing a Female and Male RCMP Constable in ceremonial uniform this year.

Mark your 2023 calendar now!

Here are the 2023 Toronto chapter meeting dates.

January 15
February 12
March 12
April 16
May 14



September 17
October 15
November 19
December 10



The Last Word
Hope everyone has a Merry Christmas
and a Happy New Year



The newsletter is edited by Scott Milburn.

News items and notices can be submitted to scottm33@live.ca.

Articles must be submitted no later than 14 days before monthly meetings. Due to postal costs the newsletter is limited to 6 pages maximum. Articles that cannot be accommodated will be forwarded to the Journal Editor.