



BOOK REVIEWS

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■ Reviews of books of interest to history buffs as well as toy soldier and model figure enthusiasts.

HORNUNG ART: THE HERALDIC KNIGHTS AND MINIATURES OF BOB HORNUNG

Author: Philip J. Bennett

Published by: Osprey Publishing,

Price: \$75 U.S.

Reviewed by: Stuart A. Hessney

American Philip J. Bennett has generously shared his great enthusiasm for collecting military miniatures, especially knights, in a series of tomes through the years. His fifth and latest self-published book, "Hornung Art: The Heraldic Knights and Miniatures of Bob Hornung," profiles a creative craftsman who hails from Cincinnati, Ohio.

Hornung was a cabinet maker and furniture refinisher for 20 years. The American has become well-known in the toy soldier and model figure hobby for his terrific knights and fantastic, Heyde-like display sets covering many topics from world history.

Bennett recounts how Hornung's hobby became a business in 1984, when he established the Yanks brand to make, convert and sell American Dimestore-style figures.

Five years later, he came up with the Hornung Art label because he was intent on creating high-quality, 50-mm knights painted in gloss to complement collections of the fabulous medieval figures fabricated in the past by Richard Courtenay and Freddie Ping. The glossy Tournament Knights, Hornung's first range of heraldic miniatures, was launched in 1989 and continued until 1996.

"Bob's design philosophy for his range of knights was simple: produce what he liked and trust that collectors would like it, too!" Bennett writes.

In 1997, at a point where his original molds were wearing out, Bob started making a new range of miniatures under the Hornung Art banner full time.

Ten chapters cover Hornung's heraldic miniatures, special commissions and other work. For example, the maker has gone off on related tangents such as a Heroes of the Realm range of less expensive knights. Since matt-painted, connoisseur-quality knights were growing in popularity, Hornung delved into a series called My Favorite Knights. But he pulled the plug

on it in 1999 because he found that its Russian painters could not be relied on to paint heraldry accurately.

This 124-page, hardcover book is richly illustrated with 240 color photos. Catalogs, sales materials and price lists are reproduced in this limited edition book, which is available directly from the author. "Hornung Art" is a peerless profile of this still active maker and his wonderful work. ■

