

*The Fantastic
Worlds Of
Grenadier*

by

Terence Gunn

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With the exception of the *Gamma World* figures scan on page 13, the *Future Warriors* figures scan on page 27, and the scan of miniatures on page 39, all images in this book, including the front and back cover, are scans from and of original Grenadier sources and products.

Figures on Page 39, from Top to Bottom, Left to Right:
Call Of Cthulhu Deep One, Byakhee, Hound Of Tindalos; *Fantasy Warriors* Undead; *AD&D* Aspis, Naga

Gamma World Badders; *Traveller* Droyne, Ael Yael, Vargr

Gamma World Iron Society; *Monster Manuscript* Zegumbwai; *Gamma World* Mutant Man;
AD&D Lizardmen, Gnolls

Gamma World Barksin; *AD&D* Bugbears; *W&W* Demon (Balrog), Minotaur, Ettin

AD&D Sahuagin; *Traveller* Crested Jabberwock; *Call Of Cthulhu* Tsathoggua; *W&W* Medusa

Dragon Lords Two-Headed Giant; *Fantasy Legends* Minotaur, Ogres, Cloud Giant

The book front and back cover artwork, as well as the majority of the cover box and blister card artwork throughout the book, is by Ray Rubin.

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The Fantastic Worlds Of Grenadier

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*Thanks to Doug Cowie, Sandra Garrity, Bob Naismith,
and Janine Bennett for taking time to answer my
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Forward

Amongst collectors of miniatures and old-time gamers who were along for the exciting ride of role-playing games and war-games in their heydays of the late 1970s through the mid-1980s, Grenadier Models Inc. was the most popular, recognisable, and accommodating miniatures company around. Grenadier never stagnated: it was consistently bold and creative, trying out new ideas, styles and concepts; running slightly ahead but parallel with the continuously evolving gaming field, for which it made figures. Without a doubt, Grenadier in its twenty years of business manufactured more miniatures, employed more top sculptors, and had more exclusive lines and more genres of miniatures than any other gaming miniatures company in history.

But to that end there also lies many inconsistencies, mysteries and little-known facts surrounding this company's vast catalogue of products and production dates, to which there is no one comprehensive source of information available for the collector, gamer, or the curious. It is for this reason, as well as to pay tribute to the miniatures company that provided a physical dimension to my and many other active childhood and adult imaginations, I present this book.

However, I do not intend that anyone should look to this book as a reference guide offering complete accuracy for dates, products and facts. I have tried my best to research this company and its products, to obtain information from available references and from those who co-founded, co-owned and worked for the company; but even within these sources information was not always forthcoming or infallible to error. Instead, look to this book as a visual journey with a narrative; a journey of a fantastic company which produced figures for fantastic worlds; a company whose unsurpassed quality is only surpassed by its longevity.

Enjoy!

-Terence Gunn.

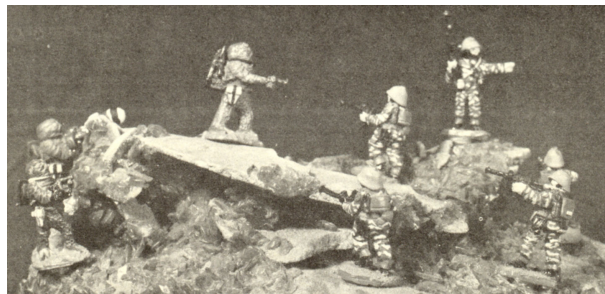
Introduction

Artists Andrew Chernak and Ray Rubin founded Grenadier Models, Inc. in Springfield, Pennsylvania, U.S.A. in the year 1975. Several years prior this time, tabletop war gaming (aka dimensional gaming) had been round for some time, and had progressed in different directions over the years, with more complex rules systems and an increasing number of miniature manufacturers. Andrew Chernak had embraced the hobby back in the mid-1960s, with continued interest through his military service, which ended in 1971 and whereupon he worked freelance for half a year for a company called Superior Models – the company where Chernak received his initial exposition into the industry of sculpting. Ray Rubin, himself not particularly into gaming himself, enjoyed painting and sculpting military subjects, and had released his own line of miniatures in the early 1970s – the 54mm line Squadron/Rubin.

After meeting at a Collectors Of America miniatures convention in 1972, the two artists became friends. Inevitably their interest in military art, coupled with Andrew's interest in war gaming and desire to become more involved in sculpting, and with Rubin's background and experience with sculpting, inspired the formation of a partnership in figure sculpting that would soon become known as Grenadier Models. However, Grenadier Models was actually secondary to a more traditional, though short lived sculpting business Chernak and Rubin initially ventured into called *Canterbury Pewter* (aka *CP, Ltd.*), which featured such items as Colonial wall plaques, sundials, spoons, and other items that celebrated the Bi-Centennial. Although Grenadier Models also featured historical and military designs in its initial line of war gaming figures, the direction of producing pewter collectables and historical lead miniatures was not the path Chernak and Rubin were to ultimately take with the company. It would be within the wake of the arrival of an innovative and entirely new sort of game – 'fantasy role-playing' – released to the public a year earlier, but played and 'in the know' to only a few, that Grenadier's future direction was to follow.

This new game, *Dungeons & Dragons* (aka *D&D*) by E. Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson – both war gamers, themselves – and released by Tactical Studies Rules (TSR), consisted of several small rules manuals, used to explain the concept of the game as well as for reference and guidelines whilst playing, was played simply with paper, pencils, dice, and mostly importantly, imagination. There was no game board. And although there was a start to the game, the game did not possess a traditional 'end' or 'winner': the game was a continuation of encounters, experiences, and development, all overseen by one player – the Dungeon Master, who created the world the other players would adventure in and who would referee the actions and provide the descriptions for everything the players encountered. And unlike war-games, which drew upon events in history and where players commanded and controlled whole armies, *D&D* drew heavily from the fantasy worlds of J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord Of The Rings* and Robert E. Howard's *Conan*, as well as from other literary elements and tales of myth and legend, and combined the elements of *individual* combat with magic, *individual* player characters, *individual* advancement, and the acting out of an *individual* personae. Having a following mainly of University students and war gamers, this new game was exactly as the description implied – role-playing; and being basically a cerebral game (i.e. played in the imagination rather than physically acted out), the inclusion of miniatures (which were always intended to be a part of the fantasy role-playing experience) gave the game a three-dimensional aspect and added 'realism'.

Now of course being a war gamer and a fan of Tolkien's work and of other fantasy literature, Chernak's attention was immediately caught by *D&D*, and he took up playing the game round the time of its inception; and, like many other dimensional-gamers and fans of fantasy literature, was enthused by its individual role-playing aspect, its potential for miniature usage, and its open-endedness to build an actual game world that did not simply end after a few minutes or hours of play. Rubin was also a fan of Tolkien and fantasy literature; and, although never becoming directly involved in the game as a player, was also intrigued by *D&D*'s innovation and potential for miniature usage. Rubin would occasionally even sit in on a *D&D* gaming session as an observer, taking in the imaginative and social atmosphere of the game. In retrospect, because of the close proximity of the release of *D&D* and the formation of Grenadier Models, it would almost seem that Grenadier was created specifically to provide these miniatures. However this was not to be the case, as another company, Miniature Figurines (aka Minifigs), would be the first manufacturer of the official *D&D* miniatures.



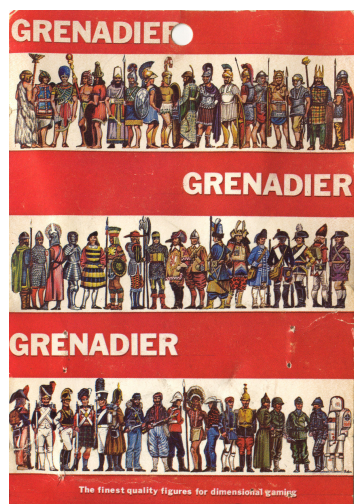
The 1970s

The very first figure line Grenadier Models released was the 25mm *American Revolution* line, sculpted by Chernak with four packs of French done by Rubin, released in 1975 to coincide with the Bi-Centennial. Shortly after followed 25mm lines for *American Revolutionary War* (Chernak), *Napoleonics* (Rubin), a Robert A. Heinlein *Starship Troopers*-based science-fiction line called *Starsoldier* (Chernak); a line of Western miniatures, *Western Gunfighters* (Chernak), to coincide with TSR's Old West RPG *Boot Hill*; the extensive *Ancient Armies* series (Rubin), featuring several hundred titles of historical figures which would continue throughout 1977; a few assorted fantasy figures (Chernak); and an eighteen title series based upon the characters and creations in Edgar Rice Burroughs' *John Carter, Warlord Of Mars* series, sculpted mainly 'for fun' by Chernak. Unfortunately, due to a licensing agreement the miniatures company Heritage already had with the *John Carter, Warlord Of Mars* series, Grenadier had to withdraw its line.

The packaging for Grenadier's earliest figures was simple and almost home made looking: a transparent plastic baggie stapled to a folded piece of card stock or paper, bearing an illustration of a crested helm alongside the company title, as well as its initial moniker, 'Quality figures for the War gamer'. The identity of the contents was either hand written or ink-stamped on the card; a feature not present on packages Grenadier used for promotions and sales at conventions. But it wasn't long before a more professional and recognisable packaging design was produced: this in the form of a blister pack with full colour artwork.



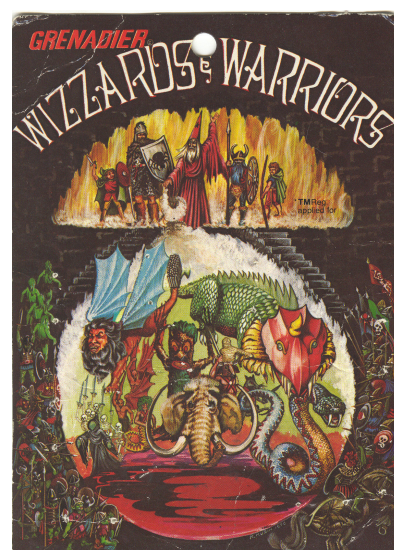
Grenadier 'Gorgon' 1975>



This new blister pack would be Grenadier's catchall design, housing miniatures from nearly all its current 25mm lines. The blister pack featured artwork by Ray Rubin on the card front, consisting of three rows of historical figures from all periods of man's time, standing side to side. A plastic blister in the shape of a bubble or square was stapled to the card front to house the miniature(s) – (the idea of glue to encase miniatures on blister packs had not been employed yet). Grenadier's moniker on this blister now read, 'The finest quality figures for dimensional gaming'. The contents of the blisters were indicated and stamped with an ink stamp just above a stamped price (usually between \$2-5) and Grenadier's printed address (this time with a P.O. Box), as well as the warning, 'Not Recommended for Children Under 8'. On the back of the blisters were several paragraphs of text referring to dimensional gaming, Grenadier's 'unsurpassed quality at a lower price' (a statement that wasn't pure sales boast, as Grenadier's sculptures were quickly winning the attention of war-gamers and fantasy role-players alike), and the mention of their new fantasy figures line, *Wizzards & Warriors*.

Released in late 1976, the *Wizzards & Warriors* line had its own blister design: one featuring another Ray Rubin original of five fantasy adventurers poised for action in a 'dungeon', standing above an assortment of monsters below caught in the adventuring wizard's clouding spell; an image soon transferred onto t-shirts and sold by Grenadier. Some of the *Wizzards & Warriors* designs were those Chernak had reworked from the *John Carter, Warlord Of Mars* figures; others were those that reached into the worlds of mythology and J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord Of The Rings*. But whatever the inspirations, the figure designs were conscientiously aimed at providing miniatures for players of *D&D*.

Each pack of *Wizzards & Warriors* featured varying amounts of figures, from one large monster to a half dozen swordsmen, often with duplicated figures in the more numerous packs. Within the next year and with additional updates, the *Wizzards & Warriors* line offered over sixty different titles covering a variety of adventurers, warriors and monsters, and soon became the most popular figure line amongst fantasy gamers, even garnering a Strategist Club Of America Award for Best Figure Line.



Consequently, as no precedent had yet been set in the field of fantasy miniature design, and molding techniques had yet to be properly mastered, many of the early figures for the *Wizzards & Warriors* line (as well as Grenadier's other figure lines) were crude and contained a great deal of flash (leftover lead). But due to increasing competition within the market, coupled with the fact that fantasy gaming figures were catching on and didn't seem to be just another fleeting trend, Chernak quickly revised and refined these crudities, producing figures of an unparalleled quality for the time.

To provide a physical dimension to the few space games that began to circulate round 1976 and 1977, including TSR's *Star Empires*, for which *Space Squadrons* was recommended, as well as to give science-fiction gamers a more extensive line of star ships and support type vessels not available from other science fiction miniature lines, Grenadier released a large line of blister packs in late 1977 and throughout the next year entitled *Space Squadrons*. The ship designs were both unique and familiar, consisting of four separate fleets, each with its own distinct 'family' look. And of course, inevitably, after the motion picture *Star Wars* hit the big screen, Grenadier's *Space Squadrons* even paid homage by featuring a group of ships resembling the Death Star's Tie Fighters. The components of a build-it-yourself planetary base entitled *Battle Station Armageddon* were also featured, consisting of a small collection of accessory parts and platforms that could be joined together 'in an infinite array of configurations and sizes'. The *Space Squadrons* line had its own blister art, as well – that of a space battle, done in a photo-manipulative style and featuring actual *Space Squadrons* miniatures.

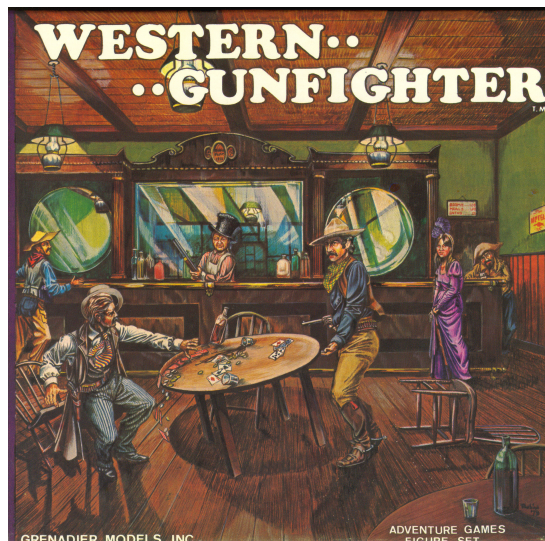
Also round this time, Grenadier released two blister packs of three figures each for the Fantasy Games Unlimited RPG *Bunnies & Burrows* – an unusual game based on the novel, *Watership Down*, by Richard Adams. The figure designs: six different human-like rabbits – one even wearing a conical-styled wizard's hat. Once again, the production of these miniatures was merely Andrew having fun; but it was also was an indication of Chernak's love for fantasy, and willingness to experiment with new creations.



Wizzards & Warriors 'Monsters' 1978

The miniatures line-up in the *Western... Gunfighter* and the two *Space Squadrons* boxed sets (all three featuring figures from each corresponding blister pack line) occasionally varied. The *Wizzards & Warriors* sets – *Dungeon Explorers* and *Monsters* – also varied and featured figures from its blister pack line, with the *Monsters* set of figures being almost completely revised shortly after its initial release, featuring more refined and detailed figures of a larger and stockier size – a characteristic that would largely (no pun intended) distinguish Grenadier's miniatures from those of other companies, and one which was prompted by letters sent to Grenadier from miniature gamers and collectors requesting figure designs with greater physical substance. These revisions and updates of Grenadier's figures would be implemented in several of Grenadier's boxed sets between 1978 and 1983, and were even stated in some of Grenadier's literature.

Western Gunfighter 1978>





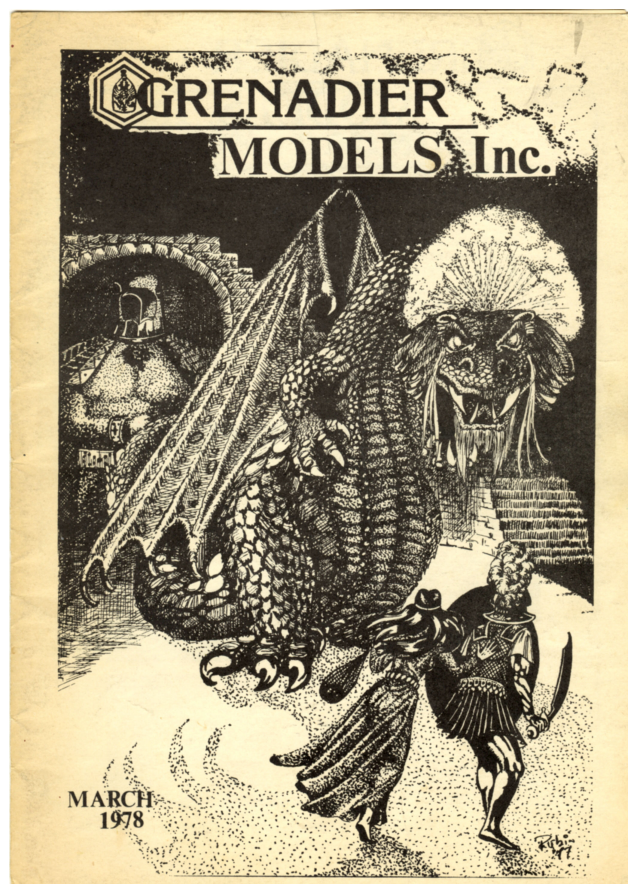
Space Squadrons 'Starfleet' 1978

The *Space Squadrons – Stellar Date 2998* boxed sets differed in content from each other, but featured the same box lid artwork – a broader image of the *Space Squadrons* blister art. One set was the *Starfleet Kit*; the other, *Starsoldiers Kit*. The only indication of which set was which set was either a descriptive paper insert on the bottom of the box, a check mark near the kit name, or both. There is even some speculation as to whether or not the *Space Squadrons Starsoldiers Kit* had even been produced; or, if it had been produced, that perhaps its lack of popularity prompted an early discontinuation.

Also round this time, Grenadier released 4 packs of miniatures for the comical TSR board game by Tom Wham, *Snit's Revenge*. (Once again, Andrew was having fun.) As well, Grenadier's newsletter, *The Dispatch*, was released as often as ten times a year; and would eventually transform into the semi-regular publication, *The Grenadier Bulletin*, which would more extensively feature comics, stories, game aides, articles on painting and gaming, and products from Grenadier's current catalogue, as well as up and coming releases.

In 1978 Grenadier announced three new lines of miniatures in the 15mm scale: *Ancient Armies*, *Fantastic Legions*, and *American Civil War*. However, only two – *Ancient Armies* and *American Civil War* – were in fact released. The *Ancient Armies* line featured 28 blister pack titles (excluding the additional mounting stands), consisting of various Egyptians, Nubians, and Hittites to Assyrians and Urartians, all housed in the *Ancient Armies* blister card design – that of two opposing Ancient Armies on the verge of battle, painted by Rubin. The *American Civil War* line featured 38 blister pack titles, consisting of everything from Union Infantry, Iron Brigades, Zouaves, Louisiana Tigers and Confederates to field guns, cavalry, stonewalls, and cannons. Although many of the figures in the larger blister packs were duplicates (as was common with war gaming figures), with packs of infantry featuring 20 figures and cavalry featuring 8 figures, Grenadier's 15mm line was an economical way to collect and build armies, without sacrificing the high standard of detail Grenadier offered with its 25mm lines.

A forty-four-title blister pack line entitled *Medieval Chivalry* also made its appearance in 1978. Featuring a range of figures from 1066 to the pinnacle of feudal Europe, the *Medieval Chivalry* line consisted of Vikings, Anglo Saxons and Normans to Men-At-Arms, Peasants, Knights, and siege weapons; with packs of footmen consisting of six figures each (many duplicates, some varied), and mounted figures, with waist-separated riders, consisting of three each.



Grenadier Models Catalogue March 1978

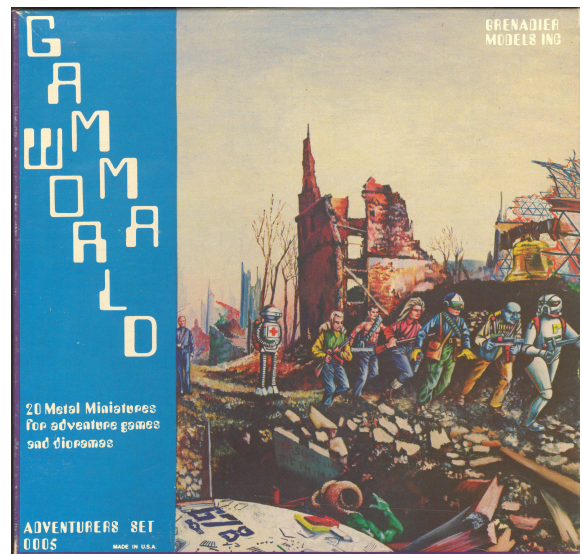
<Ancient Armies 'Romans' 1978



In early 1979 two further *Wizzards & Warriors* boxed sets, *Woodland Adventurers* and *Tomb Of Spells*, were released. The paper insert included with each boxed set featured a visual listing and title of each figure present in the corresponding set – a helpful feature that would henceforth be present in all of Grenadier’s subsequent boxed sets. An interesting fact worth noting is, although *AD&D* was not mentioned, many of the miniatures in the *Tomb Of Spells* boxed set bore a striking resemblance to the illustrations of corresponding creatures in the *AD&D Monster Manual*, released nearly two years earlier. This was perhaps a harbinger of what was to come a year later.

<Wizzards & Warriors ‘Tomb Of Spells’ 1979

1979 also saw Grenadier Models as the premiere and official manufacturer of *Gamma World* miniatures, based on the TSR role-playing game of the same name. Two boxed sets, *Adventurers* and *Denizens*, each containing 20 different miniatures, as well as 52 blister titles were produced to coincide with and represent the mutant and non-mutant inhabitants of the post-nuclear holocaust planet earth, *Gamma World*. Based on the descriptions and illustrations provided in the TSR *Gamma World* manual, Chernak and Rubin created one of Grenadier’s most interesting miniature lines, bearing characteristics and designs as bizarre as the wild creations of H.P. Lovecraft’s extra-terrestrial creatures. Although many of the miniatures were crudely designed or unimpressively simple, the *Gamma World* line of miniatures was Grenadier at its most creative and imaginative, featuring a vast array of mutated humans, animals, fish, insects, and plant life, as well as robots and various adventurers and troops. It was obvious to gamers and collectors at this time who were the two leading manufacturers of miniatures and role-playing games and accessories: Grenadier and TSR; and this union seemed a fruitful one.



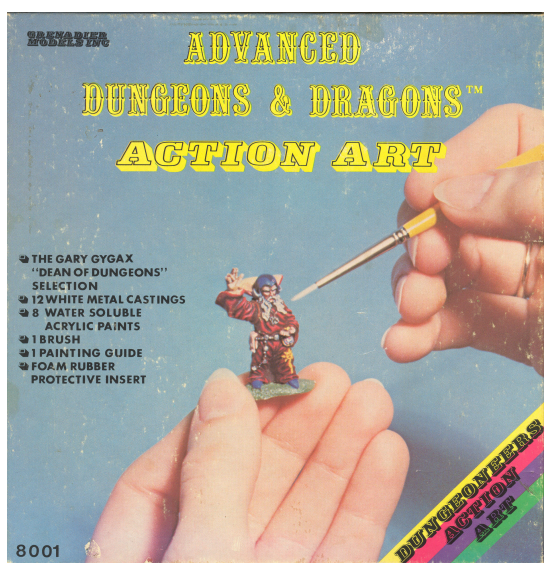
Gamma World ‘Adventurers’ 1979



The 1980s

In 1980 the inevitable happened: Grenadier became the official manufacturer of *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons* miniatures. To begin with the four *Wizards & Warriors* boxed sets from 1978 were re-released, this time with the box covers bearing the title *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons*, rather than *Wizards & Warriors*. The artwork and sizes of the boxed sets remained exactly the same, as did the miniature line-ups – albeit with the occasional updates and variations. Five other boxed sets of the same size, *Dragon's Lair* and four *Action Art* sets (the latter consisting of *Dungeoneers*, *Monsters*, *Mythological Creatures*, and *Fantasy Fiends* – each box containing figures, a basic paint set and painting guide) were also released under the *AD&D* banner. In addition, new *AD&D* miniatures were released in a large line of blisters (including an 8 figure blister pack for TSR's *Dungeon!* board game), as well as a large line of boxed sets of 10 – the latter featuring endearing colour artwork by Rubin.

AD&D 'Woodland Adventurers' 1980>



AD&D Action Art 'Dungeoneers' 1980

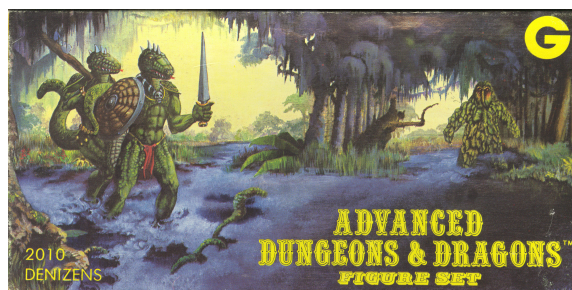
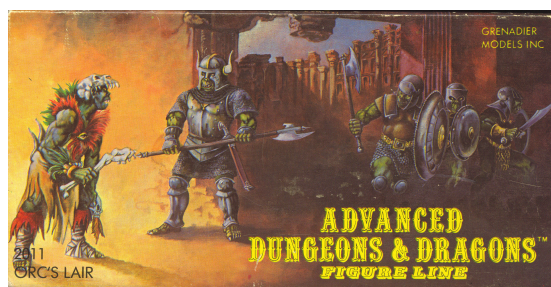
Many of figures in the Grenadier *AD&D* line were modelled directly on the illustrations and/or descriptions of the monsters and player character races in the *AD&D* manuals *Players Handbook*, *Monster Manual*, and, to a lesser degree, *Fiend Folio*. This semblance coupled with Chernak's detailing, character, and "stockiness", proved to be what many players of *AD&D* had been waiting for, with the line even being picked up and sold in such giant establishments as Toys 'R' Us. But, as good as Grenadier's product was, this union with TSR was not to continue: Grenadier broke its ties with TSR and discontinued manufacturing miniatures under the *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons* banner sometime in 1982. For anyone who knows the outcome of TSR and its miniatures division, this was perhaps Grenadier's wisest action.

AD&D 'Denizens' 1981>



Grenadier's *AD&D* line of figures affectionately became known as Grenadier's Solid Gold Line – a term applied to the line due to the gold livery on the boxes and blisters. The term was also facilitated by a contest Grenadier ran where they had 'placed at random a gold-plated wizard figure in various boxes with a gift certificate good for discounts on *AD&D* figure sets'. (Basically, a Willy Wonka-styled contest for those who collect Grenadier *AD&D* miniatures – 'I've got a GOL-den WI-zard!') Grenadier continued this practise until Gen Con, where they had a Grand Prize drawing for the recipients of the gold-plated wizard; the winner sharing one ounce of fine gold with the retail store from which the winner purchased the figure set. The success and fun of the 'ounce of gold' contest subsequently prompted an additional contest: this time with a gold-plated orc figure, featured in Grenadier's *AD&D Orc's Lair* boxed set.

AD&D Orc's Lair 1981



1980 also saw the partial materialisation of an idea by Ray Rubin that veered slightly off-course for Grenadier: the release of a series of 77mm vignettes based on and called *The Fantasy Art Of Boris Vallejo*. The six sets announced – *Primeval Princess*, *The Magic Goes Away*, *Demon In The Mirror*, *Space Guardian*, *The Nomads Of Gor*, and *Gracus The Centurion* – were selected by the famed international fantasy artist Boris Vallejo himself, from his own artwork, which graced the covers of the boxed sets. Rubin took the task of sculpting the figures, and although the outcome was impressive, the figures – perhaps because of their size and incompatibility with fantasy gaming – simply did not sell. As a result, only three of the six announced sets were produced and released – *Primeval Princess*, *The Magic Goes Away*, and *Gracus The Centurion*.

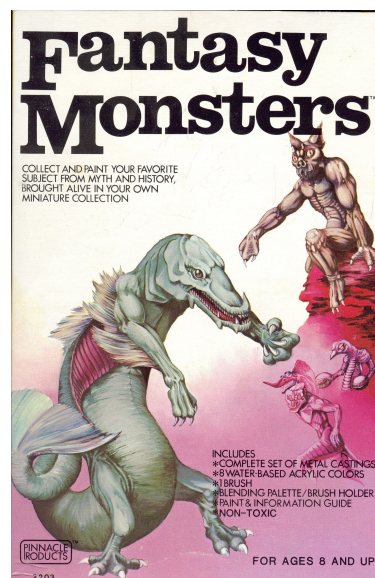


Veering yet again but staying within more appropriate confines to the gaming world, Grenadier also released in 1980 a series of midi-games called the *Great Little Games Line*, which consisted of the games *Seawolf*, *Journey*, *Dwarf Mountain*, and *Hydra*. Although these simple but durable and professionally-developed games – intended for fast-play at a low cost – could not compete with the higher-budget product of established war/board game companies such as Avalon Hill and SPI, the production and release of these games served to expand Grenadier's product line and increase its image as an attentive company open to trying out ideas.

<'Journey' 1980 – one of four Grenadier midi-games

In 1982 sculptor John Dennett hired on at Grenadier to collaborate with Chernak on a series of boxed sets that would be released under the name *Pinnacle Products*. Dennett's sculpture style complemented Chernak's admirably, and coincided directly with the reputable character, style, and quality expected of Grenadier's miniatures. At the same time, with the improvement of molding techniques and equipment in the field, Dennett came aboard at a time when Grenadier's products were to become slightly more refined and much better cast, possessing little if no flash – a feature that would from now forth be characteristic of all Grenadier's new and re-released miniatures. In the following year, John Dennett would be the first Grenadier sculptor to actually receive credit by name for his designs – a credit subsequently bestowed to all of Grenadier's future sculptors (and sculptures). As well, Dennett would be one of only two Grenadier sculptors in its history to be hired on as a salary employee.

Grenadier's *Pinnacle Products* line consisted of four sets released as the *Collect And Paint* series – *Fantasy Lords*, *Fantasy Monsters*, *Dinosaurs*, and *G.I. Assault Team* – as well as two sets of six announced for a series called *The Adventure Collection*, which consisted of two for *The Dark Crystal*, two for *Star Trek*, and two for *Star Side*. However, only those for *The Dark Crystal* were in fact released.



Pinnacle Products 'Fantasy Monsters' 1982