

THE WORLD'S NO. 1 MAGAZINE FOR COLLECTORS OF ALL STRIPES

TOY SOLDIER

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MODEL FIGURE



FROM THE EDITOR:

I have been to heaven for toy soldier collectors and it's in a place called Paradise.

James H. Hillestad, proprietor of The Toy Soldier, has been inviting me to visit his U.S. museum and shop for years. At long last I was able to make the pilgrimage to Cresco in the Paradise Valley of Pennsylvania's Pocono Mountains last Oct. 29.

Jim and his wife, Carol, graciously hosted an open house that drew a fine turnout on the eve of the East Coast Toy Soldier Show & Sale in Hackensack, N.J. A bagpiper played atmospheric music while I admired Jim's displays and had a chance to talk with fellow enthusiasts such as Don Pielin and Steve Sommers, organizers of the OTSN Inc. Chicago Toy Soldier Show.

Jim's museum has to be seen to be believed. Imagine a purpose-built facility larger than many people's homes with 3,000 square feet of space on two floors devoted to delightful displays featuring more than 35,000 toy soldiers and magnificent militaria. It is truly amazing.

Jim has created imaginative dioramas ranging from ancient Egypt to the Delhi Durbar, Windsor Castle and much more. Like the conductor of an orchestra, the artistic maestro weaves a melody of perfectly nuanced and balanced notes in his displays. And they all have intriguing stories to tell.

Carol and Jim kindly welcomed me to spend the night, so I was able to bunk down on a comfy leather couch inside the museum surrounded by toy troops. As I nodded off, I was reminded of "The Land of Counterpane," Robert Lewis Stevenson's poem about a little boy in bed watching his "leaden soldiers go, with different uniforms and drills, among the bed-clothes, through the hills."

The Toy Soldier is located within a two-hour drive of either New York City or Philadelphia. If it's at all possible for you to visit sometime, contact Jim via his Website at www.the-toy-soldier.com and make an appointment. I guarantee it will be time well spent.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Stuart".

Stuart A. Hessney, Editor