

C蒐集者OLLECTOR

A Quarterly Look at Our World in Miniature

STORM OVER THE YANGTSE





View From The Trenches...

WELL, AS THEY SAY, we live in challenging times... And they don't come any more challenging than the ones we are all living through at this moment!

It may seem frivolous to be even thinking about toy soldiers at this time but, personally speaking, I think there's no better occasion...

For quite a long period we've had bores... boom... boom and now, suddenly, the bubble has burst and it's all gloom 'n' doom. Or is it? Most of us are still working and still eating. We may not buy a new car this year... and this might not be the right time to move house... but we still need our hobbies and toys that give us pleasure and a small measure of respite from the outside world.

I spoke to one of K&C's collectors a few months back and asked him why did he think people collected toy soldiers. Now, this man is a professional psychologist and he gave me an interesting answer.

"Today, so much of our life is controlled and dominated by outside forces larger than ourselves", he said.

"As individuals", he continued, "we often feel manipulated and used. The world of toy soldiers takes us away from all of that and puts us in charge".

"We make the vital decisions... how a display should look... where a troop of cavalry rides or a battery of field guns is positioned. We decide how large or how small a company of infantry should be and where or if a battle should be fought. We have the power of life and death... albeit in 1:30 scale."

"It's important", my friend suggested, "to indulge a little of our fantasies now and then as an antidote to the harsh realities of the outside world".

None of us can afford to ignore what's happening all around us but, at the same time, we do need an occasional respite to recharge our batteries.

Collecting toy soldiers... model aircraft... or fighting vehicles offers that opportunity in abundance. And, so I'm told, it's a far better investment than Fannie Mae or Freddy Mac!

As for King & Country, we're hanging in and continuing to go forward. 2009 is almost upon us and, I am sure, will be a tough year, with lots of challenges and more than a few adventures.

But, remember this, no matter how difficult life is (or becomes) it sure as hell beats the alternative!!

Very best Christmas greetings to you and yours... Here's to a happier New Year and... happy collecting!

Above right: K&C's latest Holiday Set, "Last Christmas of the War" XM908-01

Below: Christmas Greetings to you and yours from all of us at King & Country.



Andy C. Nelson

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

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K&C recently sat down with our own Gordon C. Neilson to interview him about the new U.S. Navy series and the impressive 'U.S.S. San Pablo' diorama he built to help launch it.

ANCHORS AWEIGH

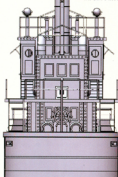
K&C: Gordon, lets start first by speaking about the new series. We haven't seen a whole lot of naval releases from K&C, are these the first?

GN: Actually, no. The Navy is not our main area of interest but these new figures are not the first we have produced. Our earliest came in 1992 with 'Nelson's Navy' which was a small line of six figures designed as a sort of precursor to the current Napoleonic series. Around the same time, we also released another small collection of modern day British Royal Navy figures as well as some U.S. Marines. More recently, several naval figures have appeared as part of our Fields of Battle series... so we do have some previous experience.

K&C: What era from U.S. Naval history do these figures fall into?

GN: One thing to remember about American naval uniforms is that from the period right before the First World War up until the 1940's, they basically did not change... which means that these new figures are suited to a huge variety of different historical scenes. Their dress white and dress blue uniforms were the standard used for almost 40 years... that gives collectors a pretty wide range of

Stem view of our Computer aided design drawings for the San Pablo.



diorama and display possibilities. They are perhaps some of the most versatile figures King & Country has ever made!

K&C: Are there any plans to expand this new series even further into other eras, perhaps American Civil War or Second World War?

GN: Possibly in the future if there is the interest but right now we are concentrating on the 1920's and 1930's.

K&C: So, for this first release, you created the 'U.S.S. San Pablo Diorama'. How did you come up with the idea?

GN: For this project our goal was to highlight the new line. We ran the idea for the new series by several of our best collectors and got enthusiastic reviews. Inspiration for the main diorama came from a variety of sources but largely from the 1966 Steve McQueen film 'The Sand Pebbles' which has always been one of Andy's and my own favourites.

The movie is set in China during the turbulent 1920's and is about an old gun boat which served in the upper backwaters of the Yangtze River... which is where the idea for our 'San Pablo' came from. These boats were deployed there to protect merchant vessels from pirates and warlords. It's a great movie; if you haven't seen it I recommend it.



K&C: It seems that 1920's China is an area K&C is already familiar with thanks to the 'Streets of Old Hong Kong' series. Was there an intention to tie the two series together?

GN: Absolutely, collectors frequently request more civilian figures so we thought why not make better use of the huge civilian range we already have in SOHK? We also want to bring our Chinese series into the 20's and 30's.

K&C: Those people who came to the Chicago show this year saw the impressive port scene diorama which you built, tell us about it.

GN: Andy and I always knew that we were going to build a replica gun boat to showcase the new rural figures but later on we determined to also include a harbour scene to frame it. It was decided to build a relatively simple 4 foot by 2 foot diorama that showed a section of docks presumably in Shanghai or Hong Kong. This was important because it would allow us to show our new U.S. Navy figures interacting with the Streets of Old Hong Kong sets. I made the stone of the docks somewhat dark to really emphasize the vibrant colours in the SOHK sets and building facades. We also used a few figures from our 'Imperial Collection'. I think the overall effect turned out very nice and will hopefully help bring these two spectacular existing series to the attention of our collectors, especially in the U.S.

K&C: The most striking part of the diorama was the U.S. San Pablo itself. Is this the first time K&C has created a boat?

GN: Yes, this is the first time we attempted to build a ship. When it came time to launch the series Andy and I both thought that building a naval model would be a great way to not only display the new pieces but also give collectors some ideas for their own dioramas.

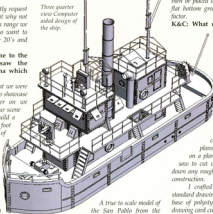
K&C: Are there any plans to put the boat itself into production?

GN: We would very much like to and are exploring our options as we speak. We want to make sure the final product is up to K&C standards and are still searching for a suitable factory that can do the job well. We have some good prospects, so it is very possible it will be available for sale at some point in the future! We also want to make it affordable... especially in these difficult times.

K&C: Is this an exact replica of the 'San Pablo' from the movie?

GN: No. It is an accurate 1:30 scale model but we chose to reduce the overall size of our ship in order to make it more manageable for display. In light of this change, we also rechristened our K&C ship the San Pueblo!

Three quarter view Computer aided design of the ship.



A true to scale model of the San Pablo from the film would have been significantly longer (about 5 feet). We felt that for our purposes a smaller size was more appropriate and easier to handle. Additionally we chose not to include a full

hull, instead making it a centerline model.

We were also aware that eliminating the hull portion would help customers with storage and display. Since the model could then be placed on virtually any flat surface, a flat bottom greatly adds to the 'playability' factor.

K&C: What materials did you use to make it?

GN: The ship itself is made from wood, polystyrene, card, brass rods and plastic tubing. Like all of our dioramas, the base of the ship is made from solid wood. This helps with both stability and acts to prevent warping. From the basic idea that Andy had come up with, I put together a blueprint which was then used to determine the correct dimensions. From those plans, I outlined the base of the boat on a plank of wood and used a power-saw to cut out the shape. After sanding down any rough edges the base was ready for construction.

I crafted the sides of the boat from standard drawing card which I then glued to a base of polystyrene. In order to make the drawing card curve around the Stern and Bow, I cut narrow slots in certain areas. This allowed the card to bend without cracking. I later used paste to cover the holes and painted the whole structure white. Afterwards I glued the polystyrene and card sides to the wooden base.

K&C: What about the deck and superstructure?

GN: The base of the deck is also made out of polystyrene. In order to get the planking right, I glued strips of card to it which I then sanded. The superstructure is made from foam board I cut into the various shapes I needed. Most of the materials I use in my dioramas are very simple but highly versatile.

The doors and windows are also made out of card while the circular window frames and railings are made from brass. I bought the door handles at a store in Texas that specializes in doll house items.

K&C: The railings are very detailed, did you buy them or make them yourself?

GN: I initially had bought a set I thought would work. However, after looking more closely I realized they weren't quite right and I needed to alter them. They were made from galvanized rod (iron) which proved very brittle and I was unable to work with it. So I then turned to brass, which is a much more malleable metal. I used thin strips of brass rod which I soldered together. It was quite an undertaking. To attach them to the ship I drilled small holes in the deck, glued the railing in and then covered the holes with brass fittings.



left: work in progress...

K&C: I notice that the deckhouse is also very detailed, even internally.

GN: The original plan was for the roof of the deckhouse to be removable. In the end that turned out not to be feasible but by that time I had already added a steering wheel, engine room control lever and steering compass. You can see them if you look through the windows. The outside of the deckhouse is made of foam board and the windows are made of clear Perspex, to simulate glass. I also added storm shutters made from card and attached with a metal slide.

K&C: Looking at the lower levels, the anchor mechanism looks very complex.

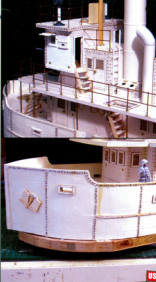
GN: I scratch built it using gears from an old radio controlled car and some wooden bobbins I picked up while in the United States. The chain is from a piece of scrap jewelry. Incidentally the 'rivets' used throughout the boat are actually dressing pins, the kind a tailor would use, cut shorter and plugged into the foam board.

K&C: What about the masts and rigging?

GN: The masts are made of round wooden doweling of various diameters. The large black funnel is made from a plastic plumbing tube available from any hardware store. I painted the smokestack black to match our references; when using paint on plastic it is generally better to use spray paint because it tends to bend more effectively. The rope rigging is simply black thread of various lengths.

K&C: There are five guns on the boat, did you hand build them as well?

GN: The main deck gun at the front of the boat was again, scratch built from plastic tubing and various brass parts. It can both elevate and rotate. However, the Lewis guns in the back are polystyrene copies of



GN: I tend to use standard water based emulsion for paint. As far as paint scheme, we were lucky that the boat seen in the movie was not just a set but an actual boat. During filming the ship was extensively photographed from nearly every angle, so we had a lot of good reference material to go by. We were lucky that there are also plenty of still shots available online from the movie. The film company,

USN006



USN004



USN010



Twentieth Century Fox, actually bought an old Hong Kong Star Ferry to convert into a gun boat for the movie. Incidentally, after filming, the company sold the boat to the Republic of Vietnam (South Vietnam). We don't know what happened to it after that!

K&C: What was the reaction of Collectors at the Chicago Show?

GN: Very positive. The ship generated a lot of interest and many people asked if we were going to put it into production. Nearly everyone was curious to know how long it took me

to build. The ship itself took a little over six weeks and the port scene just took two weeks.

K&C: Many of the photographs K&C have published of this diorama are also unique.

GN: Yes, we used natural sunlight for the first time. Over the past year all of us at K&C have learned a lot about how lighting can enhance a photo, thanks in large part to our new managing director, Helen, who has lots of experience in photography. When Andy & I were viewing this model we got an idea that it would look good in natural lighting.

So, we asked a bunch of the boys from the office to help us carry it up to the 30th floor roof of our office building here in Hong Kong. We took the photos on a clear day in the late afternoon so that sunlight was streaming across the scene at an angle. Being outside we used the blue sky as a background. The whole combination really helped bring the diorama to life.

K&C: So what's next for the King & Country Workshop?

GN: Well, we always have individual customer orders to work on but aside from that I'm building something very special for the London Toy Soldier Show in December. The diorama will be similar

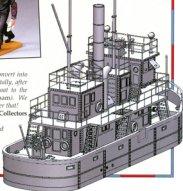
to the airfield scene we made for the last Chicago show. It's going to have to accommodate a very special large aircraft! But I won't say anymore just yet.

Three quarter stern view of our Computer aided design.



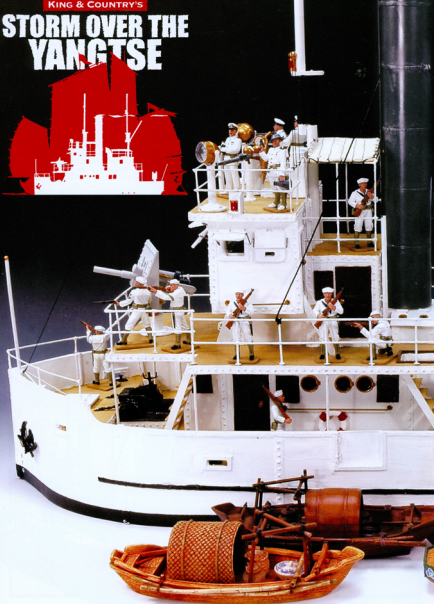
machine guns from the period which we had available in the K&C office. We used a similar set on one of our recent Long Range Desert Group vehicles (EA023) from our Desert War Series.

K&C: How did you decide on paint colours and what type of paint did you use?



KING & COUNTRY'S

STORM OVER THE YANGTSE



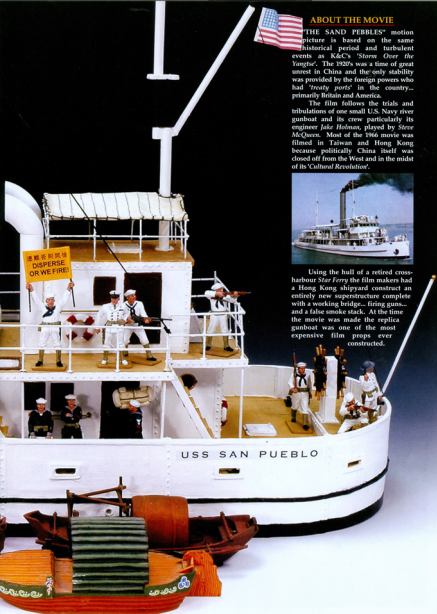
ABOUT THE MOVIE

"THE SAND PEBBLES" motion picture is based on the same historical period and turbulent events as K&C's 'Storm Over the Yangtze'. The 1920's was a time of great unrest in China and the only stability was provided by the foreign powers who had 'treaty ports' in the country... primarily Britain and America.

The film follows the trials and tribulations of one small U.S. Navy river gunboat and its crew particularly its engineer Jake Holman, played by Steve McQueen. Most of the 1966 movie was filmed in Taiwan and Hong Kong because politically China itself was closed off from the West and in the midst of its 'Cultural Revolution'.



Using the hull of a retired cross-harbour Star Ferry the film makers had a Hong Kong shipyard construct an entirely new superstructure complete with a working bridge... firing guns... and a false smoke stack. At the time the movie was made the replica gunboat was one of the most expensive film props ever constructed.



RODRIGO DE BRITO'S PERSONAL

Portfolio

ONE OF the greatest pleasures of this hobby is seeing what King & Country collectors actually do with their collections...

On this page (and in the following ones) you can see how two particular K&C collectors display and utilize our figures and fighting vehicles.

Both men have used their imagination and skill to portray two completely different collections in bold and exciting ways.

Our first series of photos shows the work of Rodrigo De Brito, a Brazilian collector living and working in Quebec, Canada. Rodrigo's Second World War diorama is based on a book "Les Enfants de la liberte"... The Children of Liberty... about two young boys who join the French Resistance in late 1943.

"I tried to recreate a typical ambush of a German convoy somewhere in France in the days just before the Normandy Invasion of June 6, 1944" Rodrigo says. "I scratch-built the entire road display including the building and telegraph poles and utilized some old model cars I had in my collection to add extra realism", he continues.

On the road itself a "mixed bag" of K&C's recently released French Resistance "Maquis" are about to pounce on an unsuspecting Wehrmacht column.

As you look at the photos - all

"I don't like it... it's too quiet!"



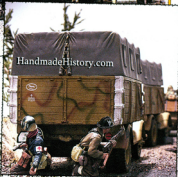


"Why are there no people about?"

taken by Rodrigo himself, you will be amazed at the authentic feel he has injected into his display. You almost suspect you are looking at scenes from a wartime documentary or a very realistic war movie!

Readers wanting to see more of Rodrigo's creative efforts... both superb dioramas and atmospheric photography can visit the *Trofyng Forum* where he regularly

"posts" examples of work or by visiting his own website:
www.HandmadeHistory.com.





PERSONALLY SPEAKING

I am from Brazil and have been living in Canada (Quebec) since 1991. I am married to a French Canadian, Quebecoise, and have two wonderful children, Mateo, 5 and Lua, 2.

I am 38 years old and work as a Human Resources counselor. My passions are architecture... military history particularly World War Two, the Ancient World and the Medieval era.

I discovered toy soldiers in 2003 and fell in love with K&C's work when I saw them in an authorized dealer's store in Ottawa, Canada's capital.



DIORAMA DETAILS

Rodrigo's display measures 1 1/2 metres long by 60 centimeters wide. He used a mix of wood... foam board... sand... and lichen grass to create the building, the telegraph poles, the roadway and the surrounding vegetation.

The photography took him about 3 hours and he utilized photoshop for specialized background lighting effects.

He has also incorporated the following K&C sets in his diorama...

DD089 "FFI Resistance Command Group"

DD090 "FFI Resistance Ambush Group"

DD091 "FFI Demolition Team"

WS687 "Halt (Motorcycle Combo)"

WS690 "Opel Blitz Truck" (Normandy Version)

WS121 "Sd.Kfz. 250/1 Leichter Schutzpanzerwagen"

Above right: Mexican Lancers form a perimeter around the Alamo as the infantry attack.

Right: An aerial view of the last moments of the desperate struggle.



OVER THE YEARS", Andy C. Neilson writes, "I've met Tom Munson at the Chicago Toy Soldier Show several times".

Tom loves toy soldiers generally but his particular interest is the Battle of the Alamo... The epic struggle which ended tragically but heroically in the early hours of March 6, 1836. On that morning thousands of Mexican soldiers, under the leadership of General Santa Anna, stormed the little Texan mission that had held out for a 13 day siege. About 200 defenders (different sources quote different numbers) led by Colonel William Travis and famed frontiersmen Dave Crockett and Jim Bowie perished to the last man. In the history of Texas and America the Legend of the Alamo burns brightly and Tom is one of those individuals for whom it burns brightest.

As a dedicated "Alamo Buff", Tom has, over the years, collected many items relating to the Battle... posters... prints... collectibles... memorabilia and, of course, toy soldiers!

When King & Country brought out their "Remember The Alamo" range in 2006 Tom was ecstatic.

"Before K&C's Alamo series was

released I had collected several other companies offerings", Tom says, "but once I saw the new K&C series and the variety and quality I decided to focus my collecting habits on them!"

Tom started modestly enough with a few pieces... mostly defenders and just a handful of attacking Mexicans. "Before long however", Tom relates, "I was adding more and more. I also wanted my Mexican forces to far outnumber the Texans and Tejano. Within a short time I had well over 100 of Santa Anna's forces against just two dozen Alamo defenders... There was just one thing missing..."

THE ALAMO CHAPEL

When K&C launched their Alamo series in the U.S. at the Chicago Show in September 2006 we knew we had to build a special display piece to really show it off. After several discussions it was agreed that Gordon C. Neilson, K&C's resident diorama builder would construct a little Alamo Chapel along with a connecting room for the bed-ridden Jim Bowie.

When Tom and Gordon met up at

the show in Chicago in 2006 Tom expressed a wish to have Gordon make a special Alamo chapel display for him. Months passed and Tom contacted Gordon again to go ahead with the commission. The Alamo Chapel you see in the photos is that model. Tom however needed a lot more space for his growing collection so he constructed a "surround base" that could accommodate not only Gordon's display piece but his rapidly expanding Mexican Army.

Today over 300 of Santa Anna's soldiers surround and attack the beleaguered chapel. On its ramparts and walls proud defenders bravely fight on. Forming a colourful backdrop is just one of Tom's many collected prints of the last desperate minutes of the battle.

ABOUT TOM

Tom Munson lives in Chagrin Falls, Ohio, U.S.A. The proud father of two sons and a daughter, all of whom are now grown up, Tom and his wife Sharon are "empty-nesters".

Professionally, Tom and his two older brothers own and operate two successful manufacturing business located in Ohio.

He's always been interested in history and has collected toy soldiers for many years.

"Remember the Alamo"

March 6, 1836



HEAVY HAULER



WHEN THE ALLIES invaded France on the morning of June 6, 1944 it wasn't only tanks, infantry and artillery that went ashore. Behind all of them was a huge logistic "tail" that supported them... fed them... fuelled them and, sometimes, pulled them out of harm's way to fight another day!

For the armoured corps of the British, Canadian and American armies the tank recovery vehicles were vital...

Although outnumbering the German opposition virtually all Allied armour was tank-for-tank inferior. Often under-gunned and carrying less armour than the Tigers and Panthers the Shermans and Cromwells were all too easily "knocked-out" and disabled in their hundreds.

The Allies did, however, have a major advantage... they could recover their damaged vehicles and repair them in field workshops.

Of the several different machines used for this purpose the M26 Armoured Recovery Vehicle was, by far, the best.

Although development had begun in 1941 it was 1943 before the first vehicles rolled off the assembly line and

were dispatched to the Italian Front. After being "battle-proven" additional vehicles were sent on to the U.K. to prepare for the Normandy Invasion the following year.

Each M26 carried a crew of 7 (in an armoured cab) and a full set of tools to make emergency repairs close or on the actual battlefield. In addition

a .50cal. machine gun was mounted on top.

After the cessation of hostilities in 1945 most of the M26's stayed on in Europe serving the US Army of occupation in Germany and other Allied country's... particularly France. In fact, the French Army continued utilize the M26 right up until the late 1950's.

Below: Our model comes with four crew figures - three of which are detachable.



DD104(SL)

M26 Armoured Recovery Vehicle

1983 KING & COUNTRY 2008

COLLECTOR

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SPECIAL WARBIRO SUPPLEMENT

KING & COUNTRY'S AMAZING WARBIRO
...ONLY NOW CAN THE STORY BE TOLD!

**"ENEMY COAST
AHEAD!"**

KING & COUNTRY proudly presents

"The First of the Few"

Four individual all metal, hand-painted RAF
pilots of the Battle of Britain, 1940

As the Nazi blunderbuss swept across Europe in the summer of 1940 only twenty-one miles of English Channel and Britain's Royal Air Force stood between Hitler and the domination of the free world.

For three desperate months, from July to September, almost 600 Spitfires and Hurricanes, Hurricanes, Spitfires and Hurricanes.

The defeat of Goering's Luftwaffe spell the end of Hitler's plan to invade Britain and provided a vital breathing space for the exhausted island to regroup its strength and counter the war.

In Churchill's immortal words, "Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few."

Now, to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the Battle of Britain, KING & COUNTRY are proud to present an exclusive, limited edition, four figure set of RAF fighters.

—SUPERB CRAFTSMANSHIP—

All four pilots are sculptured in traditional Minors (1/12 scale) white metal and meticulously hand painted to represent fighter pilots.



Hand-painted
all metal

Great can has been taken to research and capture the values of the pilots and the period.

"The War" life size, the leaders flying between and against, and even the far wings on the "Iron" flight jacket.

—ONLY 1,000 SETS WORLDWIDE—

"The First of the Few" is a strictly limited edition of 1,000 sets.

Each set comes in a specially designed box complete with a hand-painted full colour painting on the cover, plus a signed and numbered certificate of authenticity.

—OUTSTANDING QUALITY—
UNREPEATABLE VALUE

"The First of the Few" can just £199.00 and includes parking and FREE ARMAGE DELIVERY to any part of the world.

To avoid disappointment, simply fill in the coupon and mail direct to KING & COUNTRY today! Guaranteed delivery within 28 days.

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TELEPHONE: 169907

left: K&C's first advertisement for its original RAF Battle of Britain pilots set

below: 'Thunder' squadron pilots and ground staff relax in a scene from the British television series 'Piece of Cake'



KING & COUNTRY first began to make scale model aircraft in the Summer of 1990. It was the 50th. Anniversary of The Battle of Britain and the company had just designed a set of 4 Royal Air Force pilots and a companion set of 4 German Luftwaffe pilots to celebrate the pivotal air battle of the first half of the Second World War.

'THE FIRST OF THE MANY'

Once we had our figures we wanted to display them alongside aircraft of the period. Fortunately for us Revell, the American plastic kit manufacturer, produced both a Spitfire and a Hurricane in 1:32 scale which fitted perfectly with our pilots. So, we bought the kits, made them up, painted them and put them on a little grass covered base and... hey presto, instant diorama...

One slight problem however... many of our shop customers not only wanted the pilots... they wanted the aircraft as well!

For a couple of months Gordon and myself were kept extra busy building a whole bunch of 1:32 scale kits of Spitfires, Hurricanes and ME109s.



the growing demand when I felt a gentle tap on the shoulder.

"Are you looking for aircraft models?"

I turned around and faced one of our regular pub customers... Jack, an airline pilot for Cathay Pacific.

"Yes I am", I replied, "any suggestions?" It turned out that Jack had some excellent suggestions. He told me that many of his air crew colleagues had beautiful, hand-carved

only the civilian airliners he now flew but also the *Hawker Hunter* and *BAC Lightning* jet fighters he had flown while he was still flying in the *Royal Air Force*. He promised to bring them in to show me a couple of days later.

True to his word Jack showed up three days later with two cardboard boxes from which he extracted superb models of a *Hawker Hunter* and a *Lightning*.

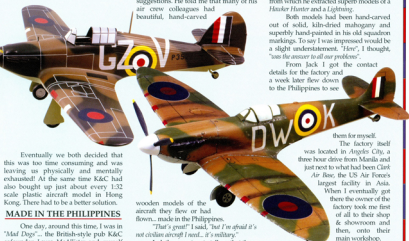
Both models had been hand-carved out of solid, kiln-dried mahogany and superbly hand-painted in his old squadron markings. To say I was impressed would be a slight understatement. "Here", I thought, "was the answer to all our problems".

From Jack I got the contact details for the factory and a week later flew down to the Philippines to see

them for myself.

The factory itself was located in Angeles City, a three hour drive from Manila and just next to what had been Clark Air Base, the US Air Force's largest facility in Asia.

When I eventually got there the owner of the factory took me first of all to their shop & showroom and then, onto their main workshop.



Eventually we both decided that this was too time consuming and was leaving us physically and mentally exhausted! At the same time K&C had also bought up just about every 1:32 scale plastic aircraft model in Hong Kong. There had to be a better solution.

MADE IN THE PHILIPPINES

One day, around this time, I was in "Mad Dogs"... the British-style pub K&C cofounder Laura McAllister and myself owned... I was at the bar talking to a friend and bemoaning the problems of building enough aircraft models to meet

wooden models of the aircraft they flew or had flown... made in the Philippines.

"That's great!" I said, "but I'm afraid it's not civilian aircraft I need... it's military."

Jack then went on to tell me that these factories in the Philippines could make anything I desired... military aircraft included. He himself had models of not

Above: One of the company's original wooden *Hawker Hurricanes* sitting alongside a plastic 1:32 scale model of a *Supermarine Spitfire* painted by Gordon C. Nelson.

For K&C collectors of hand-carved, hand-painted aircraft models the past two years have been a dream come true... Cofounder and Chief Test Pilot Andy C. Neilson provides all the "GEN" about how and why it happened...

'UP, UP AND AWAY!'



Royal Navy Fleet Air Arm Sea Hawk were frequent visitors to RNAS "Sanderling".

KING & COUNTRY has been in the aircraft business for quite a long time—almost 20 years. How, you might ask, did a toy soldier company start producing model aeroplanes?

The answer goes back even longer... much longer than 20 years! It goes back, like so many things in the King & Country story, to Scotland in the nineteen-fifties.

As some of you may know both my brother Gordon and myself were born and brought up in a wee town called "Ryefers" on the banks of the River Clyde just 5 miles downstream from Glasgow, Scotland's largest city.

Where we lived had both an airport and a Royal Naval air station on the outskirts of town. Often after school or at the weekends Gordon and myself would wander up to the perimeter fence and watch all kinds of different aircraft landing and taking off from either the airport or the Naval air station. Although both of us were fascinated by aeroplanes of all descriptions our favourites were predictably, the military ones. At that time, in the late fifties and early sixties, we had a wealth to choose from... Up at the airport we saw squadrons of Royal Canadian Air Force F86 "Sabres" transiting through on their way to Germany... At the same time there would be USAF "Glosters" heading back to the States. And, on one memorable occasion we watched, enthralled, as a flight of 4 Avro "Shackleton" four-engined maritime patrol bombers flew at 500 feet over our heads and off into the clouds. For two little boys standing on the ground it felt (and sounds!) like they were flying at 50 feet just over our heads! The noise was deafening...

HMNAS "SANDERLING"

Although the civil airport was fun the really great "plane-spotting" place to be was at the Naval Air Station or to give it its full title... *Her Majesty's Naval Air Station "SANDERLING"*.

Today the Navy has long gone and "Sanderling" has become Glasgow's very

own International Airport. Back then it was always our favourite destination of choice... When we could we would cycle out to any one of several viewing points around the perimeter fence and watch the comings and goings... for hours on end.

At the time there was certainly no shortage of aircraft to see... Being a Naval Air Station the vast majority were Royal Navy Fleet Air Arm types. In those far-off days you could still see lots of "prop-jobs" like Avengers... Skyriders... Sea Furies... Gannets and even Westland Wyvems. But, as the Fifties gave way to the Sixties we began to see more jets... Sea Vixens... Venoms... Sea Hawks and the like. Great as all this was the highlight of our year was when "Sanderling" hosted its annual "NAVY DAY". For a very modest entrance fee you actually got inside the base and "up close and personal" with the real aircraft we had viewed from a distance around the perimeter fence all year long.

Every "Navy Day", usually in the summer, our Dad would take Gordon and me there. We'd arrive bright and early and walk for miles (or it seemed like that) along the flight lines inspecting the aircraft themselves... and there were lots of them! We also liked to get there promptly because several of the aircraft were "open to the public" and you would be allowed inside (under supervision of course) to inspect them or, if you were lucky to actually sit in the cockpit and wear a "hose-down". This was the ultimate trip for young boys of our generation. Somewhere, I wish I could find it, is a long-lost photo of a 7 year old Gordon flying a Sea Vixen!

In addition to the many attractions of the flight-line there was always a flying display (weather permitting). At different Navy Days I saw, for the first time but not the last, a real Spitfire... a genuine Hurricane and... an awe inspiring Avro Lancaster.

These last three vintage aircraft awakened my life long interest in Second World War aviation. Although it was also thrilling to see the then-modern fast jets do their stuff there was a romance and spine tingling thrill to see flying legends right before your eyes. For me then (and now) to hear the unique roar of a Rolls Royce Merlin

engine and see the beautiful lines of these "Classics" flying in their natural element rather than sitting "static" in a museum is and was a joy to behold.

Since those dim and distant days I've been fortunate to see many of my favourite WW2 "Warbirds" perform at airshows all over the world. One time however I'll always remember... Back in the early 1980s I was visiting an old friend in England. Both of us had served in the Royal Hong Kong Regiment together and he had invited me down to his home in a little village near Windsor for the weekend. On this particular Sunday afternoon, while his wife prepared lunch, my friend suggested we wander down to the pub and have a drink. It was a stunningly beautiful English summer's day and after getting our pints we went out and sat down on the grass to watch a game of cricket on the nearby village green. As we watched the game I heard a distant roar that sounded vaguely familiar. Looking up, through a gap in the trees I saw in the distance four little black specks flying in a diamond formation towards us. As I watched they got closer and closer... soon I could make out their shapes... I was delighted to recognize the beautiful elliptical wing shapes of Supermarine Spitfires. I nudged my friend to look up and, just at that point, the four Spitfires flew over our heads. Where they had come from...? I had no idea... Where were they going to...? I knew even less... But for those few seconds I felt like I had jumped back in time - to the summer of 1940... A time when Britain and the free world's future fate was hanging by a very thin wire.

When all that stood between us and the abyss of a new dark age were a few hundred brave pilots and two magnificent aircraft... the Hurricane Hurricane and the Supermarine Spitfire.

Alas, I'll never fly one of these magnificent machines but with King & Country and a handful of very skilled craftsmen I can help make some superb models that are a unique reminder of great aircraft and the brave men who flew them. I'll be happy to settle for that...

K&C's latest 1:32 scale Lancaster 'G for George' sits on an airfield somewhere in England... September 1943.

Soon it will take off along with hundreds of others to bomb Hitler's Germany... where will it be this time? Cologne... Essen... Hamburg or the 'Big City' itself... Berlin!





Around the model can be seen several KGC designed Del Prado aircraft as well as a few of KGC's old RAF Ground Crew.

Also in the picture... a prototype RAF Austin Utility Van... a hand-carved wooden Bedford Fuel Tanker and... a thousand pound 'Cookie' waiting to be loaded.

'BLACK 13' was the sample model from our workshop friends in the Philippines that put K&C back in the Warbird business.

Next to it... another of our FW 190's along with a K&C Adolf Galland and a Del Prado (K&C designed) German Pilot.



A K&C 'Doolittle Raiders' B25 Mitchell... all ready to bomb Tokyo.



IN LATE 2005, after a gap of almost six years, KING & COUNTRY once more began to produce hand-carved, hand-painted aircraft models... here's why...

For over 10 years K&C manufactured literally thousands of hand-carved, hand painted wooden aircraft models made by a variety of different suppliers in the Philippines and Thailand. Because of a myriad of production problems we sadly decided to terminate that side of our business in late 1999. Much as we hated doing this our principal business... designing and making military miniatures and fighting vehicles was really taking off and demanded one hundred per cent of our

time, energies and focus. And so the aircraft business was put into 'cold storage' for a while.

A FOCKE WULF FLIES IN...

One morning in October 2005 I received a package and a letter from the Philippines...

Inside the package was a superb wooden model (in 1:32 scale) of a Focke Wulf 190 with a beautiful 'see-through' perspex canopy and all the cockpit interior in exquisite detail. I was impressed.

The letter was from an old friend... the foreman of probably the best factory we had ever worked with years earlier to produce our model aircraft. Now, he was on his own and had set up a small workshop along with two of his sons. They were producing an exclusive line of aircraft for a select band of international clients... "Were K&C interested in working with them?" After showing their sample to my colleagues and getting a very favourable reaction, we agreed to place a "trial order"... for some more Focke Wulfs.

A couple of months later they arrived and my faith in the workshop's quality and my old friend's reliability

"ENEMY COAST AHEAD!"

was not misplaced... the aircraft were excellent and eagerly "stuffed-up" by dedicated aviation enthusiasts and K&C collectors alike.

One of the major decisions K&C made early on was to produce relatively small numbers of each individual aircraft... 5, 10, 15 or 20 maximum.

This was for two very good reasons... Firstly, our little workshop was only capable of small production runs and... Secondly, we wanted to keep these great models exclusive and... very rare!

The early success of the FW190's spurred us on to expand the range and try a few larger twin-engined aircraft. Three different models of the Messerschmitt 110 fighter bomber were very successful as was one of its British opponents... the De Havilland "Mosquito". Let's try something even bigger we thought... how about a model of the medium American bomber the B25 "Mitchell". Specifically the plane that took part in the famous "Doolittle Raid" on Tokyo just a few short months after Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor.

Again, we were fortunate with our collectors' response and this further fueled our desire to go even bigger!

"Let's do a Lancaster."

BOMBS GONE!

The AVRO LANCASTER is, without doubt, my favourite British heavy bomber of the Second World War. Its massive airframe could carry twice the bomb load of a B17 "Flying Fortress". It was the plane that really took the war to the very heart of the Nazi beast for the first time and... starred in one of my all-time favourite British war movies of the Fifties... "THE DAMBUSTERS".

For all of these reasons (and many more) we decided on the "LANC". After doing a lot of research we also agreed that the first two versions of Lancaster we would produce would be a standard bomber and, of course, the special "DAMBUSTER" variation. Our standard model would be a special tribute to all of the Commonwealth aircrew who flew this four-engined "HEAVY" during the war... and can still be seen today.

In the Australian War Memorial Museum in Canberra sits, in all its glory, "G for George" an aircraft with a proud record of service during the war. Flying

with No. 460 Squadron, Royal Australian Air Force, "G for George" flew 90 combat missions over occupied Europe and is the second most prolific surviving Lancaster anywhere in the world today.

"George" also



has the added distinction of bringing home, alive, every crew that ever flew it! Today it serves as a memorial to all Australians who flew with RAF Bomber Command and to the 1,018 personnel of 460 Squadron killed in action. An excellent choice we decided.

Our other "LANC" was to be the "Dambuster" type... and that represented not only a great aircraft but also took part in one of the most famous and daring raids of the Second World War.



Above: A standard Lancaster being 'bombed-up' prior to a raid on Germany.



'Sons of the North Sea'
An evocative painting of an RAF
bomber crew in action by Dame
Laura Knight (1943).

Operation Chastise was the official name for the attacks on 3 important German dams in the early hours of 17 May 1943. Using a revolutionary "bouncing bomb", designed by leading British inventor Barnes Wallis this operation demanded a special aircraft and an all-new squadron.

OPERATION CHASTISE

Below: One of the other Avro Lancaster bombers that took part in the raids on the night of May 17, 1943.



EXTRA SPECIAL LANCERS

Only one British bomber was capable of carrying and delivering this "special package"... the Avro Lancaster. 21 standard Lancasters were taken out of the main production line and modified to fulfill the task. A special top secret squadron was also created... "617".

On 17 March 1943 the new squadron was officially formed under the leadership of a highly experienced 24-year old Wing Commander... Guy Gibson. Already wearing two DSOs and two DFCs Gibson was one of the RAF's top bombing pilots.

With less than 8 weeks to train his crews Gibson had a formidable task ahead of him... and could not tell them the purpose or reason for their arduous and dangerous training. Many days and nights of intensive low-level flying and navigational training followed until, on the afternoon of 16 May 1943, the crews were finally told of their mission.

THE ATTACK

The Lancasters were then organized into three groups... The first was to attack the Mohne and those aircraft still with bombs on board would go on to the Eder.

The second group was to attack the Sorpe. The third formation meanwhile was to act as a mobile reserve for all of the operation.

Gibson led the lead group and bombed the Mohne first... After five aircraft had attacked the dam was finally breached. Gibson then led the remaining aircraft onto their second target... the Eder.

Difficult typography made this dam particularly hard to hit. One aircraft made six unsuccessful "runs" at the dam before finally hitting it on the seventh. One more bomb hit the structure before fatally breaching it.

The last dam the Sorpe proved the most problematical. A huge earth construction (rather than concrete) it proved impervious to even two direct hits.

Left: Wing Commander Guy Gibson was just 24 years old and already a Bomber Command veteran when he led the "Dambusters" raid.

The attack was carried out by specially modified Lancasters of No. 617 Squadron led by Wing Commander Guy Gibson, already a veteran of over 170 missions.

With a radically re-designed fuselage (no mid upper turret and a completely new bomb bay) his aircraft was painted in his own personal markings "AJG".

(In addition to these first two Lancasters K&C is also at work on a small batch of two other versions to be released later in 2009.)

ABOUT THE RAID

Three dams in the Ruhr district of Germany were to be attacked... the Mohne... the Sorpe and... the Eder. These dams were the perfect strategic targets because they provided the Germans with vital hydro electric power for the surrounding area and water for their extensive canal system used to transport important war materiel and other goods.

Many different schemes and methods of assaulting the dams were considered before Barnes Wallis came up with an ingenious idea for a "bouncing bomb".

The Wallis concept was for a projectile that could "skip" over the heavy torpedo netting protecting the dams. Then the drum-shaped bomb would hit the dam wall... sink down towards the dam's base and, at a specified depth, explode against the wall. The shock wave along with the pressure of the water itself would, it was hoped, do the rest...



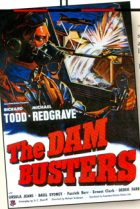
THE RESULTS

Eight aircraft were lost and 53 out of 133 aircrew were killed before, during and after the raid... just 3 were taken prisoner. Of the survivors 33 were decorated including Gibson himself who was awarded Britain's highest order the Victoria Cross.

The destruction of the Mohne and Sorpe dams did create chaos and destruction over a wide area. However, it did not have the "knock-out blow" its planners originally envisaged. What it did do though was draw much-needed German forces back from the Eastern Front into the Reich to defend other important strategic targets. This helped weaken their armies fighting the Soviets.

It also had an unexpected effect on German food production... The Ruhr valley below the ruptured dams was a major source of agricultural production... thousands of acres were rendered unusable by flooding and huge numbers of farm animals were drowned. This did have an immediate negative effect on German morale.

For the British people it was also a huge morale boost and helped persuade Russian leader Josef Stalin that Britain was more than capable of hurting the Nazis. Another great bonus of the raid was the positive effect on President Roosevelt and the American Chiefs of



Staff, some of whom doubted Britain's resolve and ability to fight.

All of these considerations put together more than justified the raid and, alas, its tragic cost.

A FEW OTHER FACTS

617 Squadron still exists and flies with the Royal Air Force today.

In 1954 the classic British war film

"THE DAMBUSTERS" was released starring Richard Todd as Guy Gibson and utilized four genuine wartime Lancasters for the flying sequences.

In 2007 a remake, to be produced by "Lord of The Rings" director Peter Jackson was announced. Commencement of filming is still to begin.

Wing Commander Guy Gibson was killed on active duty on 19 September 1944 flying a De Havilland "Mosquito". He is buried in the Netherlands.

Gibson also wrote the book "Enemy Coast Ahead".

Right: Thirty-three medals were awarded to 617 squadron crew members including a Victoria Cross for Guy Gibson.

Below: K&C's newest version of the Avro Lancaster Dambuster, AER052B, in the markings of Wing Commander Gibson's "AUG".



Master carvings of three RAF Bomber Command pilots including Guy Gibson, Les Munro and Mickey Martin of 617 Squadron to be released in 2009