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Date of Release: Feb. 18, 2014

Old Toy Soldier's Nov. 22-24 auction sets company record for highest-grossing sale ever

Appleby and Gillespie collections attract bidders from 27 countries; total hits \$590K

PITTSBURGH – Collectors mustered from all over the world to bid in Old Toy Soldier's (OTSA) Nov. 22-24 auction, and by the time the hammer had fallen on the last miniature troop, a new company record had been set. The 1,684-lot auction featuring the prestigious Richard Appleby and George O. Gillespie collections chalked up \$590,000 (all prices quoted inclusive of 20% buyer's premium).

“Whenever we're able to offer a great collection – or in this case, two great collections – with deep provenance, it draws the bidders out of the woodwork and sets the stage for a very exciting auction,” said Ray Haradin, owner of OTSA. “We had bidders from 27 countries – from Russia to Qatar to Singapore. The breakdown was 368 bidders online, 25 on the phones, and 115 absentee. Bottom line: it was our highest-grossing sale to date.”

The top lot of the sale was a rare and desirable Britains “Mammoth” Circus Roundabout from the Appleby collection. One of only 4 or 5 boxed examples known to exist, the toy went to an American collector for \$13,200 against a presale estimate of \$6,000-\$9,000.

First runner-up was Lot 2107, a red Salvation Army band. A Texas collector claimed the perennial favorite by Britains for an above-estimate price of \$10,800.

Made in the 1950s, a Britains two-tier Wild West display with cowboy and Indian figures plus fencing was entered as Lot 3030. It swept past its \$3,500-\$4,500 estimate to settle at \$6,000.

Courtenay knights, produced in England primarily in the 1950s, continued their run of popularity with OTSA bidders. Lot 3469, a boxed Sir John Mohum KG Tournament Knight on horseback, jousting its way to \$2,000 against an estimate of \$1,200-\$1,500.

“Courtenays are strong and only getting stronger,” said Haradin. “They've always been quite collectible and had a very hot streak in the late 1980s. Over the last three years there's been a noticeable uptick in the number of collectors bidding on them and the prices they've achieved in each successive sale.”

Greenwood & Ball is an English company that produced very high-quality, finely detailed figures in the 1950s and '60s. It's a brand that collectors are chasing at the moment, Haradin said. “We've had several in our sales that have sold for more than \$1,000 apiece.” In the November auction, Lot 3592, an Argyle and Sutherland

Highlander single figure depicting an officer reading a map was estimated at \$150-\$250 but was bid to \$1,020.

Another manufacturer that has remained buoyant in the marketplace is Heyde. The German company's lead figures consistently finish at the upper end of prices realized in OTSA sales. Lot 3557, a Heyde Airship display, had all the bells and whistles collectors like to see – in this case a tinfoil dirigible with winch wagon, approximately 18 figures and accessories; and even shrubbery and fencing. Estimated at \$2,000-\$2,800, the nicely accessorized set attracted multiple bidders and commanded a winning bid of \$4,320.

“Overall, it was a terrific sale,” said Haradin. “Now we're working on a three-day extravaganza for June 27, 28 and 29 that collectors are going to want to mark on their calendars. “It will feature the James A. Henderson collection of toy soldiers, which includes some of the world's best Britains, including the actual large-scale fusiliers that appear on the cover of James Opie's *The Great Book of Britains*.” Additionally, the auction will include French-made figures from Britains' Paris office, as well as soldiers and figures by Heyde, Mignot, Lucotte, King and Country, Trophy, Ducal, Hocker and a host of other manufacturers. Some have provenance from Christie's London auction of the Britains corporate archive.

Other important highlights of the June sale include the Ed Ruby collection (with actual examples pictured in *The Great Book of Britains*), figures with provenance from the Malcolm Forbes collection (auctioned at Christie's New York), and a special inclusion: unique sets with provenance from The Duke of Gloucester.

Watch for additional information on the June 27-29 auction in *Antique Toy World* and online at www.oldtoysoldierauctions.com.

To contact Ray Haradin, call 1-800-349-8009 or 1-412-343-8733.

CAPTIONS:

2106 –

Britains Set #1439 Mammoth Circus Roundabout, \$13,200. OTSA image.

2107-

Britains Set #1317 Salvation Army Band with red jackets, \$10,800. OTSA image.

3030-

Britains Set #2061 Wild West Cowboys and North American Indians display, \$6,000. OTSA image.

3469-

Courtenay Sir John Mohum KG Tournament Knight, \$2,000. OTSA image.

3592-

Greenwood & Ball Argyle Sutherland Highlander, \$1,020. OTSA image.

3557-

Heyde Airship display, \$4,320. OTSA image.