

★ KING &amp; COUNTRY ★

# COLLECTOR

蒐集者

A Quarterly Look at Our World in Miniature

WE GO TO  
THE MOVIES,  
THE MIDDLE  
KINGDOM  
AND...  
THE MIDDLE  
EAST!



A STEVEN SPIELBERG FILM  
tom hanks  
**saving private ryan**  
edward burns matt damon tom sizemore  
the mission is a man.

CREAMWORKS PICTURES AND PARAMOUNT  
IN ENTERTAINMENT PRODUCTION IN ASSOCIATION WITH CULTURAL FILMS  
ED BURNS MATT DAMON TOM SIZEMORE  
JOAN MARCUS JOHNSON JONATHAN KAYN, A.C.E.





# A View From The Trenches...



A concept sketch of a Royal Marine Commando for the new "Special Forces" releases.

THIS THIRD ISSUE OF COLLECTOR has, as usual, a colourful and eclectic mix of articles reflecting K&C's own varied and diverse product lines and influences.

For a start we'll be battling to Baghdad with a feature on our newest additions to our very contemporary "Special Forces" range of modern military miniatures.

In addition, there is a piece on our latest foray into the exotic "Streets of Old Hong Kong". Another article shows how, with a little imagination, our Roman Fort can be converted into the perfect display background for other toy soldiers and historical periods. And, there's the second installment on how we design and develop figures.

Finally, I'd like to welcome a new contributor...Los Angeles-based Dan Gagliasso. Dan, a long-standing friend, is a noted film and television writer, director and military history buff. He's also a toy soldier collector! He has written a great piece on the major influence the movies and television have played on King & Country and many of our ranges. I'm sure you'll enjoy it.

Well, that's the story so far...read on and as usual...  
**HAPPY COLLECTING!**

*Andy C. Neilson*  
Co-founder & Creative Director  
King & Country

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### KING & COUNTRY

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*Pvt. Ryan's Boot Camp -  
(Left to right) Tom Hanks, Tom Sizemore,  
Ed Burns, Capt. Dale Dye, Vin Diesel,  
Adam Goldberg.  
See K&C Goes to The Movies.*



"Saving Pvt. Ryan" photos courtesy of Dreamworks SKG.



# Destination Baghdad



AS REGULAR K&C COLLECTORS know an important part of our appeal is our ability to tackle subjects that other toy soldier manufacturers find "too hot to handle".

Our original "VIETNAM" series was thought by many to be "politically sensitive". Last year's "AFGHANISTAN" range of Special Forces with Al Qaeda and Taliban enemy was, in some quarters, similarly viewed.

Here at King & Country we've always believed that modern military campaigns have just as much relevance and "collectability" as the wars of Napoleon or Julius Caesar. Fortunately, many of today's collectors seem to agree with us.

## WAR DRUMS...

Late last year, as America and Britain vainly tried to get UN approval to deal with Saddam Hussein and his vile regime we made the decision to add to our "Special Forces" range.

Many collectors, especially in the U.S., had for some time, been requesting modern US Marines to add to their "Afghanistan" figures. K&C noted that in addition to US Marines operating in Afghanistan their British counterparts, the Royal Marines, had also been significantly involved in the fighting there.

As the weeks and months progressed and the UN procrastinated it seemed ever more clear that America and Britain would be virtually alone in taking action. It was also evident that American and British marines would be assuming important fighting roles in any future conflict.

We began there and then designing the figures --- four fighting US "leathernecks" and four British "bootnecks". Simultaneously, we had to begin work on their future enemy.

## DUG IN OPPOSITION

After researching many books on the last Gulf War and watching ongoing television coverage of the present Iraqi army we knew several things that lent themselves to our creative view of the figures.

**One.** The Iraqi Army likes to fight from "fixed positions"--- their central command structure is not very flexible --- mobile warfare is definitely not their style.

**Two.** The elite of the Iraqi forces is (or was) Saddam's so-called Republican Guard. They were supposed to have the best equipment and be the best trained.

As the centre piece of our Iraqi opposition, we designed, what appears to be, a "dug-in" Russian-built T62 tank. Often the Iraqis would create an instant strong-point by excavating a large hole in the desert...driving a tank into it...surrounding



the perimeter with sand bags leaving only the turret, main gun and top surface of the hull exposed.

We designed our K&C version to echo this defensive approach. See for yourself how effective this is when you add a little sprinkle of sand around the edges!

A surrendering Iraqi tank commander completed the set.



# Baghdad CONT'D.

## THE REPUBLICAN GUARD

We still needed some enemy infantry so, we designed an add-on set of three Republican Guard Military Police. These characters had a



particularly unsavory reputation both for their cruelty to their own soldiers and to civilians during the 1990 invasion of Kuwait and during the Kurdish and Shiite rebellions that followed.

Little did we know that the vast majority of these "brave" fighters would melt away when they came up against real professional soldiers like the Brits and the Americans. Anyway our three desperadoes look ready to go down fighting.

## SHOWTIME...

With all of our design and development work completed before the outbreak of hostilities all we had to worry about was the unlikely event of Saddam throwing in the towel...saying he was sorry and departing Iraq thus making an armed invasion unnecessary.

This was not to be...despite the best laid obstructions of the French, Germans and

millions of gullible protesters the invasion took place...the war was won...a people were freed and King & Country's "Destination Baghdad" went into full production.

We believe this group of figures will be a unique memento of a unique event and among some of our finest work. We hope you agree.

## AVAILABLE IN JUNE...

The four "War in Iraq" sets include:

### SF04 US MARINES IN ACTION

Four "leathernecks" wearing desert camo taking care of business. Included is a Marine sniper.

### SF05 ROYAL MARINE COMMANDOS

Four British "bootnecks" back up their Yank buddies. The original "green berets".

### SF06 IRAQI T62 TANK

A dug-in and sand-bagged Russian-built tank complete with Iraqi tanker "reaching for the sky" Set includes FREE Republican Guard cap badge.

### SF07 REPUBLICAN GUARD MILITARY POLICE

Three of Saddam's boys put up token resistance to Coalition Forces --- not very successfully!

## DESERT DISPLAYS

Here at K&C we're big fans of an American company called "Dept. 56" They make these great Middle Eastern buildings and accessories you see in some of our pictures where we feature the new Special Forces and our earlier WWII Afrika Korps and Eighth Army series. These ceramic pieces are very modestly priced, great quality and really bring a display to life. For more information contact them at [www.department56.com](http://www.department56.com). Unfortunately, they are only available in the U.S. and Canadian stores but you can mail order.



# How to Convert Your Fort

KING & COUNTRY'S ROMAN FORT is an exciting and dramatic display piece. Its 10 separate pieces make it both a flexible and a realistic way to show off our Roman figures.

But, did you know that its classical proportions and superb detailing can also be simply converted into a wide variety of other backgrounds. Scott James, a relatively new K&C collector from Pensacola, Florida wrote to tell us how he adapted his fort to a completely different historical period.

"I only started collecting K&C a couple of years ago when I bought all the new Romans and saw their magnificent fort. I had to have it!" Scott wrote. "In the beginning, I showed off my entire Roman collection in the fort and received lots of appreciative comments from family, friends and fellow collectors alike. One week I had to leave town on business and my son, Jamie (who's also a collector) decided to experiment with my display and some of his own collection."

When Scott returned he was at first shocked to see his Roman Fort was now garrisoned by some of his son Jamie's French Napoleonic!

"My surprise lasted just a few seconds as I was delighted to see how well Jamie's early 19th century soldiers and cannon looked with my 1<sup>st</sup> century fort."

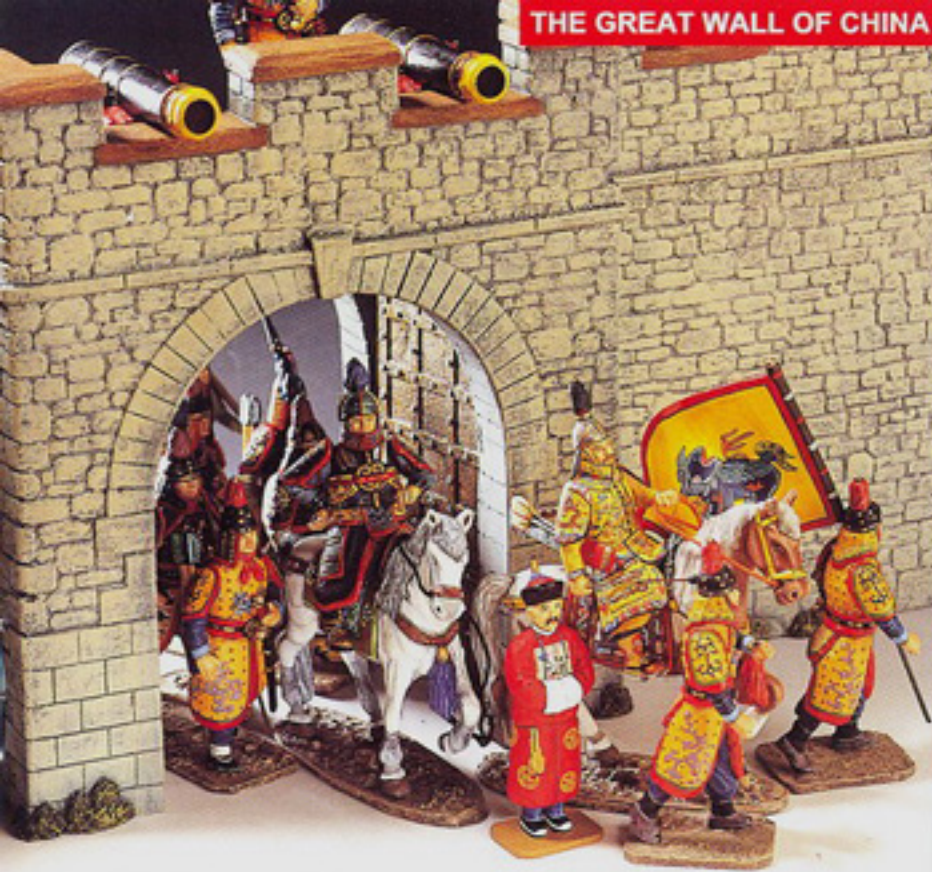
"Between us we bought another K&C Roman Fort and used it to show off Jamie's French Infantry and artillery. By adding a few "props" like tents and barrels we made pretty convincing 18<sup>th</sup> century defense works.

After receiving Scott's letter at K&C headquarters we began experimenting with a few different set ups of our own using sections of the Roman Fort and figures from a wide range of historical eras.

Like Scott we hope you'll be pleasantly surprised by the results and think about how you can creatively display your collection using our Roman Fort.



THE GREAT WALL OF CHINA



THE LAST STAND



EDINBURGH CASTLE



SS BARRACKS



CAPTURED!



CASTLE OF AGINCOURT





# King & Country Goes to The Movies

A RAGTAG REGIMENT of cowboys, Indians and college athletes charge up a grassy Cuban hill in 1898 to glory led by a future president of the United States. A squad of U.S. Army Rangers circa 1944 follow their captain up from Omaha Beach and through the bitterly contested war torn fields of Normandy while months later overcoat-clad GI's brave a ferocious German counter-attack in a small Belgium town called Bastogne during the dead of winter. White-hatted, dust stained cavalry troopers desperately fight off mounted Plains Indian warriors in a final last stand under the command of their colourful buckskin jacketed Colonel.

What do all of these historical military incidents have in common? Not only are they classic moments in military history, but they also have loaned themselves to numerous depictions on film. Teddy Roosevelt's Rough Riders have been depicted in one movie story or another at least 16 times including a 1927

Every one of these events has at one time or another been the subject of numerous wonderful miniature recreations by toy soldier makers including many spectacularly realized toy soldiers sets by King & Country.

In an interview for a future documentary on toy soldiers, (modestly, being produced and directed by yours truly, Dan Gagliasso) Bob Fisher the former owner of *The Old Toy Soldier Home*, near San Diego, CA and a retired USMC major pointed out that every time a big historical war movie like John Wayne's *The Alamo* played on TV he would get a flurry of phone calls to his store. The callers would all be asking after figures depicting whatever historical event they had just seen on their living room screens.

Toy soldiers have even been used to

plot out scenes for film directors going as far back as Cecil B. De Mille. On his huge epics like *The Plainsman*, *Northwest Mounted Police* and *The Crusades*. De Mille would often have sand tables



Paramount Studios blockbuster, *The Rough Riders* and the John Milius' 1997 four hour mini-series *Rough Riders*. D-Day and its aftermath have been given dramatic screen time numerous times most notably in Steven Spielberg's *Saving Private Ryan* and the 1962 epic filmed on many of the actual battle sights *The Longest Day*. Controversial Indian fighter George Armstrong Custer and his 7th U.S. Cavalry have seen some sort of cinematic recreation in no less than 91 feature films and television shows since 1909 including the classic *They Died with Their Boots On* and the purposely disguised Custer-like classic, John Ford's magnificent *Fort Apache*.

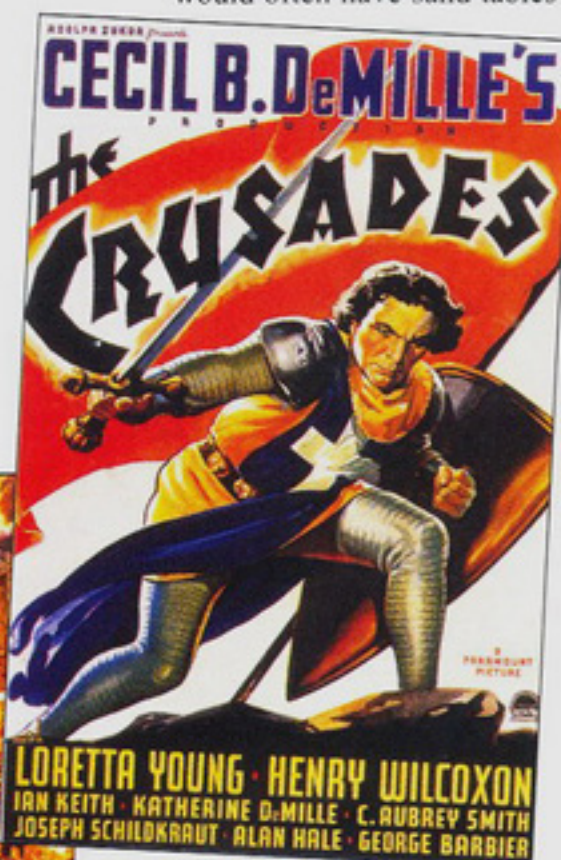
Oh, I almost forgot, there's another strong correlation between these dramatic scenes from military and movie history.



THE MISSION THAT BECAME A FORTRESS THE FORTRESS THAT BECAME A SHRINE  
JOHN WAYNE / RICHARD WIDMARK / LAURENCE HARVEY

FRANKIE AVALON PATRICK WAYNE / LINDA CRISTAL  
JOAN O'BRIEN / CHILL WILLS RICHARD BOONE

produced and directed by JOHN WIDMARK original screenplay by JAMES EDWARD GRANT  
music composed and conducted by DIMITRI TIOFANIS  
A FILM BY WIDMARK PRODUCTIONS  
TECHNICOLOR



constructed and populated with toy Indians, cavalymen, Mounties and knights to work out complicated battle scenes with his cinematographers and 2nd unit directors. It is a practice that has continued on till today where directors such as Steven Spielberg have also utilized toy soldiers to help map out intricate fighting scenes for their own films.

Co-founder and managing director of King & Country, Andy Neilson is proud to talk of the major influence war movies have had on



"I was inspired by movies like 'Sands of Iwo Jima' and 'Saving Pvt. Ryan' to produce toy soldiers..."

ANDY C. NEILSON

his choice of Subject matter. "I was inspired by movies like *Sands of Iwo Jima* and *Saving Private Ryan* to produce toy soldiers, fighting vehicles and displays that had the same authenticity and excitement as the original movies. We don't replicate actual movies --- there is no Tom Hanks or John Wayne figures but like the movies themselves we try to mirror the actual events." One of King & Country's earlier successes was an authentically detailed Alamo set inspired when Andy viewed the realistic IMAX film on the famous 1836 battle. A film that plays daily in San Antonio, not far from the real Alamo and a great little British style pub with an oversized toy soldier outside called "MadDogs"

## STAR APPEAL

This writer worked as a historical consultant with the well-known military film technical advisor Captain Dale Dye, USMC on John Milius' *Rough Riders* several years back and arranged a dinner between former Royal Marine Neilson and the no nonsense Dye. Dye is well known for his tough and realistic actor boot camps on such films as *Platoon* and *Saving Private Ryan* and most recently

a set of those same little lead World War II Rangers off to Steven Spielberg himself. The director's office was quite taken with the figures and kindly sent an appreciative and complimentary letter all the way back over the Pacific to Hong Kong.

Other similarly film-inspired King & Country sets include Teddy Roosevelt's *Rough Riders* at San Juan Hill brought on by that \$20 million 1997 TNT mini-series of a few years ago. In fact star, Tom Berenger who played Roosevelt in the mini-series, an avid toy soldier fan himself ordered dozens of sets of Neilson's previously issued *Rough Riders* sets to give out as



film. But it has also been fashionable in certain circles to bash the iconic American film hero for not having actually served in the U.S. Armed Forces during World War II. Naysayers and other such negative types should take note though. When John Wayne graduated from high school in 1925 he applied to the U.S. Naval Academy at Annapolis to fulfil his dream of becoming a professional naval officer. From a working class divorced family with no connections it was surprising he got as far as he did, Wayne wound up being the next alternate for appointment to Annapolis, just barely missing

out on one of the coveted slots.

When World War II broke out, Wayne was a star on the cusp, not a major player but someone who after ten years of potboiler "B" movies was finally on the way, but by no means yet the gigantic box office draw he would become during the 1950s. Though a father of three children and exempt from the draft, Wayne tried to enlist early on after America's entrance into the war. Alas he was emphatically turned down because of a bad back from a youthful surfing accident and the battering his body had taken during ten years of doing most of his own stunts in those rough and tumble low budget westerns.

Frustrated, Wayne then wrote his mentor, legendary movie director John Ford who was already a Captain with a special U.S. Naval Field Photographic Unit that was often filming right in the thick of combat.

"Have you got any suggestions on how I should get in? Can I get assigned to your outfit? How about the Marines?" Wayne wrote to Ford.

It's quite evident that John Wayne wanted to serve and would have done almost anything to wear his country's uniform. Given the straight forward kind of individual he was off camera there's no reason to believe that like Jimmy Stewart, Clark Gable, David Niven, Richard Todd, Henry Fonda, Charlton Heston and many other Hollywood stars who served he would have made a good real life soldier, sailor or Marine. As it was he never did. So, his only contribution was to depict the American fighting man to the very best of his ability up there on the silver screen. And this he successfully did in motion picture after motion picture.

Dan Gagliasso is a screenwriter and documentary film producer/director whose work has appeared on TNT, The History Channel and The Discovery Channel.

## PLATOON



"Band of Brothers". After dinner Captain Dye marveled at a beautifully painted set of 1944 U.S. Army Rangers that Neilson presented him with. Dye then soon helped arranged for King & Country to send

special gifts during filming. *Rough Riders*' own director John Milius proudly displays King & Country's entire San Juan Hill battle set in his Warner Brothers office, a post filming gift from star Berenger arranged for by one of King & Country's fellow manufactures, Richard Conte.



From mere children's play things, to modern adult oriented collectibles and movie director's useful tools toy soldiers seem destined to continue to be connected with films in one way or another. These little metal warriors still possess that magic power to bring a collector back to a simpler and more innocent time often evoked by fond memories of well-remembered celluloid rendered battles.





# "Streets" of Newcomers

THE PAST FEW MONTHS has seen a big increase in new releases of "Streets of Old Hong Kong". These additions are some of the best King & Country has produced and look certain to win the "hearts and minds" of "Street" collectors everywhere.

Here's a little bit of background...Set **HK103** "Two Kitchen Helpers" was originally designed as a special Christmas premium giveaway for Pacific Place, Hong Kong's number-one shopping mall and where we have our store. The premium gift was a huge success and so we've produced our own version complete with a completely different paint scheme.



**HK104** "Chinese Kitchen Set" is a totally original piece and shows a busy chef, hard-at-work preparing several delicious dishes. The detail on the food, carving and painting is amazing.



**HK108** "Grandmother & Child" is based on an actual old postcard which featured on the front cover of last "COLLECTOR"...check it out!

**HK109** "The Fruit Seller" is a vastly updated and upgraded version of an older set which was retired in 2001. Again amazing detail...you can almost taste the fruit.



**HK110** "Kids Eating Fruit" is a great little companion piece. One chubby little boy looks hungrily up at this elder brother as he munches his way through a piece of watermelon.



**HK111** "Old Man Pipe-smoking". A common scene in old China. This seated figure puffs away contentedly watching the world go by.

Finally, **HK112** "Sitting Mother & Daughter" a delightful pair...Mother is sitting knitting while her young daughter holds the different balls of wool. These two look terrific sitting side-by-side in our traditional Chinese Pagoda.



## Master Carving

IN THE FIRST INSTALLMENT of this 3-part series I explained the creative process that goes into the 2-dimensional side of designing toy soldiers. Now, in part two we will move from 2D into 3D with the creation of an actual figure...

### MEET THE SCULPTOR

King & Country works with a select group of highly talented and very skilful young Chinese sculptors who are based in mainland China.

Usually, once a week, myself and one of my top creative team go across the border to meet with our K&C sculpting group

leader. We will take anything from 2 to 3 up to 12 or more design sketches for new figures with us.

We sit down with the lead sculptor and, over countless cups of tea and coffee, will brief him on what we require.

It may be some new additions to "Streets of Old Hong Kong". Often, it is the latest ideas for our ever-expanding WWII ranges. Sometimes, it's the beginning of an entirely new series such as our recent "Napoleonic".

Sculptors like everyone else have

their own preferences. Whatever the subject we try to select the right sculptor for the right subject.

One of our young artists has an avid interest in WWII. He is extremely knowledgeable on weapons, equipment and uniforms of that era. He, in fact, has sculpted most of our recent Second World War pieces... and it shows in his work.

Another sculptor is a young lady, only a few years out of Art School in Beijing who is particularly good on our Chinese-themed subjects. Interestingly, she also loves the Napoleonic Era and worked on several important figures for that new range.

Once we've decided on the sculptor we brief them fully on what's required and when. Each figure sketch is also accompanied by reference material to assist the artist in their work. Any potential design problems can be dealt with at this time.

### THE "REAL" WORK BEGINS...

All our sculptors use a special brown clay which comes from the Shan Dong Region of Northern China. It's well-known for its quality and is the perfect sculpting material. To work with this clay the artists use a variety of sculpting tools --- regular sculpting knives and mini scalpels and even dental picks which are excellent for creating extremely fine detail.

First though, before the clay is even touched, the sculptor fashions a small wire frame "skeleton" of the desired figure. This conforms to the basic position required. Then they "flesh-out" this with clay to get a rough approximation of the pose. Finally, using their array of knives, scalpels and picks they expertly cut away, cut into and add all the exact features of the figure. At this stage they add on, if it's a military piece, weapons, equipment and all kinds of extras. These are usually previously cast pieces and help save a lot of time and duplication of effort.

Once a figure is complete I will inspect it with the sculptor. Usually there is some minor alteration --- an arm has to be moved here...the angle of the head should be moved there...a piece of equipment may be in the wrong position. Small amendments that, more often than not, the sculptor can fix there and then. I love watching the sculptors at work it's amazing how quickly they can change the entire animation of a figure in just a few minutes with a couple of deft cuts.

Once final approval is granted, the clay figure must be put into a special mold which produces an exact copy in polyurethane plastic (PU). This, more durable version of the master, is now ready to go off to one of our factories (also in China) to be cast in either white metal or pewter.

*to be continued...*

