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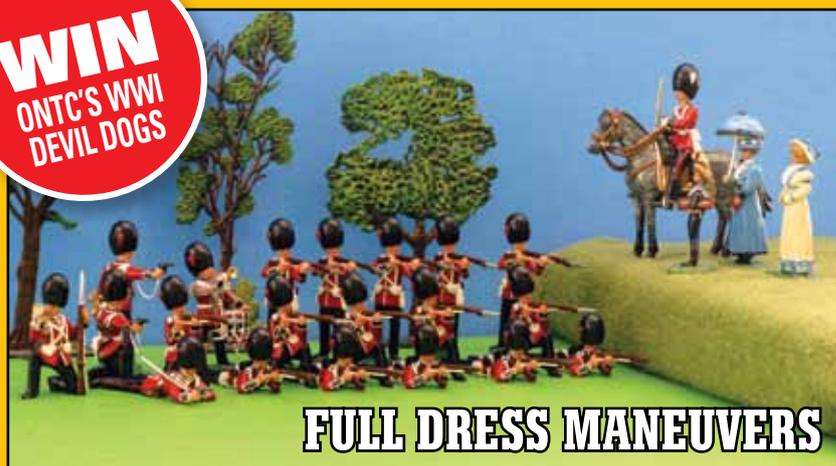


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GEORGE S. STUART'S HISTORICAL FIGURES



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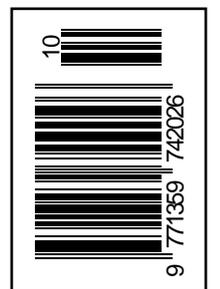
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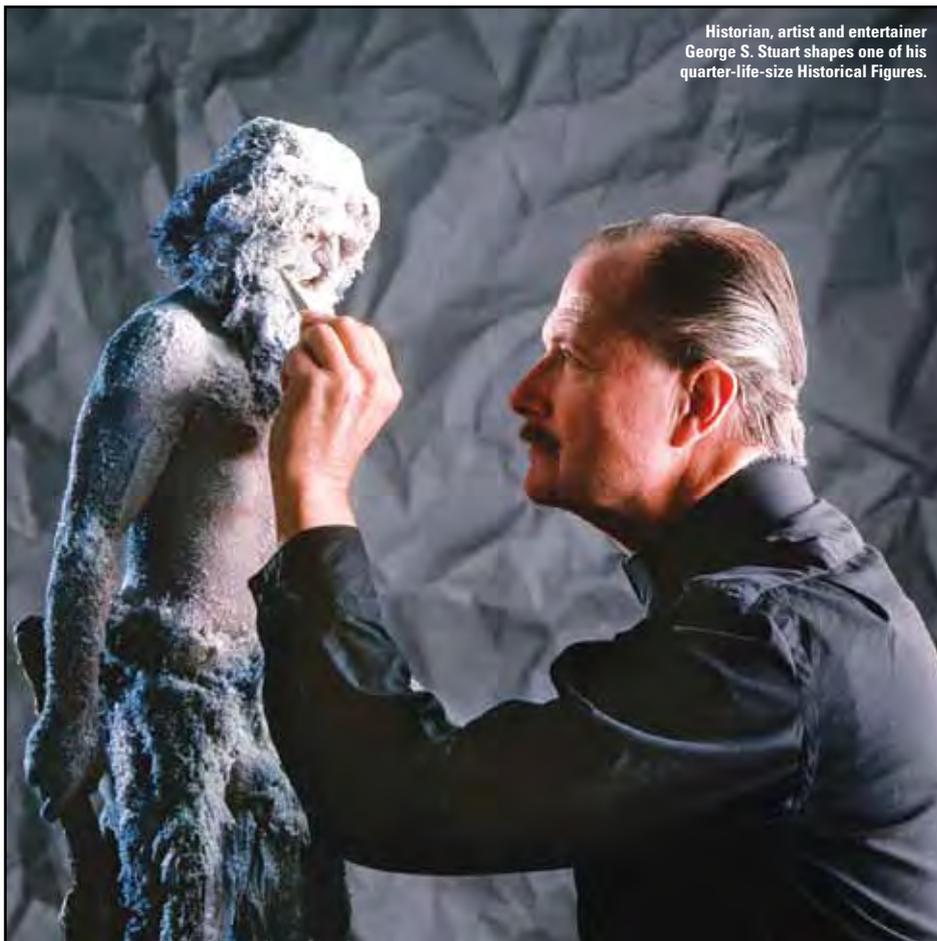
OCTOBER 2010

ISSUE 149

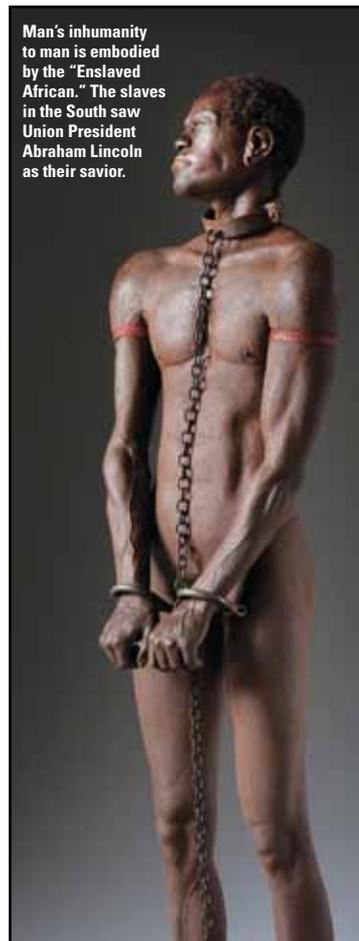
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FREE CENTERFOLD PULL-OUT POSTER



Historian, artist and entertainer George S. Stuart shapes one of his quarter-life-size Historical Figures.



Man's inhumanity to man is embodied by the "Enslaved African." The slaves in the South saw Union President Abraham Lincoln as their savior.

WELCOME TO THE WORLD OF GEORGE S. STUART

Text: Alan Golden Photos: Peter D'Aprix

Alan Golden explores the magical world of historian, lifelike figure maker and entertainer George S. Stuart, whose work fosters understanding history through art

It seems as if no matter how much I think of myself as well-read, well-traveled and a person who is open to learning, I am constantly humbled by my lack of knowledge. We definitely live in a large and complex world. I have certainly learned almost everything I know the hard way by trial and error. Some of the phrases I love the most are "What? You never heard of ...?" and "Where have you been?" Well, I've been right here and ready to learn.

That's how this chapter in

my life has unfolded. My amazing wife/partner in life, Andrea, has always supported my passions for history and for collecting toy soldiers and model figures (see issue 143). She brings to my attention advertisements, bookstores, hobby shops, military historical places and so on. She also gives me newspaper articles, Website addresses and other information. She is my precious treasure!

About 10 years ago Andrea told me of a public television show about George S. Stuart, an artist who models large figurines of people from history. She said they were breathtaking in their realism and accuracy. Upon further investigation, we learned that his work was on exhibit at the Museum of Ventura County in Ventura, Calif., USA. By chance, we were soon to be in the neighborhood.

AMAZINGLY DETAILED

At the museum, we excitedly viewed an exhibit of about 20 amazingly detailed sculptures, aptly called Historical Figures. I believe the theme was the "Monarchs of England," and each was riveting. We were assured that the pieces we saw were only a fraction of the 400 created by the artist during the last half-century.

While most visitors lingered about 10 minutes, as long as visitors typically view the Grand Canyon, my interest

The good times for Queen Victoria abruptly ended when Prince Albert died of typhoid in 1861.



An Aztec leopard warrior was a military rock star in a warring society.



SHE WAS NO VICTORIAN!

Queen Victoria kept this diary all her life and then began publishing volumes of it. She called it "Leaves From My Journal."

And, she told everything! What Albert looked like in his underwear and how his muscles rippled! And her family was just crawling up the wall!

"Oh, Mother! You didn't put that in the diary!"

Well, of course, this was the most popular coffee table book in England. Everybody bought "Leaves From My Journal." It was all there! Huge success!

--Excerpt from *George S. Stuart's monolog on the Queen and her era* titled "She Was No Victorian!"

and curiosity ran much deeper. I was most intrigued to learn more and understand what I was experiencing.

As a military miniature collector passionate about uniforms, the thought occurred to me: What if these were military themed?

I began to imagine the artist's quarter-life-size portraits of French Emperor Napoleon's marshals, ancient Romans and Greeks, pre-World War I European ceremonial uniforms, and even Japanese samurai. The possibilities were endless. I imagined that such figures' actual production would be very limited in part by time and money constraints, as

well as subject complexity and component availability.

Now the plot thickens.

MEETING THE ARTIST

I questioned the museum staff, but unfortunately the docents were reticent with information about Stuart. Given the quality and breadth of his body of work, I was very surprised and disappointed there was no coffee table book or other printed information available in the bookstore at the time. However, I found and purchased an introductory videotape about Stuart as an artist and entertainer. When I returned to my home in New York state, I

watched the video and discovered Stuart lived in a valley about one hour from the Ventura museum.

A phone number on the videotape box led to a conversation with the artist. He was polite, yet formal. Stuart invited me to his home and private gallery. As excited as I can be (and that's very at times), we went on a wonderful trip to California that included my first audience with Stuart.

I can recall it vividly. It was one-on-one for approximately four hours. For once in my life I did more listening than talking. The artist's whole life was fascinating, due in no small part to his knowledge of history, not to mention his aristocratic bearing and extraordinary talent. And, he is extremely funny.

I had brought with me some military history magazines, prints and 54-mm connoisseur figures to show him what I collected. It was new and fascinating to him. As a well-known historian, artist and lecturer, he showed great interest in my hobby of military miniatures, traveling and movies. He absorbed everything as a sponge does water.

Eventually, we met with Stuart several times and each occasion was very special. He was invited to speak and exhibit at the 2005 World Model Soldier Expo in Boston. His display of about eight of his masterpieces was a once-in-a-lifetime show. He also shared his work and experiences with Expo attendees at a standing room-only lecture.

HISTORICAL MONOLOGS

I gradually learned more about this very private, yet friendly man. Stuart is an expert on famous people in history. He has made a career out of



Collage featuring one of "Marius' Mules" from ancient Rome.



“ The unique aspect of the monologs is how Stuart combines his historical knowledge with Historical Figures of his subjects. In essence he tells a story with visual examples -- a show and tell. ”

giving entertaining monologs on the professional speakers' circuit.

The unique aspect of the monologs is how Stuart combines his historical knowledge with Historical Figures of his subjects. In essence he tells a story with visual examples -- a show and tell. To the best of my knowledge, no one has ever done this before.

He has merged his ability to make history interesting with his artistic talents to create fine art. He has produced about 400, quarter-life-size figures, most for the specific use of supporting his lectures, although some have been made for commissions for art galleries and private individuals.

Picture being at a lecture about U.S. President Abraham Lincoln, French King Louis XIV or British Prime Minister Winston Churchill with Stuart at the lectern, the figures on a display table and a sold-out audience of admirers hanging on his every word. He breathes life into his creations by helping listeners understand his subjects' greatest moments shaped by their strengths, weaknesses and personalities, as well as why they were famous and how they achieved fame.

Certainly Stuart reigns as the most interesting and unforgettable person I've ever met. We spent hours discussing a shared love of living history.

His interest is in politics, bloodlines, intrigues, social issues and their relationship to our own time. My interests are more in broad military history. We discussed costumes, uniforms, favorite movies, books, illustrations and life's ups and downs with all its irony and humor. I adore this man!

MARIUS' MULE MAKING

Let's fast forward to two years later when the plot thickens again. My dear friend Martin Fine (see issue 142) had an itch that he could not scratch after he saw several large-scale military figures in Europe. They turned out to be approximately 16-inch tall masterpieces by such famous artists as Lucien Rousselot and Eugene Leliepuce. These were known as manikins (I believe some of these are at the West Point Museum in New York state).

Marty admired the Roman legionary above all other fighting men. What would be called "grunts" today were nicknamed as "Marius' Mules." Marty had several versions of these ancient soldiers in 25-mm, 54-mm, 75-mm, 90-mm and 120-mm scales. Now he envisioned a special statement

of his respect and passion for the subject matter with a striking 600-mm replica.

This sculpture did not exist the general market in the size and quality Marty demanded, so he endeavored to re-create it through various artists. A bronze statue from England had too many restrictions and no life to it. Attempts in resins yielded poor quality and ended in disappointment. Marty was even ripped off by a never completed "pay me first" commission. Without the right resources or agent/



Holocaust victim: From immeasurable suffering and death arose a determination -- "never again!"



A Landsknecht personifying butchery, pillage and rapine.



Hoplite warriors from the city-states contributed to Greek unification.



Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee, the personification of the perfect Southern gentleman.

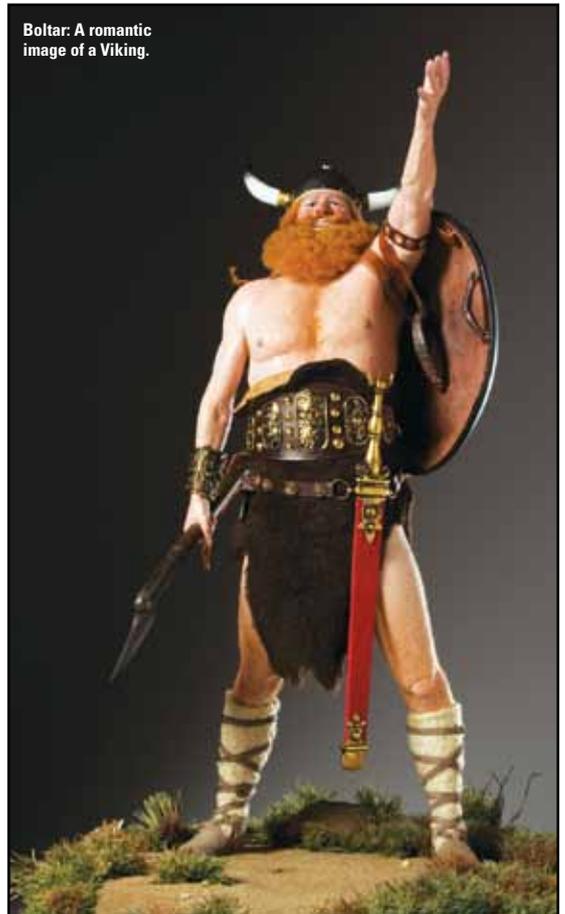
supplier, all of his attempts had failed. It was not a commodity found in commercial telephone directories.

As destiny would have it, I slowly became the middle man between this very determined patron and potential artists. Soon I suggested that Stuart should be engaged. Marty agreed and we labored over how we envisioned the finished product. All this was very exciting! After all, Marty wanted a museum-quality piece of an ancient Roman foot soldier on

the march and fully equipped. Realism required an accurate physique with muscles, scars, skin color and campaign-worn, but well-maintained equipment.

Finally we had sufficient detail on paper to send to Stuart. We held our breath awaiting his reply. Would he take the commission? What would he charge? How long will it take? And most importantly, what would the final product look like?

After considerable correspondence, Stuart took



Boltar: A romantic image of a Viking.



Typical Norman of the lower order of knights of the Fourth Crusade.



France's Napoleon Bonaparte: A little man with great charisma and a grand design for the world.



King Henry VIII changed the course of England's history with his lust.

the challenge. He extensively researched the "Marius' Mule" way beyond our color pictures and pages of information.

Stuart exceeded our wildest expectations. Astonishingly, in-progress photos revealed the figure's anatomical correctness. The figure maker had worked from the inside out with even the male organ in place, followed by underclothes and a tunic. Finally, there was the armor and gear necessary to survive a grueling military life.

The battle-hardened face had yellow and decaying teeth in a mouth opened to be able to breathe better during an arduous march. The face also reflected suffering from a bandaged, bleeding leg wound. This was no Hollywood caricature – he was the real thing.

The most curious item was the shield. Of a thousand realistic details I have seen in more than 100 of Stuart's figures, this Roman shield is



American mountain man: The harsh reality was more interesting than the "romance."

the most amazing. His photographic progress of the piece showed the fully developed shield with the pattern raised and in appropriate colors. However, during the actual forced marches a shield was covered in canvas to protect it from dust, rain and snow, as well as from bangs by columns of men in route step. The beautiful shield was completely covered – only we knew what lay beneath the canvas!

I vividly recall the first time I laid eyes on the Roman figure after its journey from California to New York. It took my breath away! Truly it was

SEE STUART'S FIGURES AT CLINTON PRESIDENTIAL CENTER

A selection of George S. Stuart's Historical Figures will be exhibited at the William J. Clinton Presidential Center in Little Rock, Ark., from December 2010 to May 2011.

Arrangements are also being made for Stuart to deliver a monolog at the U.S. exhibit's opening, which had not been scheduled at the time of this writing.

Plans call for 35 to 45 figures to be displayed in the exhibit, according to Leroy Becker, executive director of the Historical Figures Foundation based in Ventura, Calif.

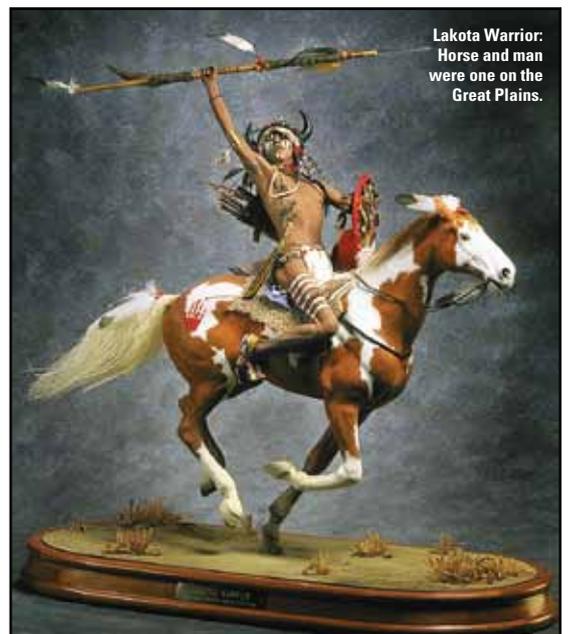
FOUNDATION EFFORTS

Dedicated to "understanding history through art," the non-profit foundation was established to preserve Stuart's figures and monologs for future generations. Its activities are underwritten by grants and donations.

The foundation helps facilitate Stuart's speaking engagements and exhibitions around the globe. In addition, multimedia educational programs are made available to the public, schools and museums.

Leroy noted the foundation has an online gallery of Stuart's body of work and publishes a subscription-based, quarterly newsletter to help fund its efforts. Also available are an award-winning book by the Museum of Ventura County and DVDs of monologs.

Permanent exhibits of Stuart's Historical Figures can be viewed at the Museum of Ventura County and the Ojai Valley Museum, both in California, and at the Naples Museum of Art in Florida. --Stuart A. Hessney



Lakota Warrior: Horse and man were one on the Great Plains.

Fierce fighters like this Zulu warrior held their own against British colonialism.



Frederick II, the Great: The Prussian's military adventures stirred up European alliances.



British general and playwright "Gentleman Johnny" Burgoyne.



the finest military re-creation in miniature I have ever seen.

Many of us have a misconception that larger-scale figures are easier to work on. But actually they're harder because the sculptures are looked at more closely and more critically. In this case, I could not fathom this level of workmanship, which compels the individual to want to know more about the subject and the history of its time.

ACCURACY & PRECISION

It was difficult to comprehend that this magnificent, precise work of art re-creating a Roman legionnaire was just one of the most recent of Stuart's 400-odd Historical Figures! It's incredible to think that they were primarily created as adjuncts to illustrate his monologs!



Stuart's "Revolution Warriors" Historical Figures include British Gens. Sir John Burgoyne and Sir Henry Clinton, Americans George and Martha Washington, the French Marquis de Lafayette, and Prussian Baron von Steuben (from left).

The figures and monologs range from Europe and the Americas to China, all of which had their warrior classes. There is an Aztec jaguar warrior from Mesoamerica, a Landsknecht from Europe's 30 Years' War, a Greek hoplite and several 19th-century American Plains Indians.

Beginning with the research material that one might provide for a custom commission, Stuart takes accuracy and precision to an ever higher level. His quests are legendary to find materials such as scale chain mail and elaborate embroidered fabrics. He fabricates all the metal objects himself. He bends, shapes and jury rigs things to his needs. He strives for authenticity in the details of everything from weapons to things as basic as hairstyles.

Stuart has learned or invented many special techniques in order to complete projects. By his count, Stuart estimates that he has had to learn more than a dozen crafts, from hat making to cobbling footwear and everything in between. He has mastered such things as skin, eyes, hair, fur and intricate patterning. He uses real materials where possible. There are few substitutes for metal, leather, wood and bone.

GENTLEMAN JOHNNY

General Burgoyne was a great friend of the King (George III). He was a charming man -- "Gentleman Johnny" -- everybody liked him.

Member of the House of Commons, playwright, ladies' man ... just an all-round fellow. We all liked him. (Circumstances of the Battle of Saratoga follow). --Excerpt from *George S. Stuart's monolog on British Gen. Sir John Burgoyne and the American Revolutionary War.*

MAKING HISTORY EXCITING

Clearly Stuart has considerable artistic talent, as do many sculptors and portraitists. What sets him apart is his insistence on historical accuracy and an unremitting perseverance beyond the comprehension of most of us.

Our minds live in a creative world. Too often this means a concept never goes beyond a paper sketch, let alone a finished product. Indeed, in this age of ever-narrowing specialization it is rare to find a multiplicity of crafts in one



French King Louis XIV illustrates how "horse ballets" were a favorite entertainment of the 1660s and 1670s.



Francisco Pizarro: A cruel, rapacious leader of a gang of thugs. The worst of the Spanish Conquest.



Some Russian serfs were the most miserable beings imaginable, barely human.

artist, especially taking a project to levels never dreamed of. Stuart is truly the standard-bearer of making history exciting and perhaps voyeuristic.

His "Really Awful People" is an exclusive club that includes among others Adolf Hitler, Vlad the Impaler and Emperor Nero. Another outstanding group brackets Imperial Russia's Romanov dynasty from Ivan the Terrible through the 20th century.

A personal favorite scene is a montage of three Russian serfs groveling before their master. When studied, it becomes a three-dimensional painting of abject subjects kneeling in a mix of snow and horse urine. Their hats are in their hair and hands cover their faces. Their body language exudes fear, for if caught catching a glimpse of the ruler, one could lose one's head. It is a mixture of emotions of terror and blind obedience.

Stuart's interests range from the most privileged and powerful rulers to the poorest victims in history. Perhaps most celebrated and universally understood are his representations of man's inhumanity to man: the "Enslaved African" and the "Holocaust Prisoner." ■

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to extend my most personal thanks to George S. Stuart for allowing me into his world. I've experienced the ability and complexity of a renaissance man. On behalf of so many fans that he has educated and entertained, a heartfelt thanks goes out to him for being so special. --Alan Golden

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