

COLLECTOR

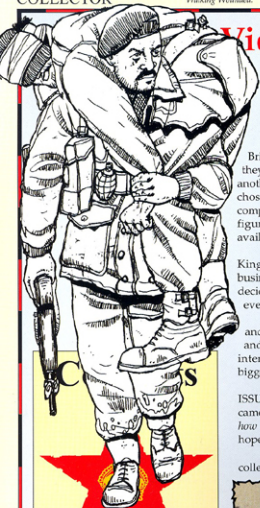
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A Quarterly Look at Our World in Miniature

THE ARNHEM ISSUE

Thousands of men ... hundreds of aircraft
...and just one bloody bridge!





View From The Trenches...

THIS SPECIAL EDITION of "COLLECTOR" is devoted to the Battle of Arnhem and its effect on the history and development of King & Country.

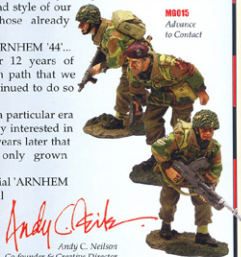
Back in 1995 when we launched our first 'ARNHEM '44' range of British Paratroopers and glider troops little did we know just how much they would influence our company's future. At the time K&C was just another name among many in the world of toy soldiers... The subjects we chose followed a well-worn path trod by many of our better-known competitors. Even the design and style of our figures differed little from those already available on the market.

All of that changed with 'ARNHEM '44'... King & Country at last, after 12 years of business, found the less-trodden path that we decided to follow and have continued to do so ever since.

At the same time I found a particular era and a battle that I was intensely interested in and fascinated by. Almost 13 years later that interest and fascination has only grown bigger.

The stories in this very special 'ARNHEM ISSUE' tell, I hope, how it all came about then and now and how it is all happening again. I hope you enjoy it...

Best wishes and... happy collecting!



MG015
Advance
to Contact

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

2-7
ARNHEM '44
8&9
**ARNHEM...
HEROIC FAILURE**
9-16
**ARNHEM
THE MOVIE**
17-19
**OPERATION
'MARKET GARDEN'**
20
INTERVIEW

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'A Bridge Too Far' director Richard Attenborough inspects a group of young British actors who were military-trained for the movie.

They were known as the APA...
Attenborough's Private Army.

With the recent release of "Operation Market Garden" King & Country has once more returned to the little town in Holland where the Allies suffered their last major defeat of the Second World War... Here's the story by K&C's co-founder, Andy C. Neilson about how it all began... all those years ago...

ARNHEM '44



BACK IN 1994 a mini revolution took place that was to change the face and future of the toy soldier hobby and business... It all began at that year's "Old Toy Soldier Show" in Chicago. As usual in those days King & Country had just one table (about 6 feet by 3 feet) to display our latest releases. This particular show our K&C table was positioned just outside the entrance to the main ballroom where the majority of dealers and traders were located. It was an excellent location because all visitors had to pass by us to enter and exit the hall.

On the opposite side of this area we could see our Hong Kong competitors "Frontline". In the past we had worked together on K&C projects... I had designed our figures and the "Frontline"

boys, Gerard Prime and Howard Swales had carved the master sculpt for our factory in China to produce.

As the years passed we both went our separate ways... "Frontline" to establish their own successful brand of toy soldiers and K&C to collect a team of skilled sculptors in both Hong Kong and China. Now, we enjoyed a friendly but competitive commercial rivalry. Anyway



BREN GUNNER

GLIDER PILOT

PARATROOPER

on this late September morning all of us were in Chicago to display our latest offerings at America's biggest and best toy soldier show. As I began to lay out our newest boxes of *Zulus*... *Highlanders*... *Camd Corps* and other collections I could see over at the *Frontline* table a black cover over theirs. What I wondered did they have up their sleeves...?

Shown above is part of the first advertisement for "ARNHEM '44". The diorama measured 18"x30" and was built over 3 months by Andy himself.

was looking at my shelf of videos at home trying to select a movie to watch that evening. My eyes fell upon "A Bridge Too Far", Richard Attenborough's star-studded epic of the doomed battle of Arnhem in September 1944. "That's it", I thought, "One dramatic battle with lots of exciting events that could be depicted in miniature in toy soldier form!" I began to work almost immediately, watching the movie over and over again whilst taking copious notes about soldiers... uniforms... equipment... weapons... vehicles and a hundred other important points that I would need to design, draw and develop the first figures.

I also made a mental decision that would radically change K&C's figures and eventually most of our competitors... This new series would not be in traditional gloss toy soldier finish... It would be more like the connoisseur painted military miniatures I personally liked so much which were always painted in MATT FINISH. This, I reckoned was much more accurate and importantly, realistic. The Second World War was definitely not a "glossy" subject and the matt finish would reflect the grittiness and reality of the subject matter.

ARNHEM '44 TAKES SHAPE

At King & Country most, if not all, of our series begin at the drawings stage... As a former graduate of Glasgow School of Art (1967-71) I specialized in graphic design and illustration. My illustration skills, such as they are, have been invaluable when it comes to King & Country. I can imagine a figure in a certain pose or position and make a reasonably detailed 2-dimensional sketch representation to show one of our sculptors. Most other companies rely on actual photos or paintings of figures to show their sculptors



ARNHEM '44 was the first real test of trying to replicate what I felt sure actual soldiers looked like (and acted like) in real combat situations. Having been in the military myself... (The Royal Marines and The Royal Hong Kong Regiment) I attempted to illustrate actual soldiers in real life-like combat situations. Over the following days and weeks I drew literally dozens of black and white sketches of the first paratroopers and glider pilots K&C would, hopefully produce. Once I was satisfied I had enough I laid all of the drawings on the floor and selected the best to go to the next stage... carving the masters.

In those days K&C did not have our own team of skilled master carvers... we employed two local Hong Kong sculptors on a freelance basis. I chose the elder and more experienced of the pair to take on this first major K&C project.

Left: Actor Edward Fox portrays Gen. Brian Horrocks, commander of XXX Corps in the movie "A Bridge Too Far".



what they require. In my opinion this often limits the variety of poses that can be reproduced and sometimes affects the animation of the figure itself.

Left: Sergeant Walker of the Airborne Forces Photographic Unit who took many of the battle photos at Arnhem.

that I had not seen before in our work. I complimented him and urged him on to complete all of the first series selection. Another few weeks passed before Mr. Y. returned again with the balance of the figures. I was delighted. Even in their raw, resin state there was a life to them that was so exciting - I could not wait to get them cast in metal and "master-painted". This we did over the following months.

This particular pose has appeared in both ARNHEM series... Why? It's just so natural and realistic.

I showed Mr. Y., my choice, gave him the drawings plus a huge file of reference photographs of relevant weapons, uniforms and other equipment and off he went to work.

A few weeks later he returned with his first "sculpt". I was "boiled-over"... He had captured exactly what I had in mind and had given each a unique "character"



On Sunday 17 September 1944, three airborne divisions, two American and one British, descended on occupied Holland to seize a number of vital road and rail bridges. Codenamed "Market Garden".

ARNHEM '44

This operation, if successful, might have ended the war in Europe by Christmas 1944. Unfortunately, it all came tragically undone in a small town called ARNHEM.

8 DIFFERENT SETS

With three you releases (and more on the way) King & Country provide collectors with a unique reminder of this epic battle.

Each piece is skillfully painted in a high quality finish.

Each piece is skillfully painted in a high quality finish. Each piece is skillfully painted in a high quality finish.

Each piece is skillfully painted in a high quality finish. Each piece is skillfully painted in a high quality finish.



KING & COUNTRY SHOP 362, PACIFIC PLACE, 88 QUEENSWAY, HONG KONG. TEL. (852) 2525 8603 FAX : (852) 2861 3806

By early 1995 we were eagerly awaiting the "Counter Samples". I well remember the evening when those very first samples arrived at our office in Hong Kong from the factory in mainland China. I took the courier-delivered package and unwrapped it to inspect its contents...

One by one K&C's paratroopers and glider pilots emerged from their bubble-wrapped cocoons to parade for inspection onto the polished wooden table in our small conference room. With each new emerging figure my smile grew wider and wider. Of course, I hoped they would be good but never did I think they would be so good! At that time in our little conference room we had a small fridge in one corner. I went to it and extracted a bottle Tsing Tao (a famous Chinese beer). This, I thought, deserves a celebration. With my bottle of ice cold beer I settled in my chair and looked at our latest collection of little toy soldiers. I was so happy because I felt, at long last, myself and K&C had found the future direction we wanted to go in. After so many years of looking and searching for the way ahead and either going off on tangents or down the wrong road suddenly, at long last, the path seemed so obvious and crystal clear.

Counter-Samples The first factory copies of any item submitted to a client by a factory for approval or alteration prior to beginning final full-scale production.

By the time this brochure appeared K&C had added hand-carved, all-wood Philippine-made armoured vehicles.

PREPARE TO LAUNCH...

Once K&C had the figures we then had to decide where and when to launch them... The answer could only be - Chicago, at the OTSN show in late September 1995. First however, I decided to take a trip to a place I had only read about in books and seen in documentaries and movies... a little Dutch town called ARNHEM.

In mid September 1995 I flew to Amsterdam and took the train to Arnhem. I then made my way on foot to just outside the town to where the "Hartenstein Hotel" stood. During the battle this was the headquarters of the beleaguered British 1st Airborne Division led by Major General Roy Urquhart... a

few Scot. Sometime in the 1980's the hotel was taken over and completely renovated to become the "Airborne Museum". It was run and operated by a dedicated team of local volunteers and skilled museum professionals. I had two reasons for visiting... To see the battlefield for myself... And to present the Museum with some of these first replicas in miniature of the men who had fought during that heroic but doomed struggle to capture the bridge.

Upon arrival at the Hartenstein I met up with one of the curators, Mr. Wybo BOERSMA who gave me a personal guided tour of the exhibits and a look behind-the-scenes at their underground store where they kept extra exhibits and all kinds of battle-related items such as uniforms, weapons and other equipment. Wybo informed me that even then (back in '95) all kinds of



The Hartenstein Hotel... now the Airborne Museum... as it is today.

objects and bits 'n' bobs were still being dug up in people's gardens... found in attics... or discovered deep in the middle of the forests that still surround Arnhem. Some of these "finds" were quite amazing... He told me about a large British parachute container which had been dropped during the battle and buried itself deep in someone's garden, been covered up and forgotten about for over 50 years. A few weeks previously, it had been accidentally dug up by a mechanical excavator. Inside were medical supplies and hundreds of field dressings in virtually "mint" condition. Graciously, he presented me with two of these field dressings, clearly marked and date-stamped "March 1944".

BATTLEFIELD TOUR

After several hours at the museum Wybo invited me to accompany him on a "personal" guided tour of the main DZ's (Drop zones) for the paratroopers and LZ's (Landing zones) for the gliders several miles outside of town. Most of these historic sites still remain unaltered since 1944 and I eagerly accepted.

Off we went in Wybo's little car to

explore. Once we arrived we got out and my guide explained "who landed where and what happened at that location". It's always exciting to stand on actual battle positions and look around at the same scenery and landscape others must have viewed all those years



before. Wybo then suggested we follow, by car, the exact route the British 1st Airborne's *Recco Squadron* took in their jeep as they headed towards Arnhem. Along

the way he pointed out German positions where the British were ambushed and delayed as they tried to reach their objective: the bridge. As a former soldier myself I tried to imagine what it must have felt like to be "pinned-down" and under constant enemy machine gun, sniper and mortar-fire on that road into Arnhem.

Finally, we drove on into the town itself and parked under one of the main concrete supports of the Arnhem bridge. Getting out we climbed some nearby steps up and onto the bridge. Today's structure is almost an exact replica of the original one (that was destroyed by the Germans themselves in early 1945). It has been named "Colonel John Frost Bridge" after the commanding officer of the 2nd Parachute Battalion, who captured one end of the bridge and held it against fearful odds for almost 5 days during the battle. Again, for me, it was a very solemn moment to stand on such a famous location and, in my mind's eye and ear, see and hear the approach of a mighty German counter-attack. Both of

Left: The Osterbeek Church.

Below: Along with our second edition Farus made several hand-carved, all-wood 1:32 scale HORSAs gliders.

"What does it take to capture just one lousy bridge?"

On Sunday 17 September 1944, three airborne divisions - two American, one British descended on occupied Holland to seize a number of vital road and rail bridges.

Operation "Market Garden", if successful, would have ended the war in Europe by Christmas that year.

Unfortunately, everything came tragically undone in a little known Dutch town called...ARNHEM.



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us stood there in the early cool September evening remembering the doomed bravery and heroism of the British 1st Airborne men.

CHICAGO '95

After my trip to Holland it was a quick visit back to the UK and up to see my parents in Scotland before catching a flight to Chicago.

In Chicago, at the show venue, several large boxes awaited me. These contained many boxes of our new ARNHEM'44 figures and a special mini-display to show off the figures. Being the eternal optimist I had dispatched 30 sets of each of the initial two sets of British paratroopers for sale.

I was quietly encouraged during the days prior to the Sunday show by the enthusiastic support (and sales) we did out of our "room trading" upstairs. In fact, by the end of Saturday we had already sold two thirds of our ARNHEM stock!

Was that a fluke... a coincidence... or what? The show on Sunday would tell us one way... or the other. Sunday dawned a bright, crisp fall morning. After setting up our small table (still only one) I went outside to inspect the growing number of collectors quietly forming up to enter the show. Not a bad crowd I thought, "I wonder how many might be interested in our

little British paratroopers?" Well, I answered myself, we'll soon know!

Within one hour of the show opening my best hopes were realized we sold out! All remaining ARNHEM'44 stock was gone and, regrettably, we had to disappoint several K&C collectors who arrived late at the event. The response to these little matt-painted figures was very encouraging. Who, back then, could ever have imagined that one day this would be the norm... and it would be the traditional glossy toy soldier that would become an endangered species?

ADDITIONAL REINFORCEMENTS

In the years that followed ARNHEM'44 grew into a series that encompassed more than 17 different figure sets. Included among them were an anti-tank gun... several airborne jeeps... and even an armoured car!

ARNHEM'44 also encouraged K&C to design and develop a range of papier-mache, hand-painted, Philippine-made "Backlot Buildings". These could be utilized in a wide variety of ways to provide a display setting for the figures and fighting vehicles. Simultaneously we began to experiment with different production materials (like polystone) which

provided us with a cheaper and more durable method of reproducing our scale-model vehicles. At one point we even produced several huge 1:32 scale, hand-carved models of the Horsa gliders which flew troops, supplies and heavier equipment into Arnheim.

THE MATT REVOLUTION

This first matt-painted range was the series that put King & Country firmly on the toy soldier map. It lifted us out of the "also-rans" and taught us many, many valuable lessons about ourselves... the hobby... and the future of the business. Those lessons are still as valuable and relevant today as they were then. We're still learning and trying to improve. Perhaps that's just one of the important reasons we're "revisiting" Arnheim today with our latest "Operation Market Garden". With the growth and development of K&C in recent years the creative possibilities of where the new series will take us are boundless... and very exciting. None of us know where K&C or "Operation Market Garden" will go but what we do know is that it's going to be a whole lot of fun getting there!

Below: The final ARNHEM'44 releases launched in 2001.

Thousands of men ... hundreds of aircraft ... impossible odds ... and just one bridge!

ARNHEM'44 FIVE ALL-NEW SETS



HORSA GLIDER

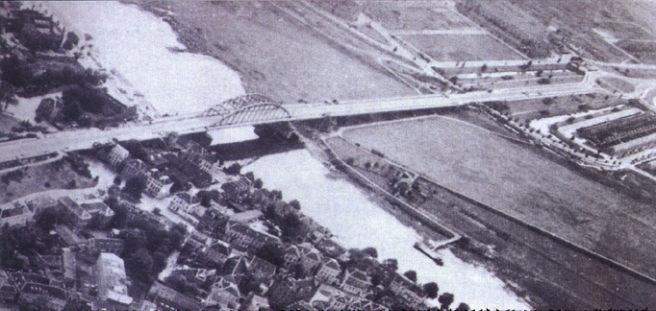
1:32 scale, hand-carved, hand-painted display model in kiln-dried mahogany wood. Available by special order.

Length: 25 1/2"
Wingspan: 31"

KING & COUNTRY
FIRST WITH THE BEST!

STREET FIGHTERS AN012

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If Operation "Market Garden" had succeeded it might have ended the war in Europe by Christmas 1944...

ARNHEM... HEROIC FAILURE

BY THE AUTUMN OF 1944 the last main obstacle barring the Western Allies' way into The Third Reich was... the Rhine River. Already France had been liberated, parts of Belgium freed and the German Army appeared to be retreating on all fronts. Now, British Field Marshall Bernard Montgomery decided, was the time to strike!

Montgomery came up with a bold, daring plan that envisioned the *Allied Airborne Army* - two U.S. and one British Airborne divisions seizing important bridges over the lower Rhine and other waterways in Holland. British ground forces would then rapidly advance up through an "airborne-held" corridor and straight into the heart of Hitler's Germany. General Dwight D. Eisenhower, Supreme Allied Commander, readily gave his assent to the plan on September 10, 1944. Just 7 days later Operation "Market Garden" was mounted.

SO FAR... SO GOOD!

The two American formations... the 101st Airborne and the 82nd Airborne were successfully dropped around Eindhoven and Grave in the south of the country. Both began to achieve their goals almost immediately.



For the British 1st Airborne their task, which was the furthest away, was to capture the vital road and rail bridges at *Arnhem*, the northernmost objective.

Simultaneously the British ground forces, XXX Corps, led by Major General Brian Horrocks, set off from their "start points" and began to move north. They would relieve and replace the airborne divisions as they passed through them.

That was the plan... the reality was to be very different.

THE BEST LAID PLANS...

It was not long before the flaws in Montgomery's plan came to the surface... First, the British paratroops and glider forces were dropped too far, 6 miles (10kms) from their main objective... the road bridge at Arnhem. To further complicate matters two SS Panzer Divisions were refitting and reequipping in the area. Intelligence reports by the Dutch resistance and aerial reconnaissance confirming the SS presence in and around the town were either ignored or rejected by the British.

Left: One of the iconic Arnhem images - a British mortar crew in action.

Above: An aerial reconnaissance photo of the famous bridge taken a few days before the airborne assault.

ARNHEM The Movie

IN THE SUMMER OF 1976, thirty-two years after the event, a movie company descended on Holland determined to film one of the last great battles of the Second World War.

The battle was the desperate, doomed struggle of the British 1st Airborne division in September 1944. The movie was to be a US\$20 million (about \$200 million in today's money) retelling of the tragic but heroic tale utilizing many of Hollywood's brightest stars and most experienced talents. The man behind the movie was Joseph E. Levine, one of the best known and boldest producers in Hollywood with more than 500 films to his credit. His idea was to use author Cornelius Ryan's blockbuster book, *"A Bridge Too Far"* as the basis for his picture.

Many books had already been written about the battle but Ryan chose to use a far wider "canvas" to show the entire operation - from both sides. He had already used this same technique before... most notably and successfully with his earlier book on D. Day... *"The Longest Day"*. That had also been turned into an epic, star-studded movie which was a "blockbuster" at the box office. Would history repeat itself?

STEADY HANDS AT THE HELM

Levine wanted this movie to be the biggest of his career - both in terms of budget and success. His choice of director for the epic was crucial and for this key position he selected Sir Richard Attenborough - one of Britain's best actors and an accomplished film director as well.

Another vital decision Levine made was to make the entire film on location in Holland. As early as 1975 Attenborough and some of his team carried out a wide-ranging reconnaissance of that country in order to find the perfect location for the action. Most importantly they had to find a bridge that would represent the actual "Bridge Too Far".

Sadly, the actual Arnhem bridge could not be used because of too many modern buildings and roadways surrounding it. Another important consideration was that the same Arnhem bridge was such an important traffic junction for all of Holland that it would be impossible to close it down while filming for even an hour or two



Above: A few survivors of the battle... safe again.

Elsewhere, a US officer was captured carrying (against orders) a full set of plans detailing the entire operation... and its objectives. To further add to the Allied woes XXX Corps was finding it increasingly difficult to advance along their single axis route because of repeated German ambushes and counter-attacks. Their finely-tuned military timetable, which depended on a rapid advance was becoming rapidly undone.

Eventually however XXX Corps did link up with both the 101st and 82nd. Arnhem alas, lay just outside their grasp.

THE ARNHEM CAULDRON

In Arnhem itself the military situation for the British 1st Airborne had gone from bad... to worse! Originally the paratroopers had been told to expect "light opposition" - old men and young boys... After landing they quickly realized they were up against two battle-hardened divisions of veteran

plight of the British grew steadily more desperate by the hour. Eventually the order was given to withdraw. Slowly, silently the men slipped away from their trenches and dugouts and made their way back to Allied lines.

By September 27, a full ten days after the initial drop the battered remnants of the Division, just 2,163 men, out of an original strength of over 10,000 made it back safely. Left behind were more than 1,200 dead... 2,000 wounded and almost



4,500 captured or missing. The British 1st Airborne Division had been effectively "wiped-out" as a fighting force.

And so, the bold, brave plan to "end the war by Christmas" lay bruised and broken on the bloody streets and bridge of Arnhem... just another little town in Holland.

AIRBORNE

SS Panzer Grenadiers with heavy armour.

Although reinforced later by the Polish Parachute Brigade the lightly armed British paratroopers and glider forces soon found themselves blocked... cut off... and eventually surrounded far from their original objectives.

As the Germans continued to strengthen their forces in the battle area the



Above: A roadside grave of a fallen British Paratrooper.



One of the most famous scenes in the movie... the first German counter-attack led by SS Hauptsturmführer Gribner to try to recapture the British end of the bridge.

Anyone who knows anything about the Battle of Arnhem probably knows a lot about the movie "A Bridge Too Far". This epic, star-studded motion picture was the last of its kind... A big budget, wide screen extravaganza... with NO computer generated wizardry... Here's an inside look at some aspects of the making of it...



Left: Walking Wounded... movie version.

THE HARTENSTEIN HOTEL

This diorama was the K&C centerpiece for the most recent OTSN Show held in Chicago this past September. It was bought at the show by a dedicated collector. When this original photo was taken, King & Country's latest British paratroopers were not yet completed. Many of the figures and vehicles shown in the photo are a mixture of the original ARNHEM '44 series and pre-production prototypes.

Diorama by Gordon C. Neilson







without wreaking havoc on the entire Dutch traffic system.

Finally, after an exhaustive search, a suitable "movie" bridge was found just 35 kilometres north of Arnhem at Deventer. Here, the bridge was perfect... the right length, the right width and... almost exactly the same architectural style as the famous Arnhem construction.

Another big "plus" - there were no new buildings around each end and the surrounding area looked virtually the same as it did in 1944! Near one side of the bridge a large, empty carpark provided the film company with an area to build a group of eight typical Dutch houses to represent those in Arnhem where Lt. Col. John Frost's 2nd Parachute Battalion held out for almost 5 days of fighting.

The town of Deventer also provided the "base" for the film unit to build and store "props" and house the military vehicles, uniforms, weapons and equipment needed for cast and crew.

MEANWHILE ACROSS THE POND

Elsewhere... in America, Joe Levine had commissioned famous screenwriter William Goldman (Butch

Cassidy & *The Sundance Kid*, *The Boys From Brazil* and many others) to write the film script.

In Europe director Attenborough's military experts were combing the continent for all kinds of military hardware - especially Sherman tanks! There were quite a few around... on display in museums and private collections. The problem was that not many of them were actually in running order... Eventually however the film company found nine that could actually move under their own power. Not really enough for an epic however. A suitable solution was to manufacture another dozen "fiber glass" Shermans and "mount" them on long-wheel base Land Rovers. Perfect for static shots... if they had to move, the camera crew had to make sure only to show them from the hull up!

The majority of the other military vehicles used came from just two British sources in the UK... trucks (both British and American), jeeps (dozens of them), halftracks, armoured cars, motorcycles, antitank guns, ambulances and even a NAAFI Tea Van joined a huge military convoy

Below: A small part of the movie's XXX Corps prepare to move out.

From left to right: Producer Joseph E. Levine, Screenwriter William Goldman and Director Richard Attenborough.

heading for Holland in the early Spring of 1976. An entire Cross Channel Ferry had to be hired to transport the vehicles from England to Holland.

And here's an additional bit of information... All of the armour used in the film... tanks (both real and fake) and armoured cars were crewed by genuine British Army personnel "on leave" from the Rhine Army in Germany. A very good friend of mine Colonel Wade Russell of the Royal Tank Regiment was a young captain at the time and led a contingent of "tenkies" to take part in the film.

UNIFORMS & WEAPONS

In a movie as big and important as "A Bridge Too Far" it was essential to get even the smallest details historically correct and accurate. Uniforms in particular must have the right "look" and "feel". This movie excelled itself in that

One of the rare Sherman tanks that could actually move under its own power - crewed by regular British Army personnel.





Actor Dirk Bogarde portraying Maj. Gen. 'Boy' Browning inside one of the mocked-up movie Horsa gliders.

respect. Wardrobe Master, Tony Mendelson, took immense care to ensure correct badges, ranks, medal ribbons and dozens of other uniform and costume details were "spot on". Even to the extent of copying Airborne Commander "Boy" Browning's unique RFC-style jacket worn by actor Dirk Bogarde in the film. Mendelson and his team often had to "dress" literally hundreds of different "extras" every day for certain scenes. To find the vintage WW2 uniforms the Wardrobe Unit scoured Military Surplus stores in Britain, Holland and the U.S. In addition hundreds of uniforms were hired from specialist costume suppliers in the U.K. especially the German ones. Their warehouse in Deventer was floor-to-ceiling with racks of British battle dress, Waffen SS Camouflage smocks, US Airborne combat jackets and pants, army boots of all shapes, sizes and nations as well as steel helmets and



hundreds of sets of period civilian clothes.

Wardrobe and Makeup also work hand-in-hand. So after "dressing" the hundreds of "extras" they had, in many cases, to get a nice, short 1940's hair cut! This was not so popular with many of the long-haired male Dutch extras back in the mid 1970's. However, once a financial incentive was added... short hair was no longer a problem.

GUNS, GUNS & MORE GUNS

In a war movie all kinds of potentially lethal hardware are required. They have to be safe and secure at all times and in line working order. The UK firm of Bapty & Co. are the movie world's acknowledged experts at supplying, securing and handling all manner of weaponry (from ancient to modern and everything in between).



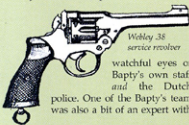
Lee Enfield Rifle

"A Bridge too Far" required almost enough firearms to start a small war... British Bren Guns, Stens, Lee Enfields, Vickers Machine Guns, American M1 Garand's, Carbines, "Tommy Guns", German Schneiders, K98 Mauser Rifles, MG42 Machine Guns and a range of mortars for everyone!

Mk. V Sten Gun



Most of these were blank-firing but there were also "dummy" wood and rubber replicas used for background scenes. All of them had to be "signed out" and "signed in"... cleaned every day after every use... and kept secure under the



Webley .38 service revolver

watchful eyes of Bapty's own staff and the Dutch police. One of the Bapty's team was also a bit of an expert with

the PIAT and the director used him to great effect "knocking-out" several German tanks with perfectly aimed dummy rounds.

TALKING OF EXPERTS...

In any movie dealing with the biggest Airborne operation of the Second World War it was essential to obtain the proper aircraft and

professional paratroopers for the "big jump".

For that Richard Attenborough turned to the "real" forces. Twelve C47 "Dakotas" and their crews were hired from the Danish and Finnish Air Forces to drop the Paras. The men themselves came for the 1st Battalion, The Parachute Regiment (350 of them) plus a small supply drop section from the Royal Corps of Transport. Another 50 Belgian Para Commandos played members of the US 82nd Airborne. In addition 30 regular British Royal Air Force officers and men were responsible for all aircrew training, safety and dispatch.

The Dutch Army itself provided several modern-day German Leopard tanks which were cleverly disguised as WW2 German armour.

Finally, 30 young British actors were put through a form of basic training, battle tactics, weapon handling and physical fitness by the film company's own military advisers to provide "trained" extras in many of the movie's most memorable scenes. They called themselves "The APA"... Attenborough's Private Army.

British 36 Mills hand grenade



A squadron of C47's lined up to load several hundred 'genuine' paratroopers - not movie extras!



AIR SUPPORT

In a movie with such an important aerial component "Bridge" made do with what they had rather than what they might have liked or what was historically accurate...

Earlier I wrote about the dozen C47 transport aircraft used for the parachute drops. These were all repainted to resemble wartime US Army Air Corps aircraft and worked beautifully. Perhaps less successful were the four AT 6 "Harvards" (a WW2 training airplane) which had raised backs and were then RAF camouflaged to vaguely (very vaguely) look like Hawker Typhoons. An Auster spotter-plane also put in a brief appearance as well as a low-flying photo reconnaissance Spitfire.

Perhaps the film's greatest aerial achievement was one that never actually got off the ground... the Horsa Gliders! Before filming began the film unit had tried to find any WW2 Horsa Gliders that were still available. To their dismay they found none. A decision was then made that they would build eight brand-new ones from still existing plans. It was hoped that at least two of these could be built to flying standard for take off and landing scenes. Alas the movie's insurance company forbade that so all of the film "Horsas" were either static or could be towed

around an airfield or positioned on a landing ground solely for film purposes. All eight plus a few more two-dimensional "flat" gliders were built in Holland at the company's Deventer prop warehouse. Sadly all were broken-up after filming was complete.

STARS IN BATTLEDRESS

Next to "The Longest Day", this film boasts one of the largest



A genuine WW2 Spitfire pretending to be on photo reconnaissance.



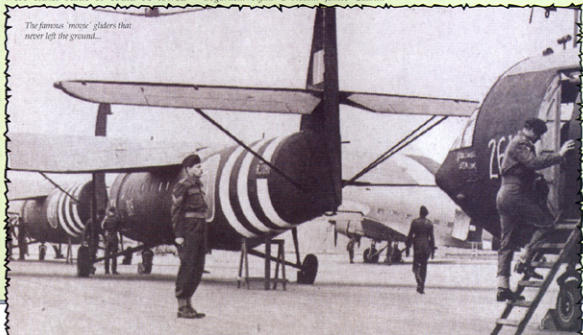
McQueen and Paul Newman (for the part of Major Julian Cook later played by Robert Redford).

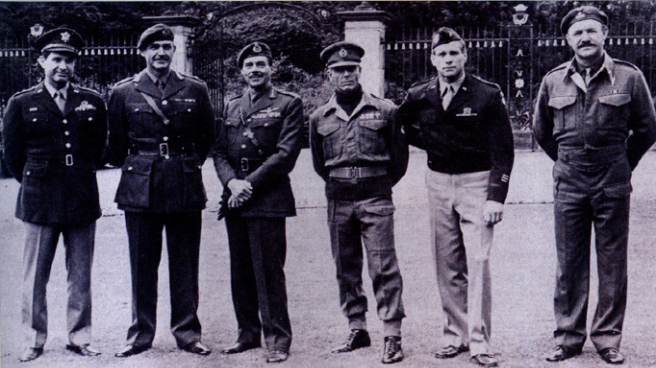
gatherings of top flight movie stars of the 1970's cinema... Robert Redford... Sean Connery... Michael Caine... Anthony Hopkins... Laurence Olivier... Dirk Bogarde... Ryan O'Neal... James Caan...

When the movie was released in late 1977 some critics complained that Ryan O'Neal was far too young to play Brig. Gen. James Gavin of the 82nd Airborne. Actually, at time of filming O'Neal was 37... Gavin during

Above: Actor Ryan O'Neal as General Jim Gavin

The famous 'movie' gliders that never left the ground...





Operation 'Market Garden' was just 36!

Among the other stars there were few who had actually been in the military... the notable exceptions were... *Dirk Bogarde* who had been an officer in Normandy, Germany and the Far East during the war... *Michael Caine* who had fought as an infantryman during the Korean War... *Gene Hackman* who had been a US Marine after the Second World War and *Sean Connery* who had

Above: General lineup... Actors Paul Maxwell, Sean Connery, Dirk Bogarde, Edward Fox, Ryan O'Neal and Gene Hackman - ready for inspection.

Major General Roy Urquhart (Sean Connery) actually visited the movie set during filming.

THE FINAL VERDICT

In this writer's opinion "A Bridge Too Far" is one of the best war films of its time. It tells a complicated story in a clear precise way through a series of dramatic "vignettes" that show the all-too human side of warfare. At the same time the sheer size and scope of the action fill the screen many times over. Among the best scenes are the sight (and sound) of XXX Corps formed up and ready to go along miles and miles of Dutch roads... Hundreds of paratroopers and glider troops lined up and boarding their transports preparing to fly to Holland... And the sight of those massed aircraft disgorging stick upon stick of paratroopers until their mushroom chutes full the entire sky and screen. These are just a few of my personal favourites. Perhaps one of my regrets in the movie is that it's not adequately explained (or shown)

how quickly the Germans managed to react and upturn the entire British plan by pulling together small fighting units to ambush and delay the advancing paratroopers. I also found the ending of the movie very downbeat. Of course it was a defeat but the British 1st Airborne held out for almost 10 days (against the 2 days that they were expected to).



served in the Royal Navy.

All of the actors however did a fine job of portraying real-life characters some of whom such as Colonel John Frost (played by Anthony Hopkins) and



The movie also conveniently and surprisingly leaves out Field Marshal Montgomery from the action which is quite amazing since it was originally his plan. However, "A Bridge Too Far" is still a great "must-see" movie... especially for enthusiasts and toy soldier collectors of Operation "Market Garden". See it again soon!



*Far Left: Michael Caine as Lt. Col 'Joe' Vandeleur
Middle: Sean Connery as Maj. Gen. Roy Urquhart
Above: Gene Hackman as Maj. Gen. Stanislaw Sosabowski*

OPERATION 'MARKET GARDEN'

As these latest British airborne troops begin to reach K&C collectors all over the world it might be interesting to consider their background...

KING & COUNTRY'S FASCINATION with the Second World War is already well-known and long established. Although our Hong Kong-based company cannot claim to be the very first to ever produce an all-metal, hand-painted WWII Soldier we are the toy soldier maker who has specialized and developed the market for this conflict and taken it to new heights... both in quality and quantity.

It's true to say (if a little immodest) that many new collectors to this military miniature hobby were first attracted to toy soldiers by seeing a K&C Second World War release. As written elsewhere in this special edition of "COLLECTOR" the original ARNHEM '44 series brought K&C to the attention of a multitude of existing toy soldier collectors around the world. At the same time, a host of brand-new collectors who had, in many cases, never seen a toy soldier in their life were also attracted.

When we retired the original series it was always our intention to return to it at some point. Our principal reason for the retirement was that creatively the company had progressed 'leaps and bounds' since the first British Airborne figures and fighting vehicles had been released. As we felt, the original series no longer reflected the new, improved quality of our sculpting... painting... and even packaging. So, sadly, they had to be let go...



GONE BUT NOT FORGOTTEN...

And then a strange phenomena began... Within a couple of years of their retirement collectors (both old and new) began to seek out these original paratroopers, glider pilots and their vehicles...

Ebay auctions and private sales saw the value and price of "mint" condition ARNHEM '44 sets go "sky high". Even all of us at K&C were amazed and sometimes shocked by the resale value of our old product. "What", we pondered, "was going on?" The answer, of course, was deceptively simple... The subject matter was still very popular all over the globe. In addition with the growth of an army



of new K&C collectors a sizeable number of them were particularly interested in the 'heritage' of the company and what had been released in the past. ARNHEM '44 for all of these reasons seemed to be the most popular.

Here in Hong Kong at Head Office that got us thinking... "Was it time to revisit that little Dutch town and the epic but doomed battle fought there..." As if to push us forward in making a positive decision on the matter we had, over the years, received a small but steady stream

of emails... faxes... and letters from collectors urging us to reissue ARNHEM'44. For already stated reasons that did not exactly excite either myself or the rest of the creative team. However, after several long meetings over a number of months in early 2007 we decided "What the heck...", "Let's do it! Let's go for a brand-new series."

GREEN FOR GO...

Now, as regular readers of "COLLECTOR" already know, K&C attempts to collect a wealth of background details and visual information before we begin any new project... This proposed new range of British airborne was no different... Myself and our creative team began to search out and assemble quite a substantial file of photographs... illustrations... books... movies... documentary videos and dvd's... anything in fact that would help our research.

Obviously we also took another look at our earlier ARNIEM44 figures and vehicles. That was an interesting exercise in its own right. Studying these pieces again we discussed what had been most successful... how we could improve them and... what K&C had not been able to do back then because of our own lack of skill, knowledge and expertise. It proved to be very valuable in the development of the new series which by now we had "christened" ... *Operation "Market Garden"*.

SO, WHAT COMES FIRST?

In designing and developing any new series or range of figures it's vitally important to select the best composition for the first few sets...

What should that be? Because of our earlier experience with



Above: One of the many colour references used by K&C... courtesy of Histoire & Collections.

ARNHEM'44 we knew just how popular vehicle sets were... particularly jeep sets! Let's begin there. Our first project was to look into how these were used at Arnhem and what they were used for.

That led us directly to British 1st Airborne Division's own Reconnaissance Squadron (commonly known as the Recon Squadron). These heavily armed jeeps and their crews were tasked with heading directly for the bridge immediately after landing by glider. Alas they ran into a series of ambushes on the way and subsequently suffered heavy casualties in both men and vehicles.

The Recce Squadron seemed a good unit to begin with and we



Above: A memorable scene showing the German counter-attack from 'A Bridge too Far'

and uniforms. In addition K&C were in the fortunate position of knowing personally the authors of two of the most authoritative and most recent photo illustrated books on Britain's airborne forces... *Harlan Glenn* and *Jean Bouchery* quite simply the best in their field.

After completing work on both projects we focused our attention on the figures. Here again our ever-growing photo library proved invaluable. We modeled several of our pieces directly from actual pictures taken during the battle in and around Arnhem. Some others we "sourced" from an excellent souvenir booklet which was produced to promote "A Bridge Too Far"-the star-studded epic war movie released in 1977. Several figures came from that little magazine most notably our kneeling officer with an umbrella (MG014).



Airborne Jeep
and Trailer



MC001
'Reece' long

As our enthusiasm and energy for the project grew so to did the number of figures. Originally I planned on a relatively modest 12 figures with perhaps one jeep for first release. Now, we were well over 20 figures with 2 jeeps and an anti tank gun.

Sometimes it's very hard to contain creative people's enthusiasm and energy. Eventually however we did call a halt and stopped to consider what we had produced. It's a very exciting moment to sit



back and look at all of your sculpted masters on the conference table ready for selection. With the creative team present we began to group singles... doubles... and trebles into their respective sets. There were so many that we made the decision to launch this first release over two months... *November and December 2007.*

Once that was complete we also decided to give each soldier a rank and name... it just seemed to add a little extra character and personality to every piece.

Then it was on to one of, what I think is, the most interesting and fun aspects of the business... "master painting" each individual figure and fighting vehicle.

As you can imagine this takes a long time and demands very, very high levels of figure painting skills. K&C is blessed to have three of the best in the business... two at our head office in Hong Kong and another in our sculpting studio in mainland China. The two men and a lady who perform these duties are true artists and immensely talented. All of them have been with K&C for many years and I never fail to be impressed by their talents, dedication and artistic skill. After I personally approve each and every master-painted figure and fighting vehicle its off to any one of our factories in China for mass reproduction.

MEANWHILE

BACK AT THE RANCH...

That, of course, is not the end of our project... Back in Hong Kong at head office we were already hard at work on the design and production of special "ARNHEM" packaging... proposed

advertising and promotional materials plus the idea to build a massive 6' x 2' Amherst diorama that would be the focal point of our new Operation "Market Garden" display at the upcoming Chicago Show in late September 2007.

For three months prior to Chicago, whilst the first releases are being manufactured in China, the K&C head office is a hive of activity. Operation "Market Garden" is not K&C's only release at that time there are other ongoing projects which are being carefully nurtured and developed for release in and around the same period.

However, this particular new range has a long and cherished place in the K&C story and demands high priority. We hope you agree.



THE NEW YORK TIMES

RIGHT AT ARNHEM IS WITHOUT MERCY

Our Sky Troops in Netherland Pocket Hold Off Nazis—Hear

British Game Approaching



MG019
Airborne 6 pounder
Anti Tank Gun Set



By STANLEY MAXTED
For Combined Allied Press

WITH ALLIED AIRBORNE

FORCES in the Arnhem Area, the Netherlands, Sept. 20 (UP)—Fighting is continuing bitterly throughout this area. There have been moments when the situation looked very sticky, but the U.S. forces are holding their positions. The U.S. forces are holding their positions. The U.S. forces are holding their positions.

This is the fourth day and the ears are wide open to the guns ten miles away, while the British Second Army is appealing from the south to relieve the surrounded bunch of fighters who are hanging on and punching with a steadily rising enemy.

Sniping is going on contin-
It seems to come from the most
unexpected places; but the mortar-
ing is worst of all.

In a nearby town the Germans are sniping from the houses, firing even on medical parties.

Fighting is the most relentless I
have ever seen. There is no quar-



Above: A mixed selection of our latest Peris.

The first of an occasional series... K&C's Andrew Morrill talks to

Gordon C. Neilson, the man behind many of the company's amazing displays.

INTERVIEW

Gordon Cairns Neilson was born in Renfrew, Scotland on October 10th, 1952. As a child, Gordon had an avid interest in history and consistently excelled in that subject. After completing his formal education in the United Kingdom, Gordon worked as a Civil Servant and accountant. He moved to Hong Kong in 1984 in order to work with his older brother, Andy, and a little-known start-up toy soldier business... called *King & Country*. Now, *King & Country's Master Diorama Builder*, Gordon has worked at the company for over 23 years.

Throughout his career Gordon has produced some extraordinary pieces, not the least of which are the four elaborate displays he created for the 2007 OTSN Show in Chicago. To give our readers further insight into how Gordon designs and builds these incredible dioramas, I interviewed him recently.

K&C: Good morning Gordon, thank you for taking the time to speak with me today. Take us back to the beginning, how and when did K&C start making dioramas?

GCN: This goes back to when we launched our first matt series, ARNHEM '44, about 12 years ago. Arnhem was our first real run-away hit with a worldwide audience. In promoting it, Andy built a couple of diorama displays to show off these new figures at our flagship store here in Hong Kong. A customer came in and really liked the figures with the display and offered to purchase the whole thing. After that we realized that selling displays along with our figures was something some of our collectors might like.

K&C: How did you get involved with diorama building?

GCN: When I first started at K&C my time was split between working in the shop and head office. The days when I was in the shop, aside from selling, I would assemble small displays that I thought showed off the sets to their best advantage. Our collectors liked this a lot because it demonstrated how to display their figures... especially WWII... in a different manner than simply on parade.

One of the things we always say at K&C is that 'each set tells a story'. My displays help to 'tell' that story.

K&C: A lot of collectors associate your dioramas with the OTSN Chicago Show. When did K&C first make dioramas to appear there?

GCN: When we first started going to the Chicago Show, we used it as a place to sell our figures. But, as K&C became a larger

manufacturer and started selling to dealers in the US, we changed our policy about selling directly to the public at that show. Instead, we wanted to support our dealers who were selling our figures there. One way we came up with to do that was to make some additional dioramas specifically for the show that would feature our new releases. It was a pleasant surprise that there were customers at the show who also wanted to purchase these dioramas. Over the years we have continued to create very special, and large, dioramas for that event.

K&C: Tell us a little more about the early dioramas? What did they look like?

GCN: The earliest displays we made were very simple when you compare them to the ones we make today. They were scenes of terrain, maybe a few trees and rocks but overall fairly rudimentary. On average they were 15"x15", so not that large either. Still, pairing these scenes with our figures was something that K&C had not done before and our collectors really enjoyed seeing the new direction.

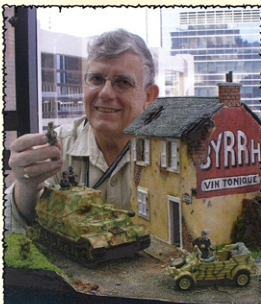
K&C: By the time collectors see the dioramas at the shows they are truly spectacular. I know a lot of work goes into getting them that way, so if you can, tell us briefly how you make them.

GCN: All of our dioramas are made on a base of high density polystyrene attached to a piece of wood. Attaching them to a solid base helps to prevent warping and makes the dioramas easier to move. Here in China, the polystyrene we use is a bright pink colour, in the 'States' however it is a pale blue.

K&C: And you can carve this material?

GCN: Yes, I use a cutting knife and a hot wire to shape the blocks into whatever I'm making. It is a lot like carving stone, except it takes a little less time. After I roughly shape the polystyrene, I sand it down using sandpaper or a

Gordon pictured with his newest creation, the Norman Townhouse, as well as K&C's latest tank... BBG008, The Elephant. This tank will be available in January 2008.



metal rasp. The sanding is done because the carving leaves too many sharp edges that appear unnatural. After I get the forms right, I use plaster and gypsum powder to fill in cracks and further shape the scene.

K&C: Now you mentioned that the polystyrene is pink, what paints do you use that make it look like terrain?

GCN: All of our paints are household water based emulsions easily obtainable at your local hardware store. The colours I choose depend on what I'm building but are usually all variations of earth tones. Once I've added stones, trees, rubble and any other extra touches I use a dry brush (literally a dry paint brush) to get the proper 'aged' effect.

K&C: How do you decide on the composition of these dioramas?

GCN: Andy and I discuss the upcoming releases and then we think about which ones lend themselves best to dramatic displays. We do a lot of research with old photos, or paintings in some cases, and modeling books to come up with a rough idea of what we want to do. Andy or I then prepare a sketch which I translate into the 3D model at the workshop.

K&C: Other than the figures, is there anything else that K&C makes that you use in your dioramas?

GCN: Yes, we frequently use items from the SP series, Battlefield Accessories. SP022 is our ground cover and is extremely useful. I use it on almost all my dioramas. One of my personal favourite pieces though is SP028, the Oasis Well. It is great to use with our Crusaders and Saracens,



Above: 'The Battle of Crete', built to showcase the new German Fallschirmjäger series.

Napoleonic, or even some WWII lines. SP019, the table and chairs, SP020, the barrel and ladder set and SP024 the supply dump are also helpful to me in adding the final touch to our dioramas.

K&C: Now you mentioned that the first dioramas were relatively small. When did K&C start producing the more impressive sizes that collectors see today?

GCN: Back in 2006, with K&C's acquisition of Kings X in San Antonio, Texas, I was given the task of creating a

large diorama to celebrate their joining our company. The plan was to make the largest scene we had yet produced in order to feature our newest line at the time, Remember the Alamo. That diorama is 6 x4 feet and remains the largest single display I have produced. It can still be seen at Kings X today so if you are ever in San Antonio go by and take a look. It took me over three months to complete and features a replica of the entire Alamo mission and the great battle that rages around it. The scale and complexity of that project taught

us a lot about how to build large dioramas and the logistics of shipping and setting them up. Once that project had been completed, and received so well, we decided to produce these larger and more elaborate displays for other occasions.

K&C: Tell our readers a little more about each of the dioramas you produced this year for the 2007 Chicago Show. The first was made for the Operation Market Garden Series and was called 'The Hartenstein Hotel'.

GCN: This diorama was the biggest we made for the show this year and measured 66" x 22". It took me

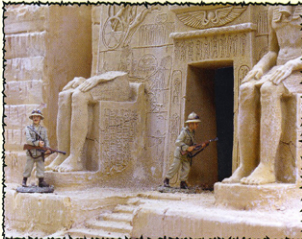


Two different angles of 'The Hartenstein Hotel'.

22". It took me almost 2 months to complete because of its size and the complexity. The hotel building was made out of foam board. I plastered over the external walls and then cut into them to make the foam look like bricks. Internally this building also had a huge amount of detail. It was divided into three floors, including an attic. The inside walls were decorated with three different types of wallpaper which I stained and weathered. Through the front door there was a large split-level grand staircase complete with a balustrade that I hand built. All of the window frames were made of wood and had pieces of clear acetate in broken jagged forms to resemble glass. To add the final touch, I repainted several pieces of doll-house furniture and placed them around the grounds and in the building.

Aside from the Hotel itself, there were two other structures in this scene: a tennis court and the remains of a bombed out greenhouse. The greenhouse was built with wood and acetate and also used polystyrene flowers taken from the K&C Streets of Old Hong Kong set HK146 'The Flower Shop'. K&C: The 'Battle of Crete' was used to showcase the new Fallschirmjäger series. A lot of collectors were really impressed with the crashed airplane, tell me more about that.

GCN: The size of this diorama and the remaining two was 60" x 24", so slightly smaller than the Hartenstein Hotel. The



Above: Two Italian soldiers shown cautiously entering the ruined Temple...

biggest part of this diorama was a crashed Junker 52 transport plane. This entire plane was hand built. I based my model on drawings and photographs of the aircraft. The characteristic ribbing on the body of the plane was made from fine corrugated paper, which I then painted. This type of paper is available at any good stationery shop. The remainder of the fuselage was made from a mixture of wood and card (board). The engine mounts were converted aerosol paint can tops that I cut and painted.

Most people have been surprised when I tell them that the stone effect on the base of the windmill and terraces was achieved by gluing dried split peas onto the styrene under-layer. It may seem an odd choice of materials but it does work very well. Half of successful model building is

learning the ability to see virtually anything as potential building material. After attaching the peas I plastered and painted them into the correct shade.

I hand built the blades and top portion of the windmill out of base wood.

K&C: I know a lot of people really liked the 'Lost Desert Airfield' that was made to show off the new Desert War releases. It sort of had an Indiana Jones feel to it!

GCN: Although I didn't plan it that way, as I built it, I was certainly influenced by the Indiana Jones movies. This diorama used several pieces from K&C's Ancient Egypt line. The Temple facade

(AE013), pair of pharaoh statues (AE012) and the pharaoh's head (AE014) formed a big part of this display. I broke one of the pharaoh statues in half to give it a more ancient look. People forget that relatively simple things like that can be done to give a whole new look to the product (always use proper safety equipment and be mindful of sharp edges).

I built the rear of the temple out of styrene in a cube shape to which I attached the facade and statues. The use of styrene for the body of the building allowed me to carve the sides of the structure into a relief and make them look like slabs of stone. Flanking the temple on either side, I placed long strips of styrene in a stair-step pattern. I did this along the walls of the canyon to give the area a quarried effect. I built the

The 'Lost Desert Airfield' was one of the most popular dioramas at the show. Many viewers said it reminded them of a scene from an Indiana Jones movie...





the swing bridge above the quarry out of scale rope and pieces of base wood. Base wood is a better choice than balsa for these types of models because it is stronger and less prone to breakage.

K&C: The final display was made for the new Battle of the Bulge figures. This diorama was the only winter scene this year, aside from adding snow, is there anything else done differently when creating a winter scene?

GCN: One of the major difficulties in creating a winter scene is getting the edges smooth enough. Real snow has a very unique look and if you don't get it just right things will look 'off'. For this display I carved out hills and mounds from the styrene and then sanded them down to a smooth surface. After that, I cover the styrene with gypsum paste. Gypsum is

great for creating the effect, but it hardens very rapidly so you have to work fast. Gypsum will dry in about 15 minutes. After it dried, I added artificial snow using a thin layer of glue.

One other difficulty I have found particularly with winter scenes is finding the right type of trees. This just takes patience and a lot of looking. I bought most of the trees for this diorama the last time I was in the States.

K&C: Finally, there has been a lot talk recently about the King & Country Workshop. For those who may not know, what is that?

A: The King & Country Workshop is the official name for the studio where I build our dioramas. The purpose of publicly advertising the name is that, for the first time, K&C is offering our diorama building

Above: A detail of the 'Ardennes 1944' display showing several new BBG figures and vehicles.

services to individual collectors. Aside from the displays we produce for the toy soldier shows, now I and my team can be commissioned to build any collector a diorama... on any subject matter they choose. There is a lot more to say about the workshop... it is something I'm very excited about.

To find out more about Gordon's studio visit www.kingandcountry.com and click the 'King & Country Workshop' tab. If you need any further information or would like to place an order, please send an email to info@kingandcountry.com.

Below: The natural curves of the snowy terrain were achieved through sanding, gypsum and patience!

