

LORD OF THE THINGS

RANDY VAN PEURSEM, COLLECTOR • LIBRARY DISPLAY CASE • 1ST FLOOR



WHAT FIGURES DO YOU COLLECT?

Star Wars and Star Trek, obviously. After I saw Peter Jackson's adaptation of Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring in December of 2001, I was totally hooked on J.R.R. Tolkien's Middle-earth! Toy Biz started producing and selling high quality and highly articulated action figures in 2001 to coincide with the movies. The collecting bug bit hard. I also collect Babylon 5 and all of the action figures based on the Stargate franchise.

HOW MANY ACTION FIGURES ARE IN YOUR COLLECTION?

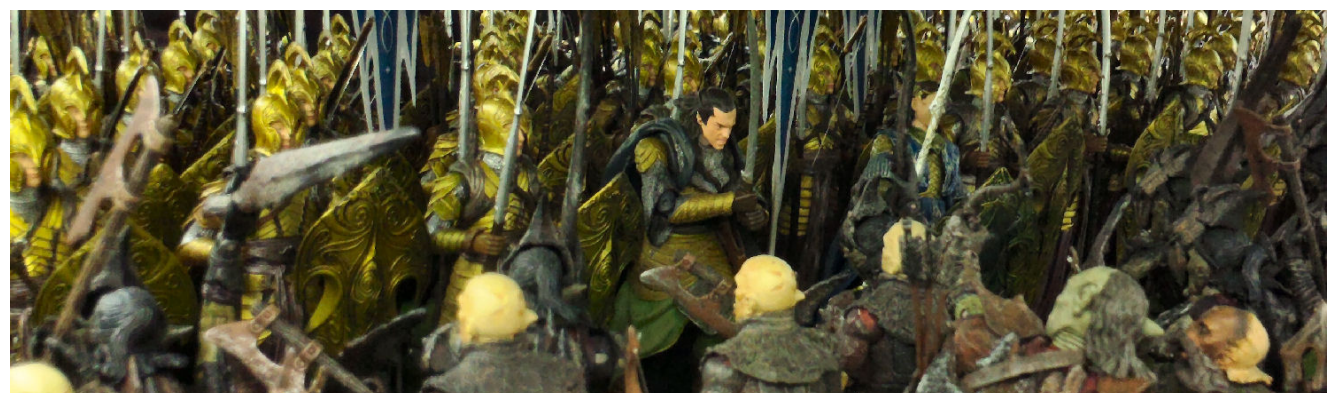
For Lord of the Rings, I have 206 boxed action figures and ~1,400 loose action figures. If you count Star Wars, Star Trek, Stargate, Babylon 5, etc., it is a little over 7,000 in total.

DO YOU STILL COLLECT?

Yes. I use eBay for figures not produced anymore, but I also use Amazon, Entertainment Earth, Wal-Mart, and other websites to get what I would like. I also bought collections from a few NWC students who wanted to sell their childhood action figures. I am always interested in buying / selling / trading; feel free to reach out to me if you are interested.

WHEN DID YOU START COLLECTING ACTION FIGURES?

The first Star Wars movie I saw in the theater was *Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back* in 1980. I had six Star Wars action figures growing up (Darth Vader, R2D2, Luke Skywalker, Boba Fett, and two Stormtroopers) which started my collection. When I was in medical school in 1993, I started collecting vintage Star Wars action figures (produced by Kenner) after I saw some at a flea market. Since I was enjoying Star Trek spin-offs then, I also started collecting action figures (Playmates) from all Star Trek TV shows and movies.



WHERE DID YOU GET MOST OF YOUR ACTION FIGURES?

When I would drive home from Iowa City on the occasional weekend/holidays, I would take the back roads and hit all the Wal-Marts, Targets, Shopkos, and other toy stores that I could find meandering between Iowa City and Orange City. It would take me 8-9 hours to get home. After I dropped out of medical school due to severe health issues, I was confined to my house for two years. During those two years, the Toy Shop magazine and eBay kept me satisfied. Fortunately, eBay was just starting as a business. I was able to buy large lots of action figures, keep what I wanted, and sell the duplicate figures individually or in smaller lots. Most of the time I was able to get my money back.

WHAT DO YOU DO WITH YOUR COLLECTION?

When I was recovering, it gave me something to do to keep my mind active. I still struggle with health issues, so it is still therapeutic. I cannot go on vacations or go out to eat or do a variety of other things that many take for granted. Therefore, I spend my entertainment money and relaxation time on science fiction action figures. I make dioramas (see pictures below) and put them on display that I gladly show other people. I enjoy seeing faces of kids and adults when they see the dioramas and collections. Why have a collection if you cannot share the joy with others? I do make videos of my dioramas and share them on YouTube and Facebook in communities of like-minded individuals. After seeing dioramas made by other people, I realize I am a rank-amateur!. Another fun thing I do is customize action figures and make characters found in Tolkien's Middle-earth that were not in the movies or made by toy companies. This is why it is good to have multiples of some action figures.

