



*Some very early "animated" 54mm figures of German Hussars by Charles C. Stadden, awarded a trophy by the British Model Soldier Society in 1951.*

## A SHORT HISTORY OF ONE OF THE WORLD'S LEADING MAKERS OF MODELS AND TOY SOLDIERS

# TRADITION

By David Scheinmann

**T**radition, one of the world's leading model and toy soldier companies, has been in business for over fifty years. Starting life in a very modest way, the company catered to a then very small band of enthu-

figure, a small group, or a complete battle scene, all were undertaken with great attention to detail. This particular range of figures is still very much in production today.

Around the mid 1960s the company started publication of a groundbreaking, prestigious magazine on military uniforms, which went under the name of "Tradition". Following the success of the magazine, the model soldier range and the shop was likewise named. Many leading military authors and artists, past and present, were at the time contributors to Tradition magazine, which ceased publication in 1974. Many of the old back issues of this magazine are still available.

Over the years new ranges of figures were continually being introduced, ranging from 25mm and 30mm to 110mm in size –with the emphasis on 54mm and 90mm scales. These new figures were the creations of several renowned sculptors such as Charles C. Stadden, Jeff Willis, Ron Cameron, Alan Caton, Clive Knight, David Scheinmann and Andrew Stadden.

The 25mm and 30mm figure ranges were taken over some years ago by "Tradition

*A selection of Tradition Figures from the various ranges – Toy Soldiers, 54mm and 90mm Model Soldiers.*



*54mm figures of a General and a Trumpeter of the Imperial Guard Dragoons c.1812.*



siasts, both at home and abroad. Over the years the company has expanded with the hobby and built up a huge range of figures over its half-century existence, always with a shop in the heart of London's West End- which has become a Mecca for collectors of all nationalities and from all walks of life.

The company was originally founded as "Norman Newton Ltd" by Roy Belmont – Maitland, a keen enthusiast of military uniforms and militaria. Roy Belmont-Maitland teamed up with Charles C. Stadden, the now legendary military artist and sculptor to create a unique range of animated 54mm figures. These figures were cast in lead with separate packs and weapons, and positioned by hand to create highly individual figures to the customers' exact requirements. As all the work was done by hand, it enabled a virtually limitless range of poses and uniforms to be created. Whether a single

*54mm figures of Sergeant Ewart of the Royal Scots Greys capturing a French eagle, Waterloo 1815.*







54mm figure of an Officer of French Carabiniers c.1812



Some of the toy soldier sets in the recently released "French and Indian Wars 1750's" series.



"Napoleon's Headquarters", one of the many Napoleonic subjects in the toy soldier range.



"The Royal Marines 1805", a set of toy soldiers depicting the Royal Marines at the time of the Battle of Trafalgar.



"Union Cavalry", one of the many American Civil War toy soldier sets by Tradition.



90mm figure of a Drummer of the Black Watch, present day.




90mm figure of a Bugler of the Royal Marines, present day.


Scandinavia", but the remaining ranges are still very much in production today.

In 1980 the now extremely popular toy soldier range was introduced, created by David Scheinmann, which from modest beginnings has expanded to a very extensive range covering many popular subjects and periods. The emphasis in this line is primarily on the Napoleonic period, the American Civil War, the Victorian Era, and a recently introduced French and Indian Wars range.

Tradition's manufacturing base is located in rural Hertfordshire, some sixty miles north of London. Here the figures are cast in metal, assembled and finished, with the painting of the toy soldier range being undertaken by a small army of home-workers scattered around the country.

The original founders of Tradition, and some say the creators of today's hobby, are sadly no longer with us. However, Tradition is still trading in the heart of London at 33 Curzon Street, Mayfair, London W1J 7TR.

When in London a visit to Tradition is a must to view their huge range of figures. For those unable to get to the shop, Tradition offers a full mail-order service (catalogues for all the ranges are available) and in addition all the figures can be viewed on their website.  [www.traditionoflondon.com](http://www.traditionoflondon.com)

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