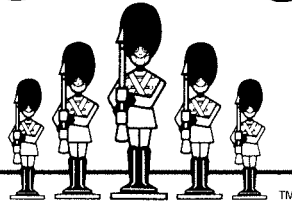


Fall  
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The Journal for Collectors

Volume 37 Number 3  
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**Old Toy Soldier** is published quarterly.

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*Old Toy Soldier* is printed by  
Banksville Express Printing  
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA

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ISSN1064-4164

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Mambru Lancer

Photograph courtesy of Norman Joplin



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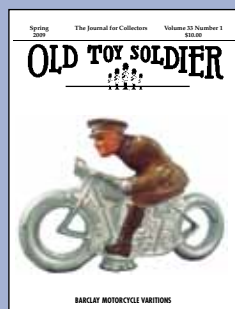
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Old Toy Soldier (ISSN 1064-4164) is published quarterly for \$36 per year.





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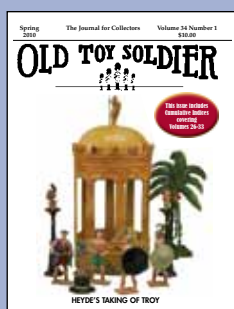
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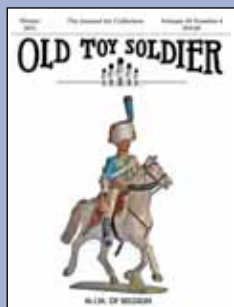
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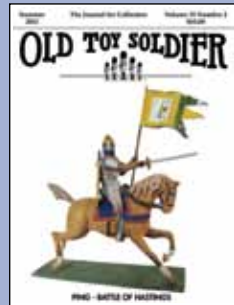
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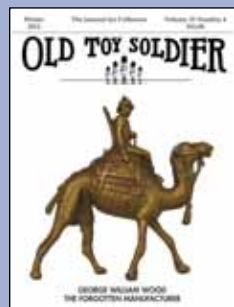
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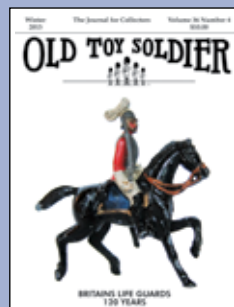
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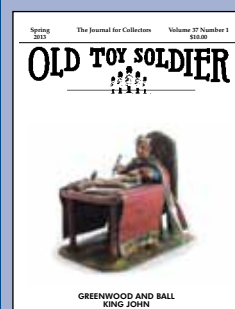
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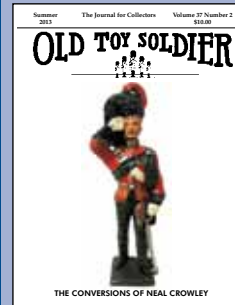
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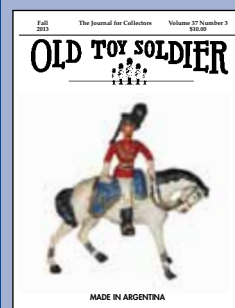
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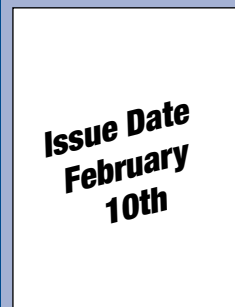
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# The Bikanir Camel Corps

## Britains Set #123

*By Joe Wallis*

---



Bikanir, a name evocative of distant empires, was a princely state located 200 miles northwest of Jaipur in the state of Rajasthan in India. It is situated along the present border between Pakistan and India, with a primarily desert climate, which explains Bikanir's traditional use of camels for their military. During the First Afghan War in 1842 the ruler of Bikanir provided supplies and baggage camels to the British at a large profit. He also supported the British during the Sepoy Rebellion of 1857.

In 1889, the British approved the Maharajah's request to form a military force composed of light infantry and a Camel Corps. The Bikanir Camel Corps was sent in September 1900 to China as part of the 4th British Brigade. They served dismounted as infantry in the international army assembled to put down the Boxer Rebellion, returning to India in 1901. Shortly thereafter, the Bikanir Camel Corps went to Somaliland along the coast of Africa east of Ethiopia to combat Mohammed Abdullah Hassan, called the "Mad Mullah" by the British, who was leading raids with as many as 10,000 Dervishes into British territory as part of a Muslim jihad.

Given the desert nature of Somaliland, the Camel Corps' skills and service were highly appropriate. Only one British Army battalion fought in Somaliland and most of the troops were Indian or from the King's African Rifles. From November 1902 to July 1904, the Bikanir Camel Corps participated in the battles of Daratoleh on April 22, 1903 (where 150 casualties

were inflicted on a force of 800 Somalis) and Jidbali on January 10, 1904 (where 1,000 Somalis of the 6,000 that attacked the British square were killed).

However, things did not always go smoothly for the British. At Gumburru on April 15, 1903 about 8,000 Somalis overran a square composed of 175 men of the 2nd Battalion of the King's African Rifles and 50 men from the 2nd Sikh Infantry, and wiped out 180 of the British troops. The victory of the Somali tribesmen came at a heavy cost--inflicted by two Maxim machine guns manned by British officers and the Martini-Henry rifles of the native troops fighting for the British. During this Third Expedition campaign in the south-central part of British Somaliland, the Bikanir Camel Corps with their stronger Indian camels proved to be very useful in the marches and patrols across vast reaches of desert terrain in search of an elusive enemy.

In February 1915, the Bikanir Camel Corps served in the British army that defeated a Turkish attack on the Suez Canal. In one clash in the Sinai Desert, the Bikanir routed a Turkish force by making a headlong charge on their camels. In 1917 they participated in Allenby's conquest of Palestine and Syria, and then from March to May, 1918 the Bikanir Camel Corps served in Baluchistan (now in Southern Pakistan) against the Marri tribesmen along the Northwest Frontier. During World War II, the Bikanir Camel Corps was part of the garrison of Aden in the southwest corner of the Arabian Peninsula from August 1940

## The Bikanir Camel Corps (Cont.)



Set 40185 Bikanir Camel Corps

to December 1942. The regiment was disbanded by 1951 after an independent India formed its Army without the Imperial Service Troops that had been raised and commanded by the now anachronistic and retired Maharajahs.

So Britains may have been motivated to produce Set 123 Bikanir Camel Corps in 1901 by the unit's service in the Boxer Rebellion. Another possible inspiration is Simkin Print #165, published in the Army and Navy Gazette in 1901, which depicted Imperial Service Troops (including the Bikanir Camel Corps) from the princely states of Bikanir, Gwalior, Patiala, and Hyderabad. The Simkin print may have made Britains realize that they could easily modify the Egyptian Camel Corps of Set 48 by just changing the head so that a turban instead of a fez was worn. The fixed-arm Bikanir wore khaki tunics, brown breeches, a red turban with a yellow portion with red vertical stripes on the right side, red facings, and black boots. (A variation sometimes seen in the 1930s wore an entirely yellow turban with red vertical stripes.) They held carbines and had bandoliers across the body just like the Egyptians.

There were only two changes between the first and second versions of Set 123. The man was detachable from the camel in the first version, but was soldered to the camel from 1920-1941. At the same time, instead of the wire tail featured by the early camel used from 1901-1919, the mold of the camel was altered so that the tail was part of the casting along the camel's leg instead of having to be soldered on. Oddly the Firm

saved time and effort by redoing the mold for the camel to avoid soldering the tail, but at the same time began to solder on the riders, perhaps due to customer complaints about the difficulty of keeping the Camel Corps seated onto the camel. (See accompanying photograph of two camels from the side showing the difference in the tails, with the first version being on the right.) Britains was shrewd enough to issue the Bikanir Camel Corps as a three-piece set costing one shilling rather than the more costly six-piece Egyptian Camel Corps of Set 48. As evidenced by a Gimbels Department Store price sticker on the box in my own collection, Set 123 later sold for 98 cents in the 1930s.

The Bikanir never appeared in any display set—Britains may have missed an opportunity by not assembling a display box of the Indian Army larger than the 15 piece cavalry sets 60 and 61, as it would probably have sold well if Bengal Lancers, Madras Pioneers, Gurkhas, and the Bikanir Camel Corps had been offered in one large box. However, Britains did produce Set 40185 in its Delhi Durbar Series from 2001-2003. They were considerably more “chunky” in appearance than the prewar Set 123, but the contents and uniforms were the same.

Relatively minor changes were made in the design of the basic mold, and no alterations were made to the box label over the forty-year production period of Set #123. Its discontinuation after 1941 was due to the end of the British Raj and was not a reflection on the high quality of the model sold by Britains Limited from 1901 to 1941.

## OBITUARY Lynn Kenwood

**18th of June 1941 – 2nd of October 2013**



Lynn (left) being presented with an award by Ray Wooton of Britains

After a short, determined but unavailing struggle against cancer, Lynn Kenwood died at the Royal Berkshire hospital in the UK on October 2, 2013.

An avid and dedicated toy soldier collector for many years, Lynn will be remembered for his enthusiastic support of the toy soldier hobby.

Lynn was owner of MKL Models and proprietor of the Guards Toy Soldier Centre in Birdcage Walk Central London. Lynn also attended all of the major toy soldier shows in the United Kingdom, being a founder attendee at the British Toy Soldier and Figure Show in 1991. Lynn also acted as organizer of the William Britains Collectors Club for many years. A frequent visitor to the Chicago Toy Soldier Show, Lynn will be missed not only by his UK friends, but by all who knew him in the USA.

Lynn is survived by his wife of more than 50 years, Tricia, and his two daughters Karen and Caroline. It was Lynn's dying wish that his family continue in the Toy Soldier business.

A funeral service was held on Thursday the 17th of October 2013 in the chapel at the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst and was officiated by Padre Paul Wright MACF.

Above photo courtesy of Philip Dean.

## OLD TOY SOLDIER AUCTIONS USA

*A number of online only auctions will be held by Old Toy Soldier Auctions during 2014. Including a one day auction containing new Britains and a number of other days exclusive for Old Toy Soldier. More details in February issue.*

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# Made In Argentina

*By Norman Joplin*

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**Britains and Mambru Lancer Officers**

This article and the cover shot of this issue is a prelude to a continuing series of articles which will outline the manufacturers of toy soldiers and figures in Argentina.

Until the emergence of e-bay and the worldwide communication that it provided, very little was known about the manufacture of Argentinian toy soldiers. Several Argentine collectors and dealers offered toy soldiers via e-bay, which brought to the fore the large variety of figures made in that country together with the names of many hitherto unknown company names.

EG Toys, Mambru Birmania, Terry, Grafil, and Mectoy are but a few names that emerged when e-bay listings were posted.

The following photograph shows examples of a Birmania mounted lancer officer shown in comparison with the Britains version. The Argentinian firm used a white horse for this item which Britains did not produce. This is only one of hundreds of similar items where Argentinian companies imitated with subtle differences products by British toy soldier manufacturers. Britains and Timpo were often the object of imitation by many of these Argentinian firms, sometimes slightly modified for the Argentinian

market, while some Argentinian companies produced their own unique items.

Marx Plastic Figures in the USA were also produced again in Argentina in either hollowcast or solid form. Over the next few issues a photographic record and information about many Argentinian producers of toy soldiers will be published. Should any readers wish to contribute any information on unusual figures from this country please contact Norman Joplin [info@normanjoplin.com](mailto:info@normanjoplin.com) telephone 262-692-3913.



**Mambru Lancer Officer**

## CAVALRY REGIMENTS OF THE BRITISH ARMY AS PRODUCED BY BRITAINS LTD, 1893-1914

In 1914 the regular cavalry of the British Army included three regiments of Household Cavalry, seven of Dragoon Guards, three of Dragoons, twelve of Hussars, and six of Lancers a total of thirty-one. A typical regiment consisted of about four hundred officers and men, divided into three squadrons further subdivided into four troops of about thirty-five.

Of these thirty-one regiments, Britains Ltd had, by 1914, produced twenty-one. Only two more would follow: the 16th Hussars in 1929, and finally the 7th Hussars, not until the restoration of H. M. Elizabeth II in 1953. In addition to the twenty-one regiments of the regular cavalry, Britains offered two regiments of Yeomanry, four Colonial units, and six regiments of cavalry from the Indian Army. Last, but far from least, they included the Royal Horse Artillery, actually the second senior unit in the entire British Army.

### TYPES OF THE



A number of regiments appear in different forms e.g. both review order and foreign service order, or in different horses than usual, or with different weapons. Such departures from the norm added variety to the overall picture, and nicely complemented their standard versions. The dates given below each figure indicate when that figure was first introduced, and when it would have been removed from production.

Included on the bottom row, in addition to the Field Marshal, are some of the larger display sets, are seven examples of Britains' small size figures, the "B" series. These figures are of 40mm size, rather than the standard 54mm, and were issued in first quality poster style. They were produced from 1894-1914.



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# Space Adventures

## Chasing the World's Most Elusive Vintage Space Figures

By S. Mark Young

---

In 2008, after almost 18 years of rabid searching for vintage space figures, I hit a collecting wall. Coauthoring the book, *Blast Off! Rockets, Robots, Ray Guns and Rarities* (Dark Horse, 2001) had given me the opportunity to obtain figures from collectors worldwide and to gather intelligence about what else was lurking out there. Based on my research, I believed that there were only a handful of truly rare figures that I didn't have. It also appeared that the chances of obtaining the figures were extraordinarily slim since the known collectors who possessed them were taking them "to the grave" – not encouraging news. I knew that if I didn't start pursuing other types of figures, my collecting days would be numbered.

Even before 2008 there were some tell tale signs that I was starting to lose my enthusiasm. During my years of chasing space figures, I became obsessed to the point of psychosis. While I had amassed hundreds of vintage spacemen, spacewoman, and aliens in hard plastic, soft plastic, composition, lead, rubber, soap, wood, ceramic and celluloid, I was to the point where finding anything new had become a rare event. Thus, I turned my attention to accumulating color variations and upgrading existing figures. For example, I had every known boxed Archer Plastics playset and window box, and had amassed over 150 color variations of their hard plastic *Space Men*, *Mars Men* and soft plastic *Moon Men* and *Satellite Men* and the many Archer knock offs from around the world. I acquired all of the Ajax, Lido, and Premier figures in too many colors to count, found just about all of the 13 Marx *Tom Corbett*, *Space Patrol*, *Captain Space* and *Rex Mars* space playset variations, and built a huge collection of figures from Germany, France, Australia, Hong Kong, Italy, Spain, Argentina, England, Canada, and Wales. I was intent on finding every vintage space figure that had been produced. I was even very fortunate enough to acquire the centerpiece of my collection, Henri Mignot's *War of the Worlds* diorama.

Curiously, Italian makers from the 1950s made most of the figures that I didn't have. I had seen photos of these figures but had only been able to

find one of the dozen or so that eluded me. What made these figures so difficult to locate was that very few had survived since they were made of easily breakable materials such as vulcanized rubber and manufactured in very small production runs.

After another year of searching, I finally threw in the towel... a beaten man. I renewed my interests in French Hollowcast, Heyde, and exotic clay-like figures by JRD (Jean Rabier and Donnot) from France. I was very deep into collecting these figures, when I received an email from a contact in Italy in early 2012. Sometimes I think that searching for elusive collectibles in any hobby is like trying to find a mate. If you push too hard, you can easily scare people away, but if you relax and become more philosophical, your Karma will improve and then good things will come your way.

A dealer from whom I had purchased a figure from Italy many years before had come across the ISAS figures that I was missing. His note asked if I was still interested in buying the figures. I replied affirmatively instantaneously. The figures arrived a couple of weeks later and one of my main collecting holes had finally been filled. I casually mentioned to the dealer that I was still seeking another rare Bakelite set by Torgano. He told me that he might know of someone who had the set. I sat back and didn't think anything more about it until a few months later another email arrived from the same dealer. He had found the set of four figures for me. I couldn't believe my luck. I had found many of the figures that I needed within the span of 5 months.

I was now down to searching for only three figures—the Rovello Porro, War of the Worlds' Martians. I had seen a photo of these three figures over a decade ago. I was told that only two complete sets existed. Of all the vintage space figures that I have seen the Rovello figures are the ones that I was most excited about. Apart from their sheer campiness, the ties to George Pal's 1953 War of the Worlds film and Mignot's set, were tantalizing. Rovello Porro is often thought of as the poor stepchild of Italian composition manufacturers such as Nardi

## Space Adventures (Cont.)

and Chialu but I have always thought that they had a great deal of charm.

On the eve of the 2013 OTS show this past September I received another email from a different friend in Italy. The good news was that he had located one of the Rovello but the bad news was the asking price. As I was pondering what to do, I thought back to something collecting maven Bob Lesser once said about buying rare items, and that we had quoted in *Blast Off!* years ago. Bob was the first person to amass the most significant collections of Buck Rogers and Mickey Mouse collectibles. He had always maintained that availability is much more important than price, and his view on what to do when being offered truly rare pieces was as follows:

“Never bargain, Pay double. And when you wake up at two in the morning with an anxiety attack because you’ve just spent a fortune on something, you’ve done the right thing. You’ve trusted your intuition. You’ll come out ahead. Because that magical day will come when the sky is black, when every pane on the window of opportunity is painted black and the window is nailed shut with ten-inch nails, and you’re never going to get another piece as long as you live (*Blast Off!* p. 53).

With Bob’s words ringing in my ears, and my heart pounding, I agreed to the price. When I arrived back exhausted from Chicago the figure was waiting for me. Finding this piece has given me hope that the other two will eventually come my way.

Based on close to thirty years of collecting vintage space figures, I have summarized what I consider to be the most difficult vintage space figures to locate. While finding individual figures in these sets is entirely possible, if you are patient enough, completing sets is the challenge. Any such list is somewhat idiosyncratic; however, I have the key criterion that I have used for inclusion in the list: the relative desirability of pieces in the marketplace.

### ISAS – Spacemen (Italian, 1950’s)

ISAS of Bagni di Lucca, Italy, produced a spectacular set of 70 mm spacemen in the late 1950’s. According to Orazio Di Mauro and Franco

Paoletti in their book, *Soldatini Italiani* (Edizioni Lazzaro, 1994) the ISAS figures were fashioned out of a mixture of rubber, latex and plaster. When found, these wonderfully imaginative figures are often warped and missing pieces. Warped or not, these figures are very rare. A small antenna protrudes from the top of each spacemen’s head and fits through a hole in a clear Perspex helmet. Drop one of these and all you may have left is a pile of dust.



Photo 1: A complete set of ISAS spacemen.

### Rovello Porro - War of the Worlds Martians (Italian, Circa 1953)

Perhaps the hardest set to find consists of three 65 mm composition Martian figures by Rovello Porro of Brianza, Italy. Each Martian head is semi-circular with a tri-colored - blue, yellow and red face that is almost identical to the aliens seen in George Pal’s *War of the Worlds* film (Paramount in 1953). The paint on the figure is still very vibrant and quality of the sculpting is superb. The figure is shown in a fighting stance brandishing a massive space rifle.



Photo 2: A War of the Worlds Martian by Rovello Porro, Italy, circa, 1953.

## Space Adventures (Cont.)

### Torgano - Flash Gordon Figures (Italian, 1950s)

Thought to be made by Torgano of Saronno, Italy, these imposing 8 cm figures were produced in a hard, Bakelite-like plastic and hand painted. There are two versions of Flash Gordon holding a ray gun in each hand and advancing with a space rifle across his waist. The two other figures are Prince Thun – aka the Lion Man of Mongo and one of Flash Gordon's most trusted friends and a Mechanical Man (missing air hoses on either side of his helmet) who was one of Flash Gordon's enemies. Each figure comes in at least two paint variations.



Photo 3: The set of four Torgano Flash Gordon figures: Flash with pistols, the Lion Man, Mechanical Man and Flash with a rifle.

### M. G. Southall – Playland Products, Dan Dare figures, (circa 1954)

Dan Dare was Britain's answer to Flash Gordon being conceived on the pages of Eagle magazine in April 1950. Of all of the Dan Dare collectibles, the M. G. Southall figure set is probably the rarest of them all. Individual 70 mm figures are highly sought after, but when found are often broken or missing paint. Several years ago the only known boxed set surfaced at a Vectis Auction and commanded a very high price. The figures depicted in the set are Space Fleet Commander Sir Hubert Guest, Digby, Sondar, A Treen from Venus and Dan Dare.



Photo 4: The M.G. Southall Dan Dare set.  
Photo courtesy of Vectis Auctions.



Photo 5: Four of the five M. G. Southall Dan Dare figures as they are most usually found with paint loss – Dan, Sondar, Sir Hubert Guest and a Treen.

### MP Spacemen (French 1950s)

Very little is known about the origins of these 54 mm figures. They are made of hard plastic and come on flat and raised base variations. Underneath each flat base are the letters MP and the words Model Déposé (registered or copyrighted). Each flat base figure is numbered beginning with 500. The raised bases are hollowed out and are meant to be rock formations on which the figures stand. There are no markings underneath these figures. I have seen the MP figures in orange and yellow color variations. An outstanding feature of these figures



## Space Adventures (Cont.)

is the small detachable air hoses that connect the helmet and the oxygen tank on each figure's back. I am not sure how many figures are in the series but my numbers stop at 507.



Photo 6: MP Spacemen from France.

### Alpia Aliens (Italian 1950s)

Alpia produced a set of eight spacemen, a bazooka man and four aliens. The aliens and bazooka man are very difficult to find intact. Alpia figures have round bases and each base is inscribed with a large A and the inscription "Alpia, Made in Italy." Each alien has a different antenna on his head, and carries a different weapon. All have large protruding eyes, and chunky bodies. The unique feature of these figures is the large propeller that is either located on their backs or as part of their weapon. The propellers actually rotate.



Photo 7: The four Alpia Aliens

### The Selcol Space Ranger (English, Circa 1952)

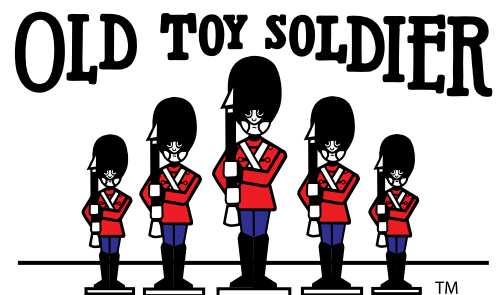
Selcol was a London based plastics manufacturing company best known for producing a line of plastic Beatles Guitars and Dr. Who Daleks beginning in the early 1950's. The Selcol Bazooka Man Space Ranger is a direct copy of the Best Company's figure that was made in the U.S. There is a trademark stamp on the back of the figure that says, "Selcol - Made in England." Best produced a

set of five spacemen that were designed to be cake decorations; the Bazooka Man was one of them. The 65 mm Selcol figure does turn up loose from time to time but finding it on the original card is very difficult. The card itself provides a great connection to two other space toys of the era. The spaceship depicted on the left is most likely a Tudor Rose, Atomic Space Ship (note the portals and fins) and the two space figures to the right appear to be campy versions of Popular Playthings "evil alien" with the spiked helmet.



Photo 8: The Selcol Space Ranger Bazooka Man shown with two variations of the rare Alpia Bazooka Man. The bronze Alpia Figure of the left has a much longer bazooka and a different sight than the emerald green figure on the right. All three variations actually fire.

*S. Mark Young is always seeking unusual space figures and new information about them. Please contact him at (626) 676-3134 or [mark.young@marshall.usc.edu](mailto:mark.young@marshall.usc.edu) if have you would like to correspond.*



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# SHOW REPORT

## Old Toy Soldier Show Day September 2013

The annual Chicago Toy Soldier Show attracts collectors and dealers from all corners of the globe. In keeping with past *Old Toy Soldier* issues the following photos show the action on Sunday.



Mark Young and Francois Beamont



Norman Rodregus



Andy Neilson and Ken Ogen



# SHOW REPORT (Cont.)



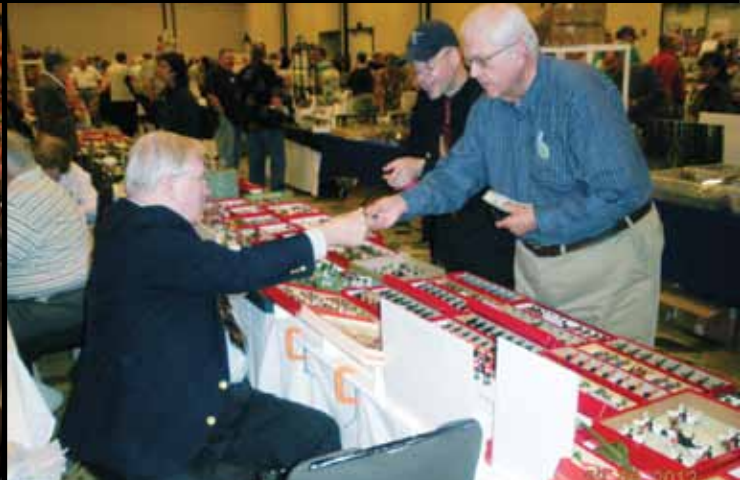
Bubba and Woody



Thomas Fink



Bill Hocker



Michael Mattimore



Matt Murphey



Fay and Ed Ruby and Gordon Neilson



Bob Hornung, Mike Shore, Janet Reynolds



Steve and Linda Weston



# SHOW REPORT

## OTS Auction Bargain Room

Traditional frantic bargain room sale - Saturday morning 10:00 a.m.  
3000 toy soldiers were soon snapped up by some 60+ collectors.





# Chicago Toy Soldier Show Finds

*By Rob Wilson and Norman Joplin*

The following photos show some of the rare finds at this year's Old Toy Soldier Show.



Elastolins Largest Castle



Ideal Huge Atomic Cannon



Renvoize? Austro Hungarian



Jones Bluecoat



Jones 3" WWI Cavalry Man



Large Wooden  
Erzgebirge? Figure



Exceptionally Rare Herald?



Britains Plastic Garden Folk



Previously Unknown  
Hollow Cast Zulu



# Chicago Toy Soldier Show Finds (Cont.)



Royal Horse Artillery Escort Pre-war  
Thought to have made Post-war Moustaches



Britains Toy Town to be featured in OTS Auction 2014



Swoppet War of Roses Point of Sales Board



Britains Special Carabineer on Trotting Horse



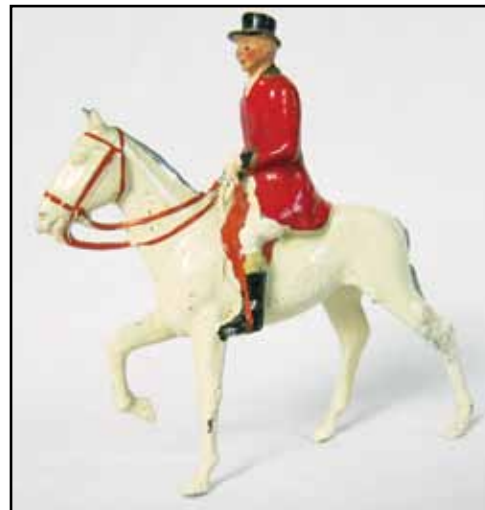
Britains Royal Marine Light Infantry Band



Sonnenburg Wooden Sailors



Greenwood and Ball 25mm Comparison



Rare Coronation Groom

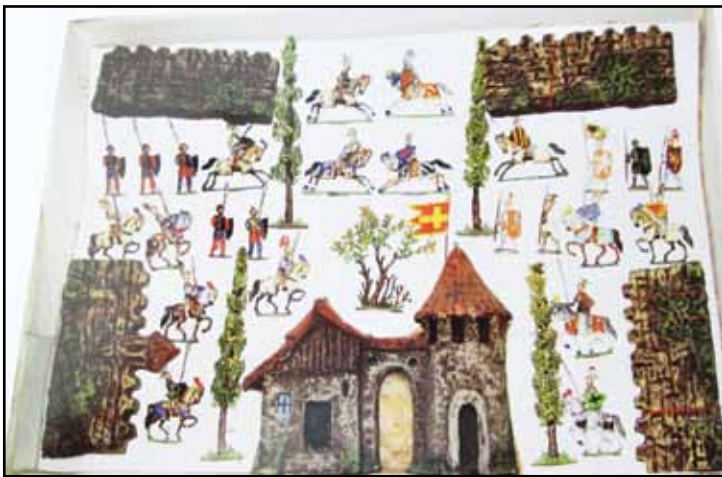
## Chicago Toy Soldier Show Finds (Cont.)



Britains Waltzing Couple (Britains First Soldier?)



Mignot Maginot Line



Heyde Richard the Lionheart



Previously Unrecorded 54mm Hollow Cast Prussians



William Hocker New WWI Set



Britains Paris Office Flag Bearers



# The Belgian Navy of The Durso Company

By Vincent J. Russo & Patrice Servais

## I. Preface

This article continues our coverage of European Naval Forces of World War II made, in composition, by Belgian manufacturers.

In previous Articles we featured The “Dutch Navy” (vol. 35, No. 3, Fall 2011), The “French Navy” (vol. 36, No. 2, Summer 2012), and The “German Navy” (vol. 37, No. 1, Spring 2013). Now we are continuing The Series by presenting The “Belgian Navy”, as depicted by The Durso Company of Liege, Belgium.

## II. Background

After the revolution in 1830, The now independent Country of Belgium, established in 1831 The Belgian Navy (known as “Marine Royale”), to counter a Dutch Squadron that had blocked all Belgian shipping. The initial Navy consisted of two (2) “Gun Boats” and with help from France were able to counter the Dutch Threat, and with the addition of a few more ships, carried out its task of protecting Belgian Territorial waters. This Navy however, did not come under the Ministry of War, but instead under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and unfortunately in 1862, the Belgian Government learned that the Navy was “too expensive” to maintain, and it was disbanded.

## III. World War I

Belgium had no navy when World War I broke out and soon had its merchant ships destroyed by German Submarines, and its coastal waters “littered with mines.” A force of Naval personnel was quickly assembled and they served aboard French mine sweepers and as artillery men on Belgian merchant ships.



At the conclusion of World War I, the Treaty of Versailles gave Belgium eleven (11) Destroyers and twenty six (26) minesweepers, that had been captured by the allies. This new “Fleet of the Rhino” was berthed in Bruges and monitored the river from Cologne to the “Dutch Border”

Unfortunately, in 1927 the Navy was once again dismantled for budgeting reasons.

## IV. World War II

When World War II broke out, again Belgium had essentially no Navy, but in 1939 quickly started to put together staffing and resources.

(Prince Albert & the Royal Belgian family enrolled in this new Navy, and is depicted by Durso in his Lieutenant and then in his Rear Admiral uniforms. – Note the Royal Crest on the jacket)

The immediate threat to Belgium was the infestation of mines into their coastal waters. Despite limited





## The Belgian Navy of The Durso Company (Cont.)

resources, this “newly born” Navy destroyed more than 250 German mines. In May 1940, the Belgian Navy participated in the “evacuation at Dunkirk”; however after the capitulation of Belgium to Germany, the entire Belgian Navy, save one ship, was relegated into inactivity to Spain. The only ship that escaped this fate was P 16” which made its way to England, and served as a Patrol Boat under the name of “HMS Kernot.”

In September 1940, a “Belgian Section” of the Royal Navy was created, consisting of two (2) Corvettes, a squadron of minesweepers and three (3) patrol boats. The two Corvettes named “Godetia” and “Buttercup” were assigned to Atlantic Convoy duty and both participated in the Allied D-Day landing at Normandy.



(Above photos are of “enlisted” seamen and petty officers)

### V. Conclusion

At the end of World War II, Great Britain returned the “Section Belge” to Belgium, where it was renamed “Section Navals”, and consisted of twelve (12) vessels which were put under the joint control of the Ministries of transportation and Foreign Affairs.



(Above photos are of officers of various ranks, note the differences in the “cuffs”)

In 1949, the Navy was incorporated into the Belgian Armed Forces, under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Defense, and has served with distinction in many areas of global conflict since then, including Korea, the Congo, Kuwait and the Persian Gulf.

(In tribute to the Belgian Navy, Mr. Klimov and the Durso Company created an extensive array of Marching Musicians which are depicted here.)

## The Belgian Navy of The Durso Company (*Cont.*)

---



600



601



602



579



603



604



605



606



607

# The Belgian Navy of The Durso Company (Cont.)



608



609



610



611

## VI. Durso and the Belgian Navy

Following are the catalog numbers and descriptions of the Belgian Naval figures made by Durso:

### 1. Standing Figures

Catalog Number	Description
512	Seaman, presenting arms
527	Officer Saluting, Commander
528	Officer Saluting, Rear Admiral
530	Seaman Signaling

### 2. Marching Figures

Catalog Number	Description
550	Prince Albert with drawn sword, Lieutenant
550A	Prince Albert with drawn sword, Rear Admiral
551	Seaman Marching, Rifle on shoulder
554	Seaman holding machine gun on chest
554A	Petty officer holding machine gun on chest
555	Naval Police, seaman
555A	Naval Police, Petty Officer
574	Seaman, barehanded
574A	Petty officer, barehanded
575	Officer with Sword, Lieutenant
576	Officer with Sword, Commander
577	Officer with Sword, Captain
578	Officer with Sword, Vice Admiral
579	Flag Bearing Officer

### 3. Musicians

Catalog Number	Description
600	Drum Major, Petty Officer
601	Parade Drum
602	Clarinet
603	Saxophone
604	Bugle
605	Trumpet
606	Bass Drum
607	Cymbals
608	Bombardon
609	Fife
610	Tuba
611	Horn

## VII. Appreciation

Again, the Authors wish to express our most sincere appreciation to "Old Toy Soldier" magazine for the opportunity to showcase "Belgian Made" composition figures.

## VIII. Acknowledgement

Photos by Veronique Servais

## IX. Editors Note

See the advertisement for the book, "Composition Figures of Belgium – The Durso Company" by Vincent J. Russo, Bertel Bruun and Lucieu Maris on page 47 of this issue. Page 48 sales ad, also Marketplace page 55.



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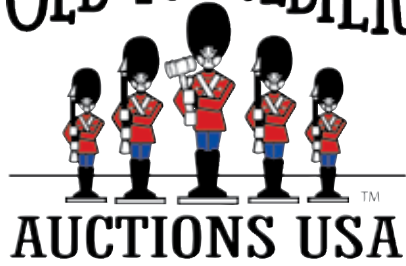
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# AUCTION PREVIEW

## THE JAMES A. HENDERSON COLLECTION - JUNE 2014

OLD TOY SOLDIER



Old Toy Soldier Auctions USA are proud to give advanced notice of an exceptional one-owner toy soldier collection to be auctioned in June 2014. The James A. Henderson Collection. Britains, Britains Paris Office, Heyde, Mignot, Lucotte, King and Country, Trophy, Ducal, Fusilier, Steadfast, William Hocker, Stadden, Monarch, Imrie & Risley, Imperial, Etc., Etc.

Many lots carry excellent Provenance I.E. Britains Archive, Ed Ruby Collection, Malcolm Forbes Collection, and The Property of H.R.H. the Duke of Gloucester.



Britains items from the Great Book of Britains



Britains Paris Office



King and Country



Scots Guard Pipe Band



South African King



# AUCTION PREVIEW (Cont.)



Britains Special Paints



Forbes Gun Boat



Britains Paris Office Figures



Britains Waterloo Winter Cloaks



Britains previously unknown Terrain Ferrior



Britains Texas Rangers



Lucotte

More details available in February issue of *Old Toy Soldier*.





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# BOOK REVIEW

## Five Books That Belong In Every Collector's Library

*By Russ Bednarek*

Rather than review a new book for this issue of *Old Toy Soldier*, I thought it may be beneficial to examine existing works worthy of being in every toy soldier collector's library. If you knew someone who was going to begin collecting toy soldiers, what book(s) would you recommend? Why would you recommend one book over another? What would you base your recommendation(s) on? If the new collector is only interested in new production toy soldiers, then the need for reference works is minimal. If the aspiring collector shows an interest in older production toy soldiers, then acquiring quality reference works is a necessity. I am going to provide my recommendations for five books that, in my opinion, should be in the library of every collector of older toy soldiers. My list of suggested books will be open to scrutiny, debate, and examination as any subjective list should be. After all, it is like asking the question; "who is the greatest basketball player of all-time?" Is it Wilt Chamberlain, Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, Michael Jordan, LeBron James? We all have our own opinions, based on our personal criteria.

For my criteria to create my list I considered; 1) if the author has a high degree of toy soldier credibility, 2) type and amount of information provided, and 3) photographs and bibliography. Credibility of the author is of the utmost importance. Authors who have worked as toy soldier experts for auction houses, and have written books and catalogues received high marks when I formulated my list. Nothing replaces hands on examination to authenticate an item. Because of their work experiences, these authors have handled and examined thousands of toy soldiers resulting in an extremely high degree of expertise. Many of these authors tend to be collectors themselves. Information contained in the book needs to be based on reliable data, and the author needs to provide definitive factual information. Production dates are a fine starting point, but far too many toy soldier books rely on this alone. Examinations of set composition, paint variations, company catalogues, figure variations/changes are pivotal criteria for making my list. Company history is also important as many times changes in sculptors and painters help explain figure variations. Photographs are an essential criteria for any toy soldier book. Obviously color photographs are preferred, but even more important is the clarity and sharpness of the photographs. A high quality color photograph can often be used

for positively identifying figures. Poor quality photographs do nothing but frustrate collectors and leave a poor impression for those considering buying the book. Unfortunately, some fine self-published books suffered from poor photographs. These tended to be some of the earlier self-published books and, fortunately for collectors, the quality of this genre has improved tremendously. A quality toy soldier book should not only have high quality pictures of figures, but should include sets, box art, company catalogues and paint and production variations. My final criteria, the bibliography, is one I feel is often overlooked. The bibliography not only shows us where and who the author used when researching their book, but can also be used to help expand the collectors' knowledge base. Consulting the bibliography often leads to the collector purchasing sited works increasing one's reference library. Quality reference books are the building blocks of any toy soldier library. The best collector is an educated collector, one who knows their subject and is able to make purchases based on reliable information. The collector needs to educate himself to know such things as; is the painting correct for the period, is the set composition correct, is this the correct box for this set, is the piece a forgery, and how to avoid costly errors. The five books listed below are my "must have" titles for every collector. They are listed in no order of value or importance. The editions discussed are those in my personal library.

---

**The Great Book of Hollow-Cast Figures** by Norman Joplin, New Cavendish Books, 1993. ISBN 1-872727-26-3. Over-sized hardback, 342 pages, over 600 color photographs.

Hollow-cast production of toy soldiers and related items began in 1893 and ended in 1966 when the British government banned this manufacturing process due to the lead content. Acclaimed author Norman Joplin went "outside the box" with this groundbreaking book examining not only military hollow-cast figures, but also non-military hollow-cast pieces. Joplin was the first author to deeply examine, study and present his findings regarding non-military pieces. This classic book examines British hollow-cast production by company in an alphabetical format. High quality color photographs appear on nearly every page, with accompanying, descriptive text. Boxed sets are prevalent throughout the book



## BOOK REVIEW (Cont.)

and samples of catalogue pages also appear. A brief history of each company is presented, many of which are obscure and, until publication of the book, were previously unknown to most collectors. Joplin came into contact with countless non-military items after years of working for several English auction houses and exhaustively searching on his own for non-military items to add to his private collection. Realizing at that point in time that there was no study done on hollow-cast non-military figures, this served as the impetus for Joplin's book and would lead to several more toy soldier books. An "Inventory of Manufacturer's Products" utilizes original company catalogues to list and document each individual item made, this is invaluable for collectors. Excellent coverage on military figures and outstanding examination of non-military items put this book on my list.

---

**Collecting American-Made Toy Soldiers** by Richard O'Brien, Krause Publications, 1997. ISBN 0-89689-118-6. Soft cover, 717 pages, black and white photographs, some color.

All information was taken from edition number three. This large pulp paper book covers every type of American toy soldier; solid, plastic, rubber, hollow-cast, plaster and more. This is literally an encyclopedia of American toy soldier manufacturers, complete with short company histories and numerous black and white photographs. Figures are listed by their catalogue number, (when available), along with their condition and value. Catalogue pages and advertisements are generously utilized within the company history in addition to relevant photographs of individuals and buildings. Although some of the information was contributed to the author, O'Brien is to be commended for compiling, organizing and producing such an all-encompassing book. Some of the black and white photographs are not of the highest quality, but their sheer number is helpful and impressive. When photographs are not available, the author has skillfully placed drawings of figures taken from the company catalogue to augment the photographs. Although the physical qualities of this book are not the most impressive, this is *the book* for those interested in American made toy soldiers.

---

**The Great Book of Britains** by James Opie, New Cavendish Books, 1993. ISBN 1-872727-32. Hardback, 640 pages, over 950 color photographs.

Simply put, this is *the bible* for Britains collectors. Every facet of Britains figures, production, cataloging

and history is to be found with the 640 pages of this amazing over-sized book. The amount of information is staggering, so much so that five different indices are needed to help the collector navigate through the book. Color pictures are of extremely high quality and attractively depict individual, group and set pieces. Each chapter examines a year of Britains production. We learn at the start of each chapter which new set(s) were introduced, (in catalogue order), and applicable uniform and figure characteristics and composition of each set. Quality color photographs are provided for many of the new sets and figures. Changes in boxes are examined in the same manner as figures. In instances where a new figure is introduced to replace an older version, a photographic side by side comparison is presented for study. Each chapter ends with any changes that were made to older lines. Fortunately for collectors, dates of introduction, changes and deletions for figures and sets are all provided. Re-printed pages of catalogues appear and are most informative. Unfortunately this magnificent book is now out of print and commands a premium price commonly over \$350. A limited collector's edition bound in faux leather with gold leaf and accompanied with a 4 piece set of figures was also available. Opie's work for several English auction houses in addition to authoring additional books on toy soldiers place he and Norman Joplin in an elite class of authors. Worth the price for established and aspiring Britains collectors.

---

**The World Encyclopedia of Model Soldiers** by John G. Garrett, The Overlook Press, 1981. ISBN 0-87951-129-X. Hardback, 209 pages, 50 color photographs, 90 black and white photographs.

In my opinion this is one of the most interesting of all toy soldier books. This book will not impress you with beautiful color pictures, expertly written prose nor lists of figures manufactured by specific companies. The beauty of this book is in the quality and quantity of information. Anything related to toy and model soldiers is to be found in this tidy 209 page book. References to painters, sculptors, manufacturers, societies, dioramas, conversions, companies and forgeries are offered. All types of figures are examined from connoisseur to wargame to toy soldiers in all media; metal, composition, plaster, resin, plastic, enamel, porcelain, paper and more. Want to learn who Roy Selwyn-Smith worked for prior to Britains? Simply flip to page 152 to read about Selwyn-Smith's fascinating career. Want to find out what type of figures Toydell Ltd. made? You will find on page 170 that they produced well painted highly glazed pieces

## BOOK REVIEW (Cont.)

depicting Highlanders, Foot Guards and more. Often times when looking up a certain company, the reader will learn who started it and if it was later bought or acquired by another individual. The same holds true for painters, sculptors and mold makers. Garrett's informative book is often like reading a pedigree of individuals and companies. Garrett was a collector and authored three books on the subject of toy soldiers and he pulls no punches regarding the facts. An example is his entry regarding the company *Les Tambours*, who he notes pirated the figures of the French artist Fernande Metayer. Out of print, but available for a modest price, I suggest this book for the simple fact that there is no telling when or how it will shape your collecting interests.

---

**Armies of the World** by Joe Wallis, United Book Press Inc., 1993. ISBN 00-9605950-2-3. Soft cover, 419 pages, plentiful black and white photographs.

**Regiments of All Nations** by Joe Wallis, United Book Press, 2011. ISBN 978-0983837800. Hardback, 415 pages, 500 color photographs.

For my final recommendation, I have decided to include two books in my list of "must have" by long time Britains dealer, collector and author Joe Wallis. If you are either; a), unable to find a copy of *The Great Book Of Britains*, or b), do not want to spend the amount of money to obtain a copy, then Wallis' books are a superb alternative. The informative format of each book is the same. A short company history is presented first, followed by a short study of basic identifying tips. Armed with this basic knowledge, the collector is ready to explore the bulk of the books, an examination of each set proceeding in numerical order of production. Basic set composition and uniform painting information is provided along with related sets (by catalogue) appearing on the right hand page. The left hand page is a picture of figures described, thus preventing the inconvenience of flipping pages to compare text and photographs. *Armies of the World* explores Britains military and non-military subjects produced from 1925-1941, while *Regiments of All Nations* explores production of 1946-1966. For a more extensive look at *Regiments of All Nations*, you may read my review in *Old Toy Soldier*, Fall 2011, Vol.35, No.3. Rock solid information and excellent photographs make these two books invaluable, and offer collectors an excellent alternative to Opie's massive work. The most current edition of *Regiments of All Nations* is in the eighth printing, and the hardback and color photographs are a most welcomed improvement. Hopefully, *Armies of the World* will receive a similar upgrade in the near future.

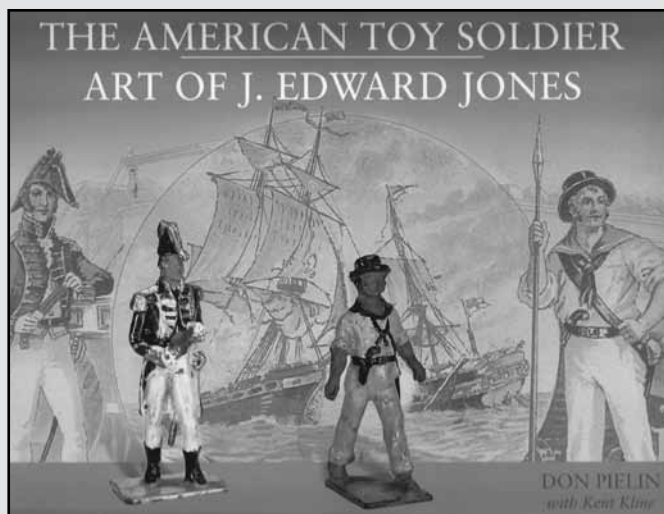
Obviously with any list it is difficult to establish a cut-off point. There were many books that I considered, such classics as; *Old German Toy Soldiers*, by Dr. Hans Roer, *Paper Soldiers*, by Edward Ryan, *Petits Soldats*, by Christian Blondieau and *The Art of the Toy Soldier*, by Henry K. Kurtz and Burt Ehrlich. These I categorize as my "Honorable Mention" works. While each is strong in their subject matter, I felt their theme may be too narrow for most collectors. One may argue that Opie's and Wallis' books focus only on Britains, so how could I include them? My justification is; given the fact of what seems like an eternal appreciation for Britains figures, most every toy soldier collector has either collected or been tempted to collect Britains at some point in time. Beyond the "Honorable Mention" category, there is what I find to be one of the most exciting genre of toy soldier books. These are the titles that deal exclusively with only one maker, or a specific aspect of manufacture. The information in these books tends to be extremely specific, almost to the point where the author displays an obsessive passion regarding their subject. Examples of this type are; *The American Toy Soldier Art of Edward Jones*, by Don Peilin, (see my review *Old Toy Soldier*, Fall 2012, Vol.36 No.3), *Racing Colours of Famous Owners*, by Peter Kirk and *Selwyn Miniatures*, by Peter Cowan.

Obtaining the books on my "List Of Five" is relatively simple. In the case of those books authored by Norman Joplin and Joe Wallis, simply find their advertisement in this issue of *Old Toy Soldier*. The three remaining titles may require a bit more work. As with all things these days, the Internet is an excellent starting point. The best place to begin your search is with Amazon. If the book is available on Amazon, you may actually have options within the Amazon framework. Many times after locating the title, you will have options to buy new/used copies from other sellers that are listed. If you are unable to obtain the book via Amazon there are numerous internet booksellers to search. Some of the more popular sites are; abebooks.com, and alibris.com. Another excellent source is eBay, as it seems eventually everything comes up for sale on their site. Good luck and good hunting.





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# Britains Paris Office Boxes and Set Numbers

*By Rob Wilson*

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## Background

In a previous article, written jointly with Joe Wallis, we summarised the sets issued by Britain's Paris Office for which the set numbers are known. This update corrects a couple of errors in that article (due to the present author!) and adds some new information. In the absence of a catalogue or list of sets issued by the Paris Office, the only evidence we have is based on the small number of boxes that have survived which include that kind of information.

As with the London Factory, the Paris Office probably used set numbers to insure that customer orders were accurately filled and production records properly maintained. Paris Office boxed sets show up only very occasionally, and not all of these are numbered. Things are further complicated by the fact that many different styles of boxes were used, some of which were undoubtedly generic types for particular distributors which did not use any numbering system!

## Known Paris Office box types

As noted in the previous article, the most commonly found boxes fall into two main types:

- 1) BL types with Armée Française or Armée Etrangère labels. BL was the abbreviation for Britains Limited. Apparently Britains did not want to over-emphasise that the figures therein did not originate from France! The labels use Art Nouveau style artwork, in various colour styles, including gold on black (GB) and blue on white (BW). They include a place to display a set number which is sometimes printed as part of the label but which was often also covered by second smaller label in which the set title and number could be printed or stamped.
- 2) AAGC types. These were probably produced for a wholesaler who distributed to one or more major French Department Stores (possibly AAGC stands for the name of such a store). These boxes also feature a block with space for the set title, or some other description. From the examples that have surfaced so far, such boxes do not appear to have set numbers, just a description of the contents (which is often rather vague, such as "Composition no. 1"!).

In addition there are a number of other less common types of label, some (but not all) of which may contain a set number (more often than not stamped rather than printed). The Paris Office does not appear to have issued standard eight-piece Infantry detachments or the standard five-piece Cavalry units sold by the London Factory in their own boxes. It is possible that in the early days they may simply have distributed the standard set numbers such as sets # 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, and 143 in the same boxes as used by the London factory.

Single row boxes for B-sized figures have turned up (see Figure 3). The first is numbered and contained 7 Chasseurs à Pieds foot figures (set # 1144). However, the second only contains the word "Cuirassiers" (albeit in a box labelled "Armée Etrangère"! ) with a tie card for the usual number of cavalry figures (4) . From the evidence of the boxes that have survived, most Paris Office boxes for the smaller sized figures seem to have contained different numbers of figures compared to standard practice in London. Some examples of these are presented below. Some, but by no means all, of these have set numbers printed or stamped on them.

The previous article listed 17 Paris Office boxes with set numbers that the authors had recorded. A corrected version of this list is given in Table 1 below, with a number of additions which takes the known number of sets with a particular number to about 26. Unfortunately, as will be clear from the further discussion below, there is some ambiguity about some of the numbering so it is difficult to be precise! In addition there are a number of other sets that have survived with no set number but with particular known contents. Some of these are also listed below.



# Britains Paris Office Boxes and Set Numbers (Cont.)

**Table 1: Revised list of known Paris Office Set numbers**

<b>Box Number</b>	<b>Notes</b>	<b>Set Title</b>	<b>Number of figures</b>
4	AF, BW	Chasseurs à Cheval	6 mounted
5	AE, BW	Peaux Rouges à Cheval	4 (or maybe 5?) mounted Indians
6	AE, BW	Marocains	6 mounted Arabs
12	AF,BW	Infanterie de Ligne Tenue de Campagne	probably 20 foot figures
18	AF, IL	Hussards Française *	11 B size mounted figures
18	AF,BW	Tirailleurs Algériens	probably 10 foot figures
33	AF,BW	Hussards	9 mounted
34	AF,BW	Chasseurs à Cheval	9 mounted
40	AF,BW	Chasseurs à Cheval on trotting horse	12 mounted
45	SP	Scots Greys & Grenadier Guards	4 mounted & 10 infantry (B size)
48	AF,BW	Tirailleurs Algériens	1 mounted officer & 14 infantry
64	AF,BW	Chasseurs à Cheval	unknown
65	AE,BW	Peaux Rouges	6 mounted North American Indians
75	AF,BW	Chasseurs à Pieds, charging, service dress	21 foot (possibly 19 with mounted officer)
79	AE,BW	Peaux Rouges	12 mounted North American Indians
80	AE,BW	Zulus	21 charging
94	AF,BG	Cuirassiers & Chasseurs à Pied	5 mounted & 16 infantry (mounted officer)
257	AF, BW	Marins Français	10 foot figures
262	AF, BW	Grenadiers Anglais	10 foot figures
273	AE,BW	Boches?	10 infantry?
276	AE,BW	Bersagliers (Bersaglieri)	10 infantry marching
306	AE,BW	Dragons Anglais	6 mounted
364	SP	Infanterie Belge	15, including mounted officer & trumpeter
422	AF, BW	Cavalerie Belge**	12 (unconfirmed contents)
1144	SR	Chasseurs a Pied	7 B size at the slope
1451	AF, BW	Infanterie Belge+, **	21 B size mounted figures

## Notes:

The following abbreviations are used: AE - Armée Etrangère; AF - Armée Française; SP – Soldats de Plomb; SR single row box; IL illustrated label; BW - Blue on white printing; GB - Gold on black printing.

\* Previously, incorrectly described as containing 21 Infanterie Belge (b-sized).

+ Previously, incorrectly described as containing 11 Hussards. There was no original tie card, 1 figure may be missing.

\*\* In boxes with an Armée Française label. The Paris Office seems to regard Belgians as part of the French army!

If you can add to this partial list, please send photographs or photocopies of box labels or catalogue pages to the author (contact details: r.a.wilson@warwick.ac.uk, +441926496062).

## Britains Paris Office Boxes and Set Numbers (Cont.)



Figure 1: Armée Etrangère box label, blue on white for 21 Zulus (SAUVAGES)



Figure 2: Armée Française, gold on black box label for display set of Cuirassiers and Chasseurs à Pied en Grande Tenue (i.e. Review order)



Figure 3: B-sized box labels for 7 Chasseurs à Pied marching at the slope and 4 Cuirassiers



Figure 4: AAGC generic style box label for a set of 32 Infanterie de Ligne. Note the BL label stuck over the AAGC logo. This is not always present but provides a clear link to the other main label types, which also use the BL acronym for Britains Limited



Figure 5: AAGC generic style box label for 12 North American Indians on foot (PEAUX ROUGES A PIED)



## Britains Paris Office Boxes and Set Numbers (Cont.)

Additions and further modifications to the list

Peaux Rouges à cheval #5

#5 Small cavalry box with label printed showing set name (Peaux Rouges à cheval) as well as the set number. The box is not very large: just under 22.5x16.5 cm and 3cm deep. It can probably accommodate only 4 or at most 5 mounted figures? This may be another case of the label for a larger set being applied to a smaller box and then over printed ! The original sticky label that was probably applied by the factory (which covered the original set number 5) has another number stamped in blue ink (see set#273 below).

#12 Paris Office box lid only (26x19.5cm), BL series; No. 12; Infanterie de Ligne Tenue de "Campagne Fusil à la main" étiquette (label) 21x15.5; probably for about 20 figures

Tirailleurs Algériens #18  
Armée Française label.

This box surfaced recently containing 12 Japanese infantry marching at the slope but with no tie card. As with the other sets in the same size box, a full complement might have been 10 or 12 figures in total. Probably these would have been the charging Turcos figure, possibly with an officer marching on foot and maybe a flagbearer. The box is covered in red paper similar to that used in the London factory.

The label is the classic Armée Française, (as in Figure 2, but blue on white rather than gold on black). This is printed with Marque de Fabrique BL France, Soldats Articulés, Fabrication Française (with two crossed French Tricolores). It is printed with the set number #18 and the title Tirailleurs Algériens in the appropriate place.

Hussards Française #18 ??  
Armée Française, illustrated label

The same set number (18) has also been found on a box for B-sized Hussards Française (see Figure 6). In this case the number is rubber stamped on. The label is very different in design. It is possible that the Paris Office had a different numbering system for B and normal sized figures. Alternatively the same number may have been reused at a later date. A final possibility is that some digits are missing from the rubber

stamped label (see below for further discussion). Both boxes and labels are unquestionably original.

This set is in a box that is covered in a salmon pink colour. A large proportion of the known boxes are this colour. It is not clear if the original paper was this tone or if a darker red colour has faded more easily than the London version. The label is the Paris Office equivalent to a "Whistock" style illustrated label, which includes a fine line drawing showing two French Hussards or Chasseurs à Cheval at the halt. The black on white printed label includes the standard logo containing Marque de Fabrique BL France, Soldats Articulés, (with two crossed French Tricolores). This is all surrounded by an elaborate art nouveau, floral design, with MODÈLE DÉPOSÉ printed below. *FABRICATION FRANÇAISE* is printed in the top right corner. The title *HUSSARDS FRANÇAISE* and the set number #18 are rubber stamped into the appropriate spaces. As noted above, it is possible that the number has been truncated and should be something in the 180s!

From its size, the label would be suitable to be applied to a standard Britains B-sized box for 4 cavalry figures (analogous to Figure 3). In this case the label has been applied to a much larger box, deliberately at an angle rather than square on. The box contained 11 B-sized figures including officer and trumpeter with movable arms. The lack of a tie card means that the original composition remains uncertain but a full set of 12 seems likely, since a number of matching groups of that size are known, including some other boxed sets.



Figure 6: Armée Française illustrated label for B-sized Hussards

## Britains Paris Office Boxes and Set Numbers *(Cont.)*

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Chasseurs à Cheval #64  
Armée Française label.

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As described below, this set number was found on a printed label, under a supplementary label stuck on to a box for a set of 10 Marins Français (Matelots).

The label is the classic Armée Française, blue on white one, also printed with Marque de Fabrique BL France, Soldats Articulés, Fabrication Française (with two crossed French Tricolores). It was printed with set number #64 and the title Chasseurs à Cheval in the appropriate place. It is not known how many figures comprised the full set. As discussed above although it is possible that the relatively small box on which it was found could have been used for cavalry, it seems more likely that the label was printed to go on a larger box! Two other boxes for Chasseurs à Cheval have already been recorded and are shown in Table 1. Set #4 contained a set of 6 at the halt, while set #34 contained a larger group of 9.

Peaux Rouges à cheval #65 Armée Etrangère label.

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This set number was found on a printed label stuck on to a box for 6 mounted figures including appropriate tie card. Another example surfaced recently on eBay also containing 6 mounted North American Indians. For some reason the #65 has been over stamped in blue ink with the number 214 (plus other indistinguishable characters).

The label is the classic Armée Etrangère, blue on white one, also printed with Marque de Fabrique BL France, Soldats Articulés, Fabrication Française, (but still showing two crossed French Tricolores rather than any foreign flags!).

Marins Français #257, Armée Française label.

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This strawboard card box (the card has distinctive stripes) is covered in a slightly paler shade of salmon pink paper. It has the classic Armée Française, blue on white printed label with Marque de Fabrique BL France, Soldats Articulés, Fabrication Française (again with two crossed French Tricolores). This box also includes a tie-card for 10 figures. Originally the box label was printed with #64 Chasseurs à Cheval. This has been covered by a printed (and then rubber stamped) blue and white label. This small label has been added to cover the original printed set number and now displays

#257 and MARINS FRANCAIS both of these being rubber stamped in blue ink by hand. This use of overlabelling seems to have been relatively common practice as a number of the surviving examples have it.

The Matelots are typical Paris Office offerings, probably quite late (post WW I). The rifles they carry at the trail are the later version without magazines. The body castings are on square, unstamped bases. The heads are slightly off centre. There has been some displacement in the mould, with the two halves of the head slightly offset on a couple of the figures. Again this is not untypical of the lack of strict quality control in the Paris Office factory. The metal used is very bright and shines through the translucent paint. Unlike the London paintings the Matelots wear blue and white rather than red and white striped t-shirts under their dark blue jackets. Their caps are topped with a red bobble, underneath which is a white stripe from one side of the cap to the other.

Based on the evidence of the original printed label, it is possible that the same small box was used for cavalry. The box is large enough to accommodate 3 or four mounted figures. More likely, the labels were printed to go on larger boxes and simply reused for other sets, with a supplementary label added as here.

Grenadiers Anglais #, Soldats de Plomb, Infanterie et Cavalerie label

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The salmon pink paper covered grey card box has a red on white printed label advertising the contents as Soldats de Plomb, Infanterie et Cavalerie, Marque de Fabrique BL France Fabrication Française (with two crossed French Tricolores). See Figure 7 for a similar example (although this is blue on white printed label). The box label is then hand stamped GRENADIERS ANGLAIS and the set number & #262 – added in the relevant “box” (both in blue ink). The box includes a tie card for 10 pieces. It contains Coldstream Guards, with long red plumes painted on the wrong side of their bearskins. The faces are very neatly painted with fine curly moustaches. Two rather careless original black paint spots/drips on the faces spoil the overall effect somewhat and betray the sometimes lax attention to quality control in the Paris Office. They are marching at the slope armed with rifles with loose slings painted white, and bayonets neatly clipped. The blue paint used for their trousers is distinctly “gritty” but a glorious translucent dark blue.



## Britains Paris Office Boxes and Set Numbers (Cont.)

“Boches” ? #273

Set #273 is in box for 10 infantry (or possibly for 4 or 5 cavalry figures). This is another example of a label having been applied by the factory on top of another generic label, (see set #5 for more details). The original added label is unreadable. It is overwritten by what could be “Boches” by a juvenile hand. This colloquial term for Germans was almost certainly not the original official title! Unfortunately the hand written “Boches” obscures whatever description was originally stamped below the set number.

Chasseurs à Cheval #1404, Soldats de Plomb, Infanterie et Cavalerie label

The salmon pink paper covered card box has a small blue on white printed label, with a rubber stamped addition in black ink advertising the contents as Chasseurs à Cheval, and giving the set number as 1404. The printed label includes Marque de Fabrique BL France (with two crossed French Tricolores), encircled by an Art Nouveau, printers flowers design, plus Fabrication Française below.

The box includes 9 B-sized Hussards Française, including an officer on a white horse (all fixed arm), dressed in dark blue jackets. The tie card is not original, so this may not be the full complement, although the box probably could not accommodate many more figures. The box itself is not a standard Britains construction, the edges of both the lid and the tray being folded over and then stapled rather than glued as is normal.



Figure 7: BL Soldats de Plomb, Infanterie et Cavalerie generic style box label, stamped for B-sized Chasseurs à Cheval, set # 1404



Figure 8: Soldats en Metal Fondu two row display set “Revue”

Other numbered sets

The following sets have been seen on eBay, but not physically examined by the author.

#40 Armée Française label, blue on white, Chasseurs à Cheval on trotting horse in three row, compartmentalised display box, covered in salmon pink paper, with tie cards for 12 cavalry; officer on a white horse; no lace.

#75 Chasseurs à Pieds containing charging figures in service dress, with “Adrian” helmets. Three row, compartmentalised display set with slots for 21 foot figures, (or possibly 19 including a mounted officer in 1 row). The box contained foot and mounted officers on the cantering horse, but there were far too many figures for the box, so the precise contents of the original set remain unclear.

Unnumbered sets

Infanterie b-sized figures Soldats de Plombs, de toutes les Nations, de toutes les Armes

This box is again covered in salmon pink paper. The stamped label (characteristic of others I have seen) provides some clues to the original contents. The word Infanterie is clearly legible but whether French or some other nation is indiscernible. In the second line is the start of what might be the word Tenue which probably would have indicated the type of dress (review order or service dress). The label also include the words Modèles Déposés in capital letters as well as Marque de Fabrique BL France (with two crossed French Tricolores), plus Fabrication Française below. This is a cut down version of the label in Figure 2 (as used for a single row standard set of 7 B-sized figures). The box tray has punched tie holes for a set of 10 foot figures, probably B-sized.

## Britains Paris Office Boxes and Set Numbers (Cont.)

A similar box lid (just over 20x15 cm and 2cm deep) has the same label as the set #1404 example (just under 11x6.5cm in size). Again this is covered in salmon pink coloured paper. The label has no set number printed, but the words *Infanterie Serbe* are written in a neat hand on an applied label. Underneath this label is another, now indiscernible, inscription!



Figure 9: B-sized box with generic BL Soldats de Plomb, de toutes les Nations, de toutes les Armes

AAGC Soldats Articles, box lid only, the label simply states "Composition no. 1". The box lid is 40x30cm while the label is 21x16cm. This is roughly the same size as a box containing 12 Cuirassiers.

AAGC Soldats Articles, Infanterie de Ligne, 4 row display box, containing Types of French infantry, including a row of Chasseurs de Pieds, marching with officers at the trail in greatcoats. This box includes both the BL and AAGC trade marks as the AAGC logo is over stamped with a label showing *Marque BL*. See Figure 4 for the box label. The contents are simply given as "Infanterie de Ligne"

AAGC Soldats Articles, 3 row Display Box for "Ecosais" containing 24 box pack Gordon Highlanders marching at the slope with officer and oval based pipers. Tie cards are missing but the silhouettes of punch holes indicate 8 figures per row.

AAGC Soldats Articles, 3 row Display Box for "Marins" containing Matelots running at the trail and a Matelot gun team. Tie cards are again missing but the silhouettes of punch holes again indicate typically 8 figures per row.

AAGC Soldats Articles, 3 row Display Box entitled "Composition no. 2". It contains what at first appears a rather odd combination of Cossacks, Zouaves and Cuirassiers. According to the vendor this set had been in the family since well before the start of WW I. In 1905 the Tsar of Russia made a famous visit to Paris. CBG produced a number of splendid display sets to commemorate this, incorporating personality figures and scenic accessories. Composition no. 2 appears to be the rather feeble attempt by Britain's Paris Office to compete with this!

Other AAGC types which have surfaced include a small display set for "Boers" which includes a mounted officer from the Boer cavalry set alongside the usual Boer figure based on the valise pack marching figure at the slope, and an even larger display set of "Cuirassiers".

### Soldats en Metal Fondu labels

A further series of labels known to have been used for Britains Paris Office output are in standard plain red paper covered boxes. These simply contain the printed words "Soldats en Metal Fondu", and the initials WB (for William Britain), but with no other trademarks or logos. These boxes also feature a block with space for the set title, or some other description. Typically, the only other information included here is a cryptic word or two such as "Revue" or "Dragons", which does not give away too much about what might have been found inside originally! Two examples of boxes with the label "Revue" both contained matching rows of 5 Chasseurs à Cheval and 5 Cuirassiers. According to the French vendor these had been in the family since the 1st World War.

Another label in this series, from a different set (and from a different sized box) is simply labelled "Dragons". This was found with a group of 8 matching Dragons,



## Britains Paris Office Boxes and Set Numbers (Cont.)

including a trumpeter. A further set containing 6 figures is known, in this case just labelled with the title "Cuirassiers".

### Other known boxed sets

Another quite large box with a "Whistock style" illustrated label, has no set number, but from studying the tie card, was probably designed for Infanterie de Ligne, in service dress, in action. The box is covered in Britain's standard red coloured paper. The lid is just under 36.5x 26cm, and 3cm deep. The printed label is 19x11cm. The tie card is for 20 foot figures, probably in action poses for the arrangement of punched holes (basically three rows). The illustrated label shows, within an art nouveau frame, a poilu in service dress at ease on the right hand side and various details of the contents. The blue on buff (rather than white) printed label proclaims SOLDATS DE PLOMB in large letters with the BL crossed flag logo, plus (in much smaller font) FABRICATION FRANÇAISE. There is large block for the set number to be stamped in (unfortunately left blank) and another for the set name. The latter looks like it might have once had a sticky label applied on top. This has subsequently been removed (leaving residual glue traces). The following has been added by (probably a juvenile) hand: "Fantassins Français"

et "hommes de Génie Français". A small round sticker indicates the set was retailed originally by the Printemps department store for 9.90 Francs!

Undoubtedly the Paris Office also produced some larger display sets in order to compete with CBG, which distributed a huge range of large display sets. The Maison Bail department store catalogue from 1907 shows a line illustration of a double layer display set containing about 60 figures, mounted and on foot. At least one example of this set is known to have survived. It includes the main standard Britains French sets issued in 1905 with some Paris Office variations on that theme. The contents include 10 Cuirassiers; 5 Dragons; 5 Chasseurs à Cheval; Infanterie de Ligne and Chasseurs à Pied en capote; Zouaves and Turcos! Other even larger sets may have been produced – if you know of one please let the author know!

Rob Wilson October 20th 2013



Figure 10: BL SOLDATS DE PLOMB, illustrated label for three row display set

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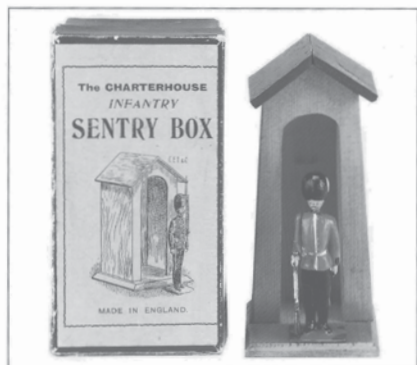


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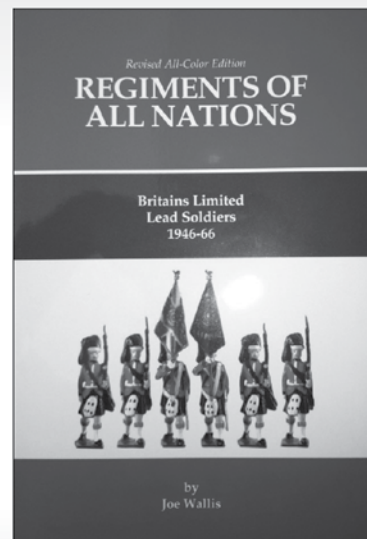
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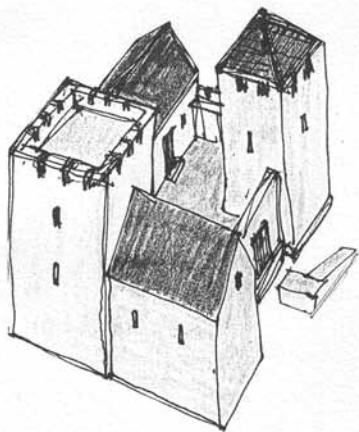
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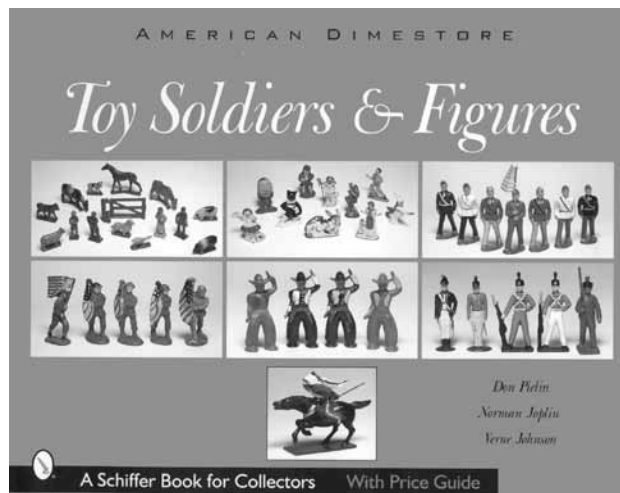
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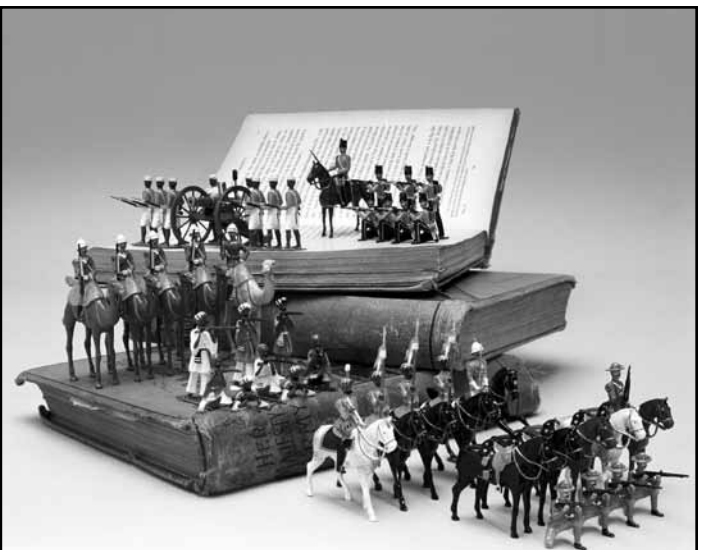
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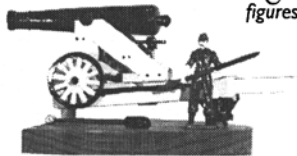
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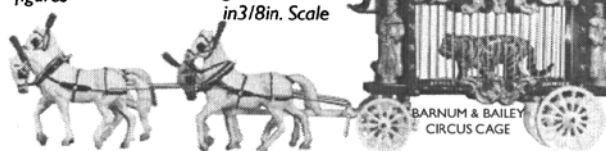
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# TOY SOLDIER SHOW & AUCTION CALENDAR 2013-2014

## 2013

**November 22 - 24 - Friday - Sunday** Old Toy Soldier Auctions USA. Important Early Britains from the late Richard Appleby Collection with the George O. Gillespie Collection of Toy Soldiers and Exquisite Additions. Contact Ray Haradin raytoys@aol.com 1-800-349-8009 or Norman Joplin 262-692-3912 info@normanjoplin.com www.oldtoysoldierauctions.com

**November 28th- Thursday** Vectis Auctions Teeside England Contact Simon Clarke 011 44 1642 750616 email admin@vectis.co.uk

**December 5 - Thursday** Bonhams Auctions, Oxford Contact Leigh Gotch +44 (0)208 963 2839 leigh.gotch@bonhams.com, James Opie +44 (0)208 963 2836 james.opie@bonhams.com, Catalogues: +44 (0) 1666 502200 bonhams.com/collectors

## 2014

**January 26th Sunday** 20th Annual Toy Soldier Show. Scottish Rites Masonic Hall, Lake Worth, Florida. Contact 561-582-6794

**February 16th Sunday** Woodville Plantation Hosts Military Miniatures Day. Contact Rob Windhorst Email Rwindhorst19@comcast.net 412 221 0348.

**March 9 - Sunday** West Coaster Irvine Marriott California. Contact Woody or Bubba 760-758-5481. www.oldtoysoldierhome.com

**March** Old Toy Soldier Auctions On Line only Auction Date to be announced Contact Raytoys@aol.com 1-800-349-8009.

**May 9 and 10 Friday Saturday** 73rd M.F.C.A. Show and Mart. Valley Forge Casino Resort. King of Prussia PA Contact www.mfcashow.com

**June** - Old Toy Soldier Auctions. The James A Henderson Collection. Date to be announced see preview in this issue. Contact raytoys@aol.com or info@normanjoplin.com

**August 30th Saturday** Norman Joplin's Old Toy Soldier Show. Holiday Inn, Bloomsbury, London Contact Adrian Little mercatortradingltd@gmail.com Telephone 01635 30535.

**September 27 Saturday** Old Toy Soldier Auctions BARGAIN ROOM. 10 am 4th Floor Hyatt Regency, Schaumburg. Contact Raytoys@aol.com 1-800-349-8009 or Info@normanjoplin.com 262-692-3913

**September 28 Sunday** OLD TOY SOLDIER SHOW CHICAGO Hyatt Regency Woodfield, 1800 East Golf Road, Schaumburg. OTSN'S 34th Year Contact Don Pielin 630-497-1239 or Steve Sommers 708-383-6525 Email dimestores@aol.com or www.toysoldiershow.com

*Dates and times are correct at the time of printing; however, it is strongly advised that before traveling, contact is made with show organizers to confirm date(s).*

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NE025

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