



TOY SOLDIER SHOP OF WASHINGTON, DC

By Norman Joplin

Located within sight of the U.S. Capitol's dome, the Toy Soldier Shop of Washington, DC was opened in 2002 by Neil Rhodes, a former California museum conservator and long-time toy soldier collector who specialized in custom conversions of Britains figures. The shop, which occupies the first floor of a beautifully-restored 1900 Capitol Hill townhouse, and is open on Saturdays and by appointment, is filled with Neil's constantly changing stock of old Britains, Mignot, Hyede, and Johillco figures, sets by Bill Hocker, and, of course, an ample supply of Neil's own conversions of Britains castings. The shop, which displays several thousand figures in antique cabinets, also features a well-stocked case of toy soldier books, along with wooden castles and a remarkable selection of original World War I posters. Guard duty is performed by an exceedingly friendly golden French bulldog, d'Or.



Display cabinets in store

On a recent Saturday morning, the shop was filled with regular customers, including Peter Clark, who also lives on Capitol Hill, and Dusty Grainger and his daughter Lilly, a young collector of Britains farm figures and knights — as well as curious, first-time visitors — all of whom eagerly inspected Neil's latest acquisitions and watched as he put the finishing touches on Montenegri-ns in winter uniforms, a platoon of Bulgarian riflemen and mounted Greek officers, all part of a group of several hundred Balkan Wars figures commissioned by a prominent West Coast collector.

If you are planning a visit to the Nation's Capital, make time for an enjoyable hour at the Toy Soldier Shop, one of the few real toy soldier shops left in the United States. If you can't make it on a Saturday, give Neil a call or e-mail in advance and arrange a mutually convenient time.



Neil Rhodes

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The exterior