



Granddad Minson set up his bicycle and toy shop during the early 1920s in Southchurch, an area of Southend-on-Sea, Essex. Just before WWII, as supplies of nonessential goods like toys became more and more limited, he decided to go into making his own lead toy soldiers and wooden tanks.

He employed his daughters, Bobby and Isobel, to paint figures as well as some military vehicles and vessels. Bobby recalls being paid a farthing per soldier and a halfpenny per submarine -- wages I'm sure many employers would love to bring back.

Gerard still possesses some of the original toy soldier molds that his grandfather used. Who knows -- maybe one day they might even be used again for a special commemorative range!?!

Like many grandparents, the Minsons were willing baby sitters at a time when "society" balls were all the rage in the 1960s, bringing Harold and Bobby frequent invitations out on weekends. Gerard and Martin would be dropped off at their grandfather's shop and their grandmother would take them upstairs until it closed.

Arrayed all along the walls of the staircase were narrow shelves stacked with boxes of Dinky Toys -- a dream come true

for young boys. Grandma Minson would always allow the boys to choose a toy, but in a conspiratorial whisper she would say, "Don't tell Granddad."

Unsurprisingly perhaps, Gerard always tended to choose some kind of military vehicle!

SWALES' FAR EAST TIES

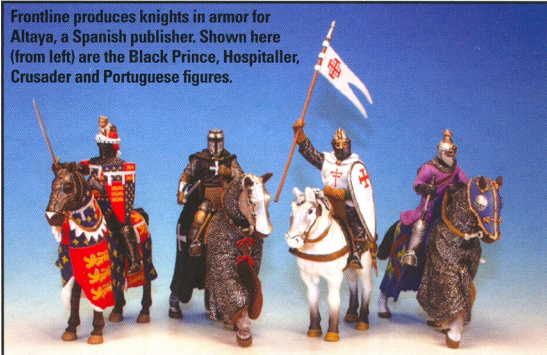
Howard Swales, who was born in Malaya in the 1950s, has spent more of his life in the Far East than in the United Kingdom.

His father was a teacher in Malaya who eventually became head of education for their area. As a small child, Howard initially learned the Malay language from his family's maid. Even now his family still speaks it amongst themselves.

In the 1960s Malaya became an independent country and the Swales family moved back to the United Kingdom. But it was difficult to settle having spent so many years in the Far East. It wasn't long before the family moved to Hong Kong, where Howard's father took a teaching post. Only when Howard reached his teenage years did he return to England for his education at a boarding school.

Both Gerard and Howard attended college at Medway in Great Britain to study

Frontline produces knights in armor for Altaya, a Spanish publisher. Shown here (from left) are the Black Prince, Hospitaller, Crusader and Portuguese figures.



Figures produced by Frontline for the Spanish publisher Altaya include (from left) these German, French, Italian and French knights.



Top left: Representing three generations of toy soldier making, Grandma Minson stands in front of the family's bicycle and toy shop. That's Gerard Prime's Aunt Isobel seated in the toy car.

Below right: WWII German Schwimmwagen set by Frontline. Gerard Prime owns a rare real one.

Bottom right: Howard Swales in modeling action.

architectural model making -- the same course at the same time. Coincidence and fate are fickle, if nothing else. Being in different academic years, Gerard and Howard didn't actually meet until after they had both qualified and moved out to Hong Kong.

A mutual friend offered them both employment in his model-making firm -- Gerard first, and then six months later Howard.

When they finally met, the two men discovered they had



British 24th Foot troops from Frontline's Zulu War range.

