

# BOER WAR PERSONALITIES

Text and Photos: James H. Hillestad

Famous people linked to the conflict in South Africa are profiled in brief by James H. Hillestad and modeled by various toy figure makers



W. Britain figure depicting Earl Kitchener in his field marshal uniform in France during World War I.

**Question:** What do these famous personalities have in common?

**Answer:** They all featured in some fashion in the Second Anglo-Boer War of 1899-1902.

## MODEL MODERN GENERAL

Sir Garnet Wolseley's military efficiency earned him the character role of the "very model of a modern major general" in Gilbert and Sullivan's musical, "The Pirates of Penzance." Wolseley served as commander in chief of the British Army.

Sir Redvers Buller, a brave general who distinguished himself in the Zulu and Sudan

campaigns, failed miserably in the Boer War and was replaced by Lord Roberts. Buller took the blame for a government trying to fight a modern war with outdated methods.

Lord Roberts stood 5 feet 3 inches tall and was popularly nicknamed "Little Bobs." After achieving fame in Afghanistan and Abyssinia, he succeeded Buller in the Boer War in 1900 with Horatio Herbert Kitchener as his chief of staff. Roberts turned the tide, but overconfidence and misjudgment of the Boers left it to Kitchener to complete the task.

Kitchener, who took over from Lord Roberts as commander in chief in South Africa in December 1900, instituted harsh measures to deal with resurgent Boer guerilla warfare. Hundreds of farms were burned and the women and children living in them were relocated into refugee camps. The term "concentration camp" thus came into being. Kitchener was promoted from major general to full general during war.

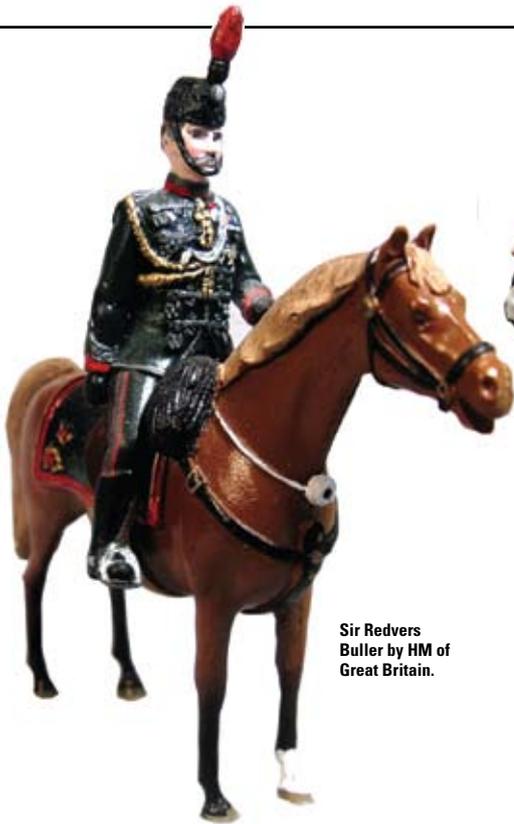
## SCOUTING FOUNDER BESIEGED

Sir Robert Baden-Powell established his reputation at the 217-day siege of Mafeking. His unconventional ideas, such as scouting and the recruitment of railway men to operate armored trains, were heralded. He was promoted to major general, the youngest in the British Army. His services to youngsters as founder of the Boy Scouts earned him a peerage.

Gen. Louis Botha was commander in chief of the Transvaal Boer forces. The farmer symbolized the Boers' unorthodox approach to warfare. The Afrikaner became



Toy soldier makers have produced figures of many famous people associated with the Second Anglo-Boer War. How many of these personalities can you identify?



Sir Redvers Buller by HM of Great Britain.



The Prince and Princess of Wales by Sarum Soldiers.



Boer Gen. Louis Botha by British Bulldog.

the first prime minister of the new Union of South Africa in 1910.

The Princess of Wales, a native of Denmark and later Queen Alexandra, instituted an armband for British nurses with a red cross surmounted by the Danish cross. She also designed the nurses' uniform, along with the badge. In 1902, the Army Nursing Service became Queen Alexandra's Imperial Nursing Service. Her husband, the Prince of Wales (later King Edward VII), refused to be crowned until the war ended in victory and a peace treaty was signed.

The Boers had hoped for support from German Kaiser Wilhelm II and Russian Czar Nicholas II. Both Germany and Russia harbored strong anti-British sentiments. But both rulers

refused to receive Boer representatives as they were not prepared militarily to incur the displeasure of Great Britain.

### WHITE MAN'S BURDEN

U.S. President Theodore Roosevelt, who was a friend of British writer Rudyard Kipling, was inspired by Kipling's

celebrated sermon to take up the "white man's burden of benevolent colonialism." As a consequence, Roosevelt refused to support the Boers despite pressure from Irish-Americans. He said, "It would be for the advantage of mankind to have English spoken south of the Zambezi just as in New York."

Future British Prime Minister

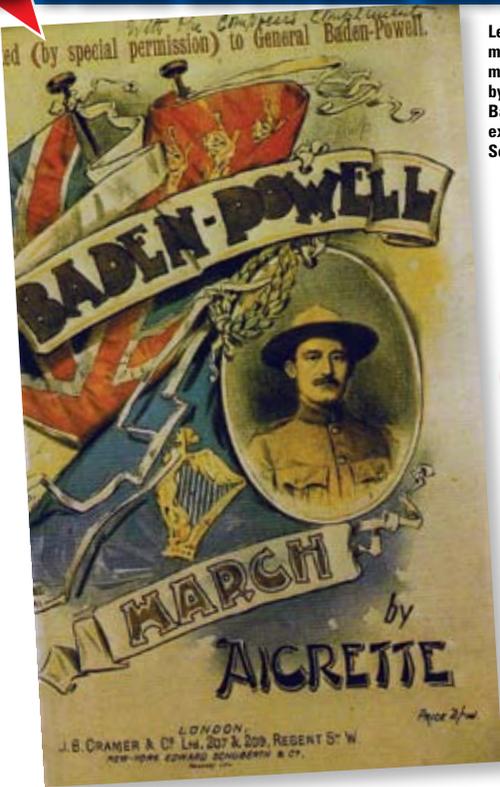
Sir Garnet Wolseley by The Toy Soldiers of Wm. Hocker, Proprietor.



The German Kaiser and Russian Czar (from left) by Sarum Soldiers.



# SPECIAL SECTION: SECOND ANGLO-BOER WAR



Left: Sheet music for a march inspired by Sir Robert Baden-Powell's exploits in South Africa.



Left: Sir Robert Baden-Powell by Sarum Soldiers.



Left: Mohandas Gandhi by Marlborough Military Models.



Right: Sir Arthur Conan Doyle by William Driscoll.

Winston Churchill, a war correspondent during the Boer War, was captured Nov. 15, 1899, during an attack on an armored train. Ironically, only five days earlier he wrote, "I think we ought to punish people who surrender ... no exchange of prisoners." Two weeks later he was badgering his captors for permission to send home a press release urging prisoner exchange. To his credit, he escaped, and the rest is history.

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle served as a physician in a field hospital and wrote a 156-page booklet, "The War in South Africa," which explained the justification for the British policy of concentration

**“ Kitchener instituted harsh measures to deal with resurgent Boer guerilla warfare. ”**

camps. The booklet, of which 500,000 copies were printed in 1902, earned the author a knighthood (though it was believed in literary circles that the knighthood was a mark of Royal gratitude for the return of Doyle's detective character Sherlock Holmes in "The

Hound of the Baskervilles" 1902). Doyle had killed Holmes off in "The Adventures of the Final Problem" in 1893, much to the dismay of his worldwide audience.

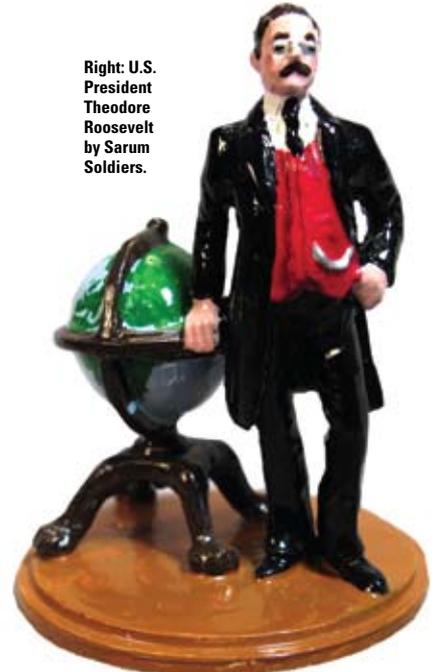
Mohandas Gandhi traveled to Natal in 1893, where he was active in the movement to secure



Lord Roberts by Imperial Productions.

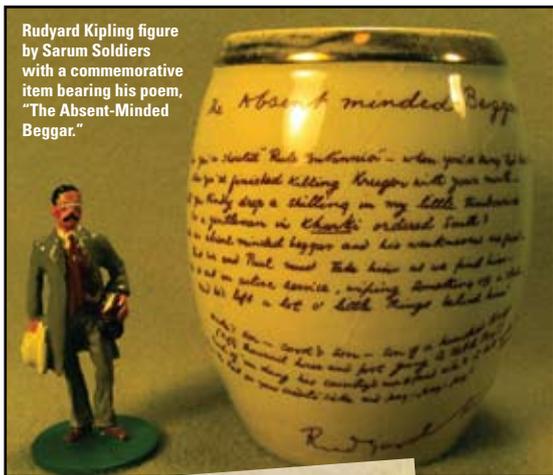


Left: War correspondent Winston Churchill by Quartermaster Corps.



Right: U.S. President Theodore Roosevelt by Sarum Soldiers.

Rudyard Kipling figure by Sarum Soldiers with a commemorative item bearing his poem, "The Absent-Minded Beggar."



Left: Period caricatures of Kitchener and Kipling representing the sword and pen (from left).



Thomas Stevens of Coventry, England, invented a technique for weaving pictures and bookmarks in pure silk called the Stevengraph. These were popular during the period of the Second Anglo-Boer War. Shown are Stevengraphs of British Queen Alexandra and King Edward VII.

voting rights for Indians in South Africa. During the Boer War, he raised an ambulance corps of more than 1,000 Indians, for which the British awarded him the War Medal. He would go on to become a spiritual and political leader in India's independence movement.

Caton Woodville was inspired by Kipling's poem and complemented it with an illustration of a wounded but defiant soldier. He titled it "A Gentleman in Khaki." Accompanied by the poem, it was widely reproduced, on everything from ladies' fans to decorative ceramic objects. ■

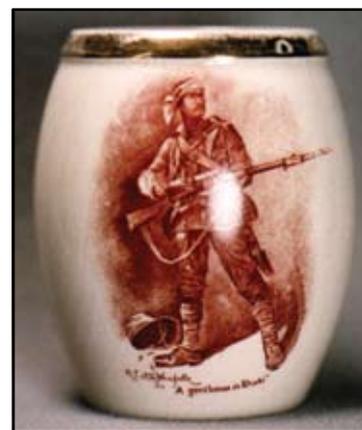
### KIPLING THE IMPERIALIST

Rudyard Kipling, who was born in Bombay, was well-known for creating the poem "Gunga Din." Kipling was a staunch imperialist and embraced the war with fervor. As a fundraiser for the dependents of soldiers, he wrote a poem, "The Absent-Minded Beggar," which was recited to Sir Arthur Sullivan's music. An excerpt follows:

*When you've shouted "Rule Britannia," when you've sung "God save the Queen,"  
When you've finished killing Kruger with your mouth,  
Will you kindly drop a shilling in my little tambourine  
For a gentleman in khaki ordered South?*

Author H.G. Wells commented, "The prevailing force in my undergraduate days was not Socialism but Kiplingism. In the middle nineties this spectacled and mustached little figure, with wild shouts of boyish enthusiasm and delight in the sounds and colors in the very odors of empire, became a national symbol."

Victorian artist Richard



Commemorative jar with "A Gentleman in Khaki," the illustration by Richard Caton Woodville. (Writer's Collection)



Commemorative plate featuring Lord Roberts surrounded by images that include Sir Robert Baden Powell, Sir George White and Redvers Buller. (Writer's Collection)



Vignette from John Eden Studios depicting artist Richard Caton Woodville creating "A Gentleman in Khaki."