

**D-Day:** Operation Overlord remembered in Normandy

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# CLASSIC MILITARY VEHICLE

Issue  
195  
**KEY**

## Back to the Beaches

- \* Veteran returns to Juno Beach in a Bedford QL
- \* Paras remembered at Ranville
- \* Anniversary event reports



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# D-Day 1944-2017

**The invasion** of Normandy in June 1944 remains the world's largest ever amphibious landing and around each annual anniversary the area becomes a magnet for military vehicle enthusiasts. Vehicles can be seen at the five landing beaches, sites of the airborne landings at each end of the beachheads, memorials and other historic places in the area. Solemn ceremonies of remembrance take place as the dwindling band of veterans remember their fallen comrades. This year, the 73rd anniversary, was no exception and so this issue of CMV contains a variety of stories from Normandy in June. Veterans of other conflicts aren't forgotten this month either as a former serviceman writes about a break in the Lake District that was facilitated by Help for Heroes and the North East Military Vehicle Club.

Also in this issue are stories about unusual British armoured vehicles; a Centaur Dozer found in a scrapyard and restored in Holland and a



A scene from this year's Wartime in The Vale military vehicle show

Covenanter that has been recently excavated from a vineyard in Surrey where it has lain since being buried by Canadian troops during World War Two. It just shows what can still be found that pertains to the momentous events that took place around 75 years ago. Both

tracked vehicles are also proof of the old petrolheads' saying, 'if you can recognise it, you can restore it.' Enjoy!

*John Carroll*

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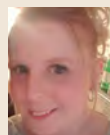
#### John Carroll

Editor John is a longstanding military vehicle enthusiast who has owned a variety of green machines from a Scammell Explorer to a Harley 45 via Jeeps and Land Rovers



#### Vicky Turner

Editorial Assistant Vicky is crucial to the organisation of the new CMV team and the production of the magazine. She's also the owner of a classic 1960s Land Rover



#### Michelle Toner

Ad Sales Executive Michelle is the person to contact with regard to advertising in CMV. She's happy to discuss companies' specific advertising needs



#### Steve Donovan

Chief Designer Steve has worked with Designer Dave Robinson in redesigning the magazine to produce CMV's fresh, new look for 2017



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Make great savings when you subscribe to *Classic Military Vehicle* today. See pages 44-45 for this month's special offers







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*GI mechanics install a motor in a US Army vehicle on the assembly line at an ordnance depot in Normandy*

**90** **Echoes of War**

*A Belgian Press Agency photograph of Willys CJ-3B/M606 during the Leopoldville Riots, January 1959*

MAIN IMAGE: 2017, an evocative image of a Bedford QL driving in the surf on Juno beach, 73 years after D-Day. RICHY LEESON



Craig Allen joined the veterans at the Normandy Airborne Commemoration 2017



# Remembering





ABOVE: A nicely restored Kublerwagen spotted close to the Gondree Cafe

LEFT: Veterans pay their respects to fallen comrades at the Church at Putot-en-Auge

The annual commemorations in Normandy are a Mecca for World War Two military vehicle enthusiasts. And so, a chance to photograph this year's commemoration on behalf of The Parachute Regiment was too good an opportunity to miss.

The airborne events were centred around the small village of Ranville, Pegasus Bridge and the Merville Battery. Being familiar with the area I booked myself into the excellent Camping Capucines at Ranville. This has good facilities and is walking distance from both the village and Pegasus Bridge.

***'The survivors are now stooped with age and few in number but still they came'***

Day one was June 5 which involved a packed series of events at the Airborne Memorial and Merville. The most impressive sight that first morning was the veterans arriving in a fleet of 70 taxis organised by the London-based Taxi Charity for Military Veterans, something they have been doing since the 50th anniversary of D-Day - what a wonderful gesture and what a great bunch of people.

French officials and schoolchildren were on hand to welcome them and, after a moving service, a number of veterans were awarded the Croix de guerre to great applause.

Leaving the memorial I spied my first Jeep, in this case resplendent in airborne recce trim and, despite the British outfits, manned by Italians who had journeyed from Turin.

At lunch, taken at the Pegasus Bridge Café, another couple of well turned-out Jeeps caught my eye and I chatted with Gary Wishing, one of the owners.

Walking back to the memorial I bumped into yet another pair of

Jeeps, this time with a party from Northamptonshire.

It turned out the owner of one of them, Kevin Birinshaw, had imported his own vehicle all the

# The Fallen





*Italian-crewed airborne recce Jeep at the Airborne Memorial*

way from the USA to ensure authenticity, and it certainly looked the part.

Just when I thought the trip was turning into a Jeepfest I turned a corner and there was a collection of Dodge trucks, along with a nicely turned-out BSA M20 in desert colours.

This was a Dutch party and the M20 was owned by Jap de Moes who had ridden it from

his home in Amsterdam. My next encounter was with Shaun Hindle, an old friend of the magazine, who had brought his familiar Universal Carrier Puddle Duck along with a nicely-restored MKII Dingo Scout Car.

In the evening I made the short run down the D223 to Merville for another airborne commemoration, this time in honour of 9 Para and its

audacious assault on the battery carried out in the early hours of D-Day.

Here the veterans were joined by a cavalcade of Harley WLAs, another Dutch group as it turned out, and resplendent in US Army costume to match their well turned-out bikes.

They certainly added to the colour of the event and were joined by a smattering of Jeeps and

***'It was sobering to see the number of headstones dedicated to airborne soldiers'***



*A pair of Jeeps from Northants with Pegasus Bridge in the Background*





**Dodge Ambulance in fantastic condition next to the Airborne Memorial**



**Dutchman Ron Vogel arrived at Merville with a group of friends all riding Harley W/Ls**



**The cost of victory - a veteran surveys the headstones at Ranville**



**Pegasus Bridge**

Dodge weapon carriers. Events on June 6 were centred around Ranville itself beginning with a short but intimate ceremony at the Parachute Regiment memorial at the crossroads. Ranville was the first village in France to be liberated by lead elements of 6th Airborne Division jumping in to secure the Orne Bridges and the flank of the invasion beaches. Moving onto the impressive Norman church

with its beautifully laid-out cemetery it was sobering to see the number of headstones dedicated to airborne soldiers. Many of these were from the 13th (Lancashire) & 12th (Yorkshire) Battalions of the Parachute Regiment, a reminder of the cost of victory. The French were wonderful hosts and laid on a reception for the veterans and their families attended by the mayor and many local dignitaries. Rep- ▶



**Yorkshireman Stuart Kinroy with his Dodge WC circa 1943**



**A veteran arrives by London taxi and snaps out a smart salute**





**Alistair Scott poses with Puddle Jumper a Universal Carrier belonging to Shaun Hindle**



**ABOVE: A smart looking Dodge Weapons Carrier parked close to Pegasus Bridge**

**BELOW: Showing the colours, a well appointed Jeep parked next to the Gondree Cafe**



If the Germans had been able to break through here they might have rolled up the allied lodgement and thrown it back into the sea.

Most of their immediately available armour was concentrated close to the Pas de Calais so this was the vital ground. Desperate actions were fought at key points along the ridge as the paratroopers and glider-borne Infantry of 6th AB Division strove to contain the German thrusts. The little churchyard at Putot-en-Auge includes a handful of graves to paratroopers who fell in these battles and is a fitting resting place so close to where they fought.

The survivors are now stooped with age and few in number, but still they came, joining with the mayor and local people to make the short walk to the church to remember the fallen. It was a moving sight and a reminder that the sacrifice of these young men for freedom all those years ago is not forgotten.

With this last event the ceremonies were over for another year and next morning I joined the ferry queue dotted with numerous Jeeps and restored military vehicles heading for home. They and the veterans will be back next year and hopefully I can join them to record the commemoration of this key event from World War Two.



**Gary Wishing and his mate with their two Jeeps at the Pegasus Cafe.**

resenting the Parachute Regiment were General Ranald Munro and Lt Col Bruce Radbourne along with the regimental mascot Pegasus.

With some time to myself the following morning I walked the mile or so to the Airborne Memorial for a look around the museum and bumped into another party of enthusiasts, Brits this time and with a fine collection of Dodge WC trucks including a beautifully-restored ambulance.

In the afternoon Merville was again the focus although, sadly, a proposed jump by the Red Devils was called off due to high winds. However a small scale event at Putot-en-Auge that evening was for me was the most poignant of the whole trip.

This small village lies close to the Breville Ridge which guarded the flank of the bridgehead and it was here that some of the bitterest fighting took place.

Today the Coup-de-Main assaults on the Orne Bridges and Merville Battery are perhaps best remembered but it was the fighting on the flank that was key to the survival of the bridgehead.



**Veterans receive the Croix-de-guerre from a French general at the Airborne Memorial with the original Pegasus Bridge in the background**



# How do you make a man happy?



## The Experience of Delivery

Dr. Matthew Henry, a reputable neurosurgery doctor who practices in Wichita, KS USA and Tank Collector, works very close together with BAIV in setting up the House of Tanks Museum. Currently Dr. Henry has a couple of tanks in the pipeline which will all be fully restored in The Netherlands.

On Sunday June 18th BAIV delivered his 'Celerity'; a famous A34 Comet Tank built in 1944, with a very nice history being a proven 'Tiger Killer'. The team of BAIV was in Wichita to deliver the tank personally to Dr. Henry. A short impression can be found on YouTube. Dr. Henry explained that this tank was exactly what he wanted. He loved it and the team in Holland did a great job!

This is one of the aspects from BAIV. Restoring a vehicle is one thing, but personal attention is as important in the philosophy of BAIV. Things like regular well documented restoration reports and updates, delivery on the spot and a detailed photographic file of the restoration is an integrated part of our restoration performance.



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# Military Odyssey

August 26-28 at the Kent Showground, Detling, Maidstone, ME14 3JF

Military Odyssey covers 2,000 years of history and conflict. There will be numerous multi-period arena events and of course, battlefield re-enactments. See ancient history come alive with arena battles between Saxons and Vikings with lots of sword-swinging, shield-bashing action. Groups representing the Napoleonic and Victorian eras will also be there and Southern Skirmish will be bringing the American Civil

War to us. There will be plenty of World War Two displays and major battles with tanks, vehicles and artillery. This year, anyone holding a ND MOD 90 ID card is welcome for free on the Monday. Bruce Crompton from the TV series *Combat Dealers* has confirmed he will be at the event this year so you can come along have a chat or have a selfie; he will be available at the Chelmsford Militaria pitch on A51 and B51.







As the hall was in the 1970s

# The Tank Museum to redesign its World War Two hall

The Tank Museum's next challenge is the redevelopment of the Second World War Hall. The hall is the oldest part of the museum and is for many, the traditional 'heart' of the museum and redesigning it is therefore a delicate matter. How do they re-display such a collection without disappointing some element of their audience?

The Second World War Hall is 3,400 square metres and can't be developed in one go, so the work will be phased over a number of years. They are asking for input, so if you have a view on what they should be doing, please do help them by sending your views to [info@tankmuseum.org](mailto:info@tankmuseum.org).

## News Briefs

### Rapid Intervention Vehicle

Commissioned by a United Arab Emirates-based military vehicle manufacturer, a rapid intervention vehicle, has been put together by Horiba-MIRA, a Warwickshire-based test facility.

The brief was to design and build, from scratch, a rapid-insertion, high-performance vehicle for desert use by up to four heavily-armed members of UAE special forces weighing around 120kg each.

"It's the fastest vehicle across the desert," said chief project engineer Jim Hopton. At 4,000kg, the RIV is no lightweight, but it can perform the 0-62mph test in 10.5sec and then cruise comfortably at 100mph, with or without the windscreen.



### REME Museum

The REME museum successfully completed its move to Lyneham and opened its doors to the public on June 6. After 57 years in Arborfield, Berkshire, the REME Museum closed to the public in April 2015 and began packing the collection. More than 100,000 items in their collection have been moved, including more than 100 vehicles, the majority of which are REME specific variants.

Price Philip Barracks, Lyneham, Chippenham, SN15 4XX  
[www.rememuseum.org.uk](http://www.rememuseum.org.uk)



### Proms Away

It is prom season, and one lucky lad from Lancashire made quite an entrance arriving to his in a tank. Brennan Boys went to his prom at Alder Grange Community and Technology School in Rawtenstall in a 30-year-old, 17-tonne Austrian Saurer Tank, owned by Grandpa Brian Boys who, until 2010 when most of it was sold off, had an extensive collection of military vehicles, some of which were used in the filming of Saving Private Ryan.



# Passchendaele Centenary

The Royal British Legion has released 60,083 limited-edition pins, to remember the 60,083 British soldiers lost during the 103 days of battle at Passchendaele in 1917.

The pins are made from melted-down fuses from British shells fired during the battle. Each of the pins is decorated



with enamel paint, which has been mixed with soil from the British front line, comes in wooden presentation box and with a commemorative certificate detailing one of the individual soldiers whose life was lost. All profits from the sale of the pins goes to help with the important work the charity does.





# Odd Contraption

While on holiday in Denmark I came across this odd machine. It is a truck, but it has obviously been modified to drive on rails instead of roads. Does anyone have any additional information on this weird thing? The machine is located in a storage yard at Karup air base, next to two dismantled jet fighters. Please get in touch.

jwaarde@chello.nl.  
Jan van Waarde

# Great Desert Explorers

Toby Savage read this book and enjoyed it so much, he wanted to share it. He reviews it here; Andrew Goudie's latest desert-themed masterpiece, on the back of Light Car Patrols 1916-19, scratches away the crusty veneer of about 60 of the most intrepid and fearless explorers ever to venture into the vast wastelands of the world's deserts. Many did it purely for the thrill of being the first there, others were subjecting themselves to the arid regions of the planet for military



reasons. One such hero was Captain William Henry Irvine Shakespear who was born in Pakistan and educated at Sandhurst. Lawrence (of Arabia) described Shakespear as having 'an abiding contempt for everything native'. Perfect for defending the Empire!

He had a healthy fascination for the motor car and in 1907 drove an 8bhp Rover home to England from the Middle East. Most Victorian and Edwardian explorers relied upon the camel of course, but a few saw the big advantages of the car. Sir Bede Clifford made the first crossing of the Kalahari in 1928 using six-wheeled Morris trucks. John Ball, 'the little doctor' used the Model T Fords as part of his work with the Light Car Patrol.

This book is laced with endless charming anecdotes and quotes describing an era of exploration now lost to us forever, when much of the globe was coloured in pink and all you needed was a stiff upper lip.

It is very well laid out and invites readers to opt for a short, but detailed analysis of both the explorers and the deserts they explored. On a more gruesome note it also pays homage to those less fortunate in their adventures. A terrifying list early in the book catalogues 36 of those who did not return: 'James Wellstead, aged 37, died of fever, attempted suicide and madness!'

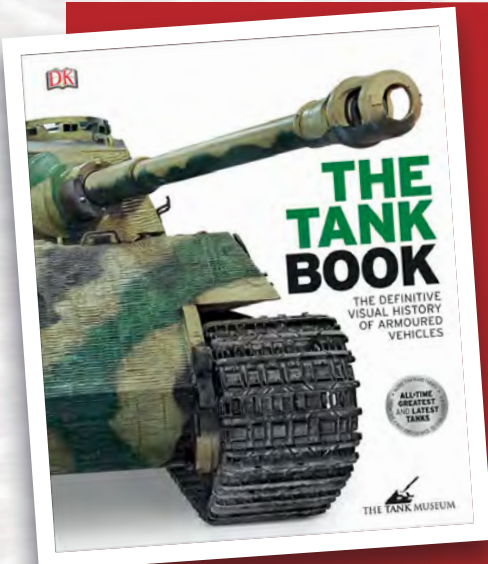
It is meticulously researched by Goudie, (one-time honorary secretary and vice-president of The Royal Geographical Society, and something of a desert explorer) providing many of the location photographs to supplement the original black and white images taken by the explorers. Available through all of the usual sources for about £30.

# Winners

We are delighted to announce that the winners of the Tank Book Competition which ran in Classic Military Vehicle's May issue are as follows:

**Mr B Allan, Fife, Oliver Barbosa, Market Harborough, Mr C Bolland, Exeter, Mr B Harris, Flitwick, Mr J Lindley, Wakefield, Mr I McCormack, Preston, Mr D Reddall, Sutton Coldfield, Mrs M Reddall, Sutton Coldfield, Mr N Thomas, Horley and Mr D Whiting, Wrexham.**

All will receive a copy of The Tank Book, written by David Willey.







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# Priced out of the market

I'm an avid reader of your great magazine and owner of a few military vehicles myself. I did 18 years full-time in the army and am still a reserve. I'm a dual Brit/American citizen. I've been into the vehicle scene for nearly 30 years and a member of various groups including my own group Eaglestorm Living History and the MVT Northwest branch of which I've been a member for around 28 years - I'm still the youngest vehicle-owning member.

As well as the military scene, I'm a member of a classic car group and there are similarities between the two. Where are all our new young vehicle owners? Well, there aren't any! The young really do not seem interested. Has the video game culture affected youth so much? Here's my main concern. Have we overpriced our vehicles so much that the young can only dream

of even just sitting in one of our vehicles as tag-along riders?

This is the same with 'normal' cars. The youth of today cannot afford to drive clapped out Fiat Puntos around let alone go out and buy a Land Rover for a couple of hundred quid and break into the vehicle hobby as I, and others did, in the 1990s. I could race around in my XR3i and still buy my Lightweight. I bought a few Land Rovers back then, nothing serious, but added some new Nato Green paint and a Union flag sticker and hey presto - a military vehicle!

I still have my first Lightweight Land Rover that I paid £400 for. Judging by today's prices and in the condition it's in with accessories, according to adverts on Milweb its worth at least £7,500-£8,000 in today's money. What kid on this earth is ever going to find, or fork out that kind of

money?

I have a Humvee. A very nice one too. My good friend Gordon Talbot and I were at Evesham this last weekend and discussing Humvee prices. Again, judging by some of the recent prices, we have £40,000 worth of Humvees each. It won't ever be sold for a pound less.

I've just sold my Reo to some friends in my Eaglestorm group. I bought it about 10 years ago for £5,000 and sold it 'cheap' to them for £8,000. I sold my Reo because I got myself an M923a2 five-ton truck. I can't even gauge the price of that because there aren't the vehicles for sale to compare, not registered anyway. But when you look at MAN Kats, modern DAFs and other likely comparisons, £14,000-15,000 has to be the starting figure.

Back in the day (my day) £3,500-£5,000 would have got you a Jeep. In my view, the single most overpriced vehicle on the planet - even Hotchkiss are now sold for over £10,000.

So how do you get new people to love and cherish our vehicles and get new blood into the hobby? It's difficult isn't it?

I know of an older guy near me who had some lovely vehicles. He's passed on and his wartime vehicles are just sitting there rotting to splinters and rust. His family think they are worth millions so are not selling them and they won't lend them out to anybody to display because they are way too valuable to let some young ruffian use.

I'm part of the very same problem because we all think that the value of our vehicles makes us the next millionaires! I certainly can't see us collectively reducing our values.

**Jon Stafford, Manchester**





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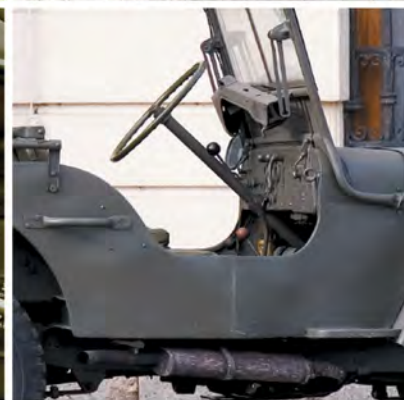
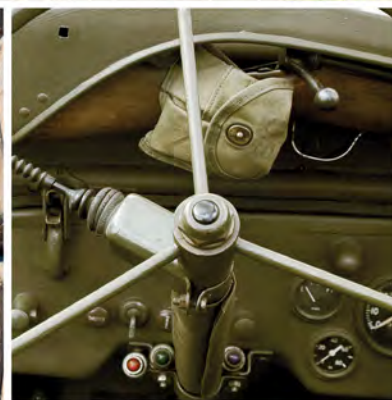
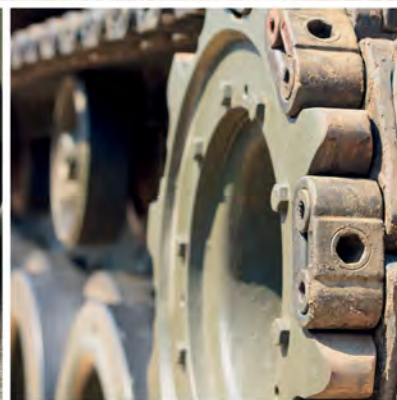


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# Putting us right...

I would like to start by saying I love the magazine and love all the in-depth stories and history of the vehicles you cover.

While reading the latest edition I was very interested in the section about the Wolf Land Rovers. I saw the part about SNATCH armoured Land Rovers and as I served in Northern Ireland with 26 Transport Sqn in the 90s when these vehicles first made an appearance I have a bit of knowledge of them. It's written in the section that they are called SNATCH Land Rovers because they were used to snatch people from crowds - this is not true. The name SNATCH is an abbreviation for the following: 'Service, Northern Ireland, Anti-Terrorist, Command, Hutch'

This was written on the front of all the training manuals and servicing books when the vehicle came into service.

James Glen

# ...again

Just a small point, but the half-track on page 41 of your July issue is not as described. The shorter body shows it to be an M2 model, not an M3. Also, the lack of mine racks and pulpit gun mount show that it's an early version, not an A1. Therefore, it is not an M3A1 Armoured Personnel Carriage.

From the angle of the photograph, it could be an M4 Mortar Motor Carriage but it is more likely to be an M2 Half-track Car. I hope this is helpful.

Kind Regards,

Rich Baker, Peterborough

# Wicksteed at War



Chieftain, one of the biggest vehicles on show

Firmly establishing itself on the circuit, Wicksteed at War's free to enter (apart from the car-parking) family weekend is going from strength to strength, with more than 200 military vehicles exhibited, two battle re-enactments each day and around 15,000 attending this year's event in the glorious June sunshine, although sadly it was too windy for the planned BBMF Hurricane and Spitfire fly-past.

A Russian T-72 and a British Chieftain tank were the biggest and heaviest armour in attendance, but there was a large variety of APVs and smaller vehicles of from military Jeeps and Land Rovers, bikes, ambulances and

Hinckley Home Guard won The Best in Show Rose Bowl with their 'American convoy meets the Home Guard' theme and attention to detail. Their impressive display featured a 1942 Diamond T, 1943 GMC CCKW 353 and a 1935 Dennis bus replica.



Best in Show - Diamond T & GMC



An M1 freshly painted green at Grafenwoehr Training Area, Germany

# Going Green

American Army M1 tanks and trucks began arriving in Europe in January in reaction to a perceived increase in threat from Russia. After years of combat in the Middle East, the US Army M1 Abrams tanks and combat vehicles still sport their desert-coloured livery. This became a challenge for Lt Gen Ben Hodges, commander of US Army Europe, when hundreds of M1s began flowing into Europe's woodland landscape. He observes that: "Nothing says transient like a tan tank in Europe," adding that green has become "a strategic communications element for us". A programme to repaint is underway.

## News Briefs

### Military Leader's Motors



The Zimbabwe Independent reports that President Robert Mugabe's cash-strapped government has bought more than 300 cars for military bosses ahead of the crunch 2018 elections.

The cars are to be allocated to various army units that included the Air Force of Zimbabwe including commanders and Zimbabwe National Army lieutenant-colonels.

The cars ranged from Toyota Fortuner SUVs valued at \$75,000 each, Ford Ranger double-cabs valued between \$53,000 and \$89,000 each, and Toyota Corollas ranging from \$25,000 to \$29,000 per vehicle.

### Fiji Furore



The Fiji opposition leader Ro Teimumu Kepa says the government is harming the country's image by having the armoured personnel carriers on parade in Nadi, and that it is not helping the tourism industry or enhancing Fiji's image abroad but rather denting it badly. She also questioned the wisdom of buying three Bushmaster vehicles from Australia, describing the purchase as an extravagant use of funds. Australia agreed to sell 10 Bushmasters to Fiji in February, with the defence minister Marise Payne saying they would be used to support Fiji's United Nations peacekeeping missions in the Middle East.

### Tank Tragedy



Two British soldiers, corporals Matthew Hatfield and Darren Neilson, died after an explosion in their tank during an exercise at a Castlemartin firing range in Pembrokeshire on June 14. Neilson, 31, of Preston, Lancashire, was the tank commander and is believed to have been in the turret at the time of the blast. Hatfield, 27, from Amesbury, Wiltshire, was loading practice ammunition.

At the opening to their inquest it emerged that the cause of Hatfield's death is believed to be burns, while Neilson suffered a cardiac arrest as a result of blast-related injuries.

It is understood the accident involved a Challenger 2 tank. No other tank was involved, and the Challenger was not hit by a shell. A worldwide ban on tank live-firing exercises involving British troops remains in place.





*Volunteers: at this stage manual digging replaces the mechanical and the hydraulic*

# BURIED

Uncovering a Covenanter from the chalk soils of an English vineyard

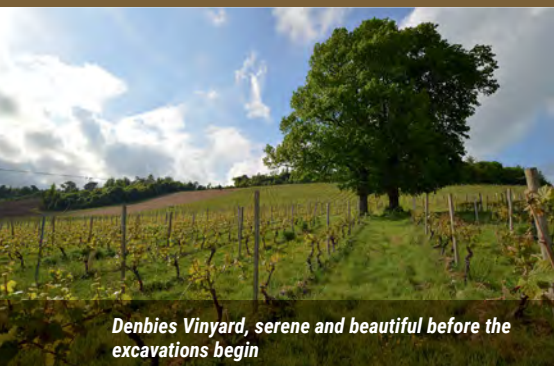
*Rick intends to get this Covenanter back in running order. He has sourced some wheels and track and a gearbox, but he needs more road wheels, engine parts, tracks and a 2PDR gun and cradle from either the Covenanter or the Crusader, and they are interchangeable. The rest he can fabricate himself, but if you have or know of anyone who might have these items, please get in touch. Oh, and if you know of the location of any buried tanks; Rick might just want to dig them up too!*

It has long been known that under the chalk soils of Denbies Wine Estate, Surrey, lay a Covenanter tank, buried by the Canadians, who had been using them in their training for Operation Overlord, before they departed for France.

When the country faced the threat of Operation Sea Lion early on in the war, the area around Dorking, Leatherhead, Bradley Farm (now Denbies Wine Estate), and Ranmore Common was a centre for defensive Home Guard activity. By 1944 nearby Headley Court, was the headquarters of the Canadian Infantry and the surrounding area provided billets and a training ground before their

departure for the beaches of Normandy on D-Day.

This tank has been excavated once before, sometime in the 1970s, when the gamekeeper of the estate mentioned it – he was in the Home Guard and remembered it of old. Of the pair of tanks disposed of by the Canadians, one was recovered and much later, after a dispute over the transportation cost, was removed to Bovington Tank Museum for restoration and eventual display. Back then though, perhaps there was only an appetite for one Covenanter to be recovered, or perhaps this one looked, with a badly damaged side and no turret, to be in too bad repair to



*Denbies Vinyard, serene and beautiful before the excavations begin*



*An eight-tonne digger is hired in for the job*



*Two types of track were found in the pit, both early and late examples. The tank emerged fitted with the early type*





# TREASURE

salvage? Whatever the decision-making process, it was reburied, where it lay for a further 40 or more years.

Enter Rick Wedlock, tank collector and restorer. He knew of the buried tank and approached Denbies shortly after selling his last project, a Cromwell tank, to a Russian museum. He was a tank mechanic for 14 years with the British Army and wanted the chance to honour the men who served in tanks as well as to preserve history.

There were 1,771 Covenanters manufactured so parts do turn up occasionally, but

there are only three known intact examples; one awaiting restoration in New Zealand, owned by Andrew Rowe, Bovington's restored example and this one at Denbies. This was a rare, historically-important and potentially valuable excavation opportunity. Rick initially approached the vineyard manager and managed to persuade him that he was serious about exhuming the Covenanter. He went on to negotiate a deal with Denbies' owner, Chris White, whose family have always been proud of the estate's wartime history. They thought it would be nice to have a World



*Bovington Museum now own the Covenanter which was recovered from this pit in the 1970s*



*Remarkably little corrosion in evidence despite the years spent buried*



*In the 1970s the other Covenanter in this pit was recovered. At that time, this was one was deemed too far gone to be worth while recovering*





Taken in 1944. It shows the anti-tank ditch, part of the British defence plan in the event of an invasion

War Two vehicle from the site on display, for use in promotional materials and to serve as a memorial, so granted permission for Rick to proceed. After a ground scan with a proton-magnetometer to establish the precise location

and orientation of the Covenanter, then the digging of a test pit in January this year, Rick returned on May 23 with some volunteers, tank experts, Suggs from Madness, and a film crew from the History Channel, to conduct the dig, and they hauled it out of the 3m hole in which it had been left. The chalk soils of Surrey have been kind to it and the condition is remarkable; the two hydraulic pistons that lift the driver's hatch began to move with just a bit of WD40. This bodes well for its revival. After the tank's extraction, Rick fitted it with a turret from a Covenanter that had been found on a firing range elsewhere. It is now on display at the entrance to the vineyard car park for the summer season. The plan is that at the end of summer, the tank will be removed to Rick's Manchester workshops to begin its restoration. ◀



In the words of Rick Wedlock, if you want to get together with 'a group of like-minded loonies', look him up on [www.armouredheritagegroup.co.uk](http://www.armouredheritagegroup.co.uk) or email him on [rickwedlock@googlemail.com](mailto:rickwedlock@googlemail.com). He is looking for people to actively get involved whether in the digging up of tanks with him, or in doing the research that leads to discoveries or finding out more about the service history of the tanks that he recovers. He has already knows the whereabouts of a buried Cromwell, a Churchill and possibly another Covenanter so he has plenty in the pipeline!



Winching the tank



The Covenanter as it is, currently on display at Denbies fitted with a turret Rick has acquired earlier from a friend



Ward le France wrecker conversion known as a Corbitt

The excavation will feature in an episode, scheduled for autumn, of a new series in production for the History Channel featuring Suggs from Madness and archaeologist Stephen Talyor. The series' working title is 'WW2 Treasure Hunters'

**'This was a rare, historically important and potentially valuable excavation opportunity'**

The missing piece in the jigsaw is the history of this particular tank. We believe the Canadian 3rd Infantry Division had it to train for D-Day but we have no photographs to prove it. Of course, the advance training and preparations for D-Day were necessarily secretive but we have no pictorial evidence of the 3rd Canadian Infantry in Surrey at all, and we would really like locals or families of the Canadian infantry units in Surrey between Dorking and Leatherhead to get in touch. We might find a peek of the tanks behind tents or Nissan huts on their photos. Thanks to Craig Moore and Rick Wedlock for their time

**CONTEXT OF THE CONTROVERSIAL COVENANTER**



The Covenanter tank has always had bad press but this isn't necessarily deserved. It did have a front-mounted radiator which made it prone to overheating, and it is this weakness that draws the criticism. However, it was

designed in 1939 and, at the time was deemed to be avant-garde. It was 10mph faster than the German Panzer III and IV. It was a cavalry tank with Christie suspension, 30mm armour and a quick-firing 2pdr gun (40mm) that could hit a German tank 1km away: in order to be hit by that same German it needed to be within half a kilometre. Unfortunately it was declared unfit for service before it ever engaged the enemy because when the Germans invaded France and came up against the heavily-armoured British Matilda and the French Char B1 Bis they were taken aback. They had been used to easily knocking out lighter Polish tanks but they reacted

quickly by adding new armour to their Panzers in late 1940 and the Covenanter became no match for the new 50mm gun. Production of Covenanters continued, but they went straight into training roles not combat. Many regiments used it, with the MK IV having the engine cooling issues resolved. Shermans and Cromwells then arrived, and Covenanters were scrapped, used as hard targets of gunnery firing ranges, reprocessed, and some went to infantry units for them to use in training them how to stop a tank in its tracks. This is exactly what happened here, there is evidence on the damaged left hand side of demolition charges.



The Covenanter being moved into Bovington Tank Museum's Tank Factory exhibition





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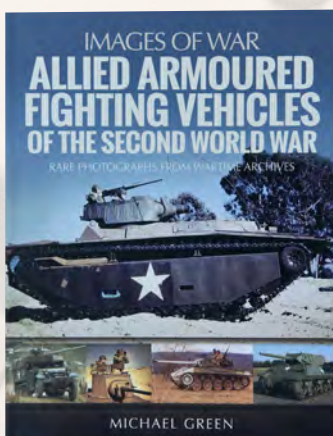


## Allied Armoured Fighting Vehicles of the Second World War

Author **Michael Green**  
 Publisher **Pen & Sword Military**  
 Year **2017**  
 ISBN **978-1473872370**  
 Language **English**  
 Binding **Paperback**  
 Pages **194**  
 Size **190x246mm (7.5x9.75in)**  
 Price **£15.99**  
[www.pen-and-sword.co.uk](http://www.pen-and-sword.co.uk)

Within this book's 194 pages is an ambitious inventory of the armoured fighting vehicles developed and deployed by the Allied armies during the war against Nazi Germany and its Axis partners. It is divided into four sections; Reconnaissance Vehicles, Tank Destroyers, Self-Propelled Artillery and Miscellaneous Vehicles. These selections contain a slightly uneven mixture of archive, museum, enthusiast-owned machine and even memorial and 'gate guardian' photographs to illustrate the accompanying text. The first section on reconnaissance vehicles includes armoured cars and scout cars such as the Daimler Dingo, the US M8 Greyhound and T17 Staghound, and the Russian BA-10, BA-20 and BA-64.

Tank destroyers include the US Army's M18 Hellcat and M36 Jackson, the British Archer and Achilles and the Soviets' SU-85, SU-100 and SU-122. Self-propelled artillery vehicles include the British Bishop and Sex-



ton, the US M7 Priest and the Red Army's SU-152 Beast Slayer. AFVs such as the British full-tracked Universal Carrier and US M3 halftracks fitted with a variety of weapon systems find a place in the final, miscellaneous section along with machines like the various models of US Landing Vehicle Tracked (LVT).

As with so many books of this type, it is the archive pictures that carry it but be prepared to go from the Pacific to the steppes of Russia within a few pages. In view of this, the book offers a general overview of its subject rather than a detailed examination of any particular aspect.

**Verdict:** A good overview of World War Two-era AFVs although tanks are in a separate volume.

## M88A2 Hercules

Author **Ralph Zwilling**  
 Publisher **Tankograd Publishing**  
 Year **2015**  
 ISBN **n/a**  
 Language **English**  
 Binding **Paperback**  
 Pages **40**  
 Size **297x210mm (11.75x8.25in)**  
 Price **£10.99**  
[www.tankograd.com](http://www.tankograd.com)

This slim publication is number 8 in Tankograd's 'In Detail, Fast Track' series and is devoted to the US Army's use of the M88A2 Hercules armoured recovery vehicle. It was originally designed in the 1950s, using many of the same parts as the, then current, M48 main battle tank. They were sequentially upgraded and in the 1980s were fitted with diesel engines. Upgraded again into the M88A2, a total of 3,242 were produced, including some for export.

The book contains a good selection



of colour photos of an in-service, sand-painted example of the M88A2 during a military exercise. This comprises sections of overall views as well as shots of the vehicle's details including the recovery boom and interior, which mean that, while it is a very specialised book, it is no doubt aimed at military vehicle enthusiasts and modellers. Tech information comes in the form of a specification sheet and informative captions.

**Verdict:** Unmissable if the specialised M88A2 Hercules armoured recovery vehicle is something that interests you

## AMX-30 Family

Author **M P Robinson**  
 Publisher **Kagero**  
 Year **2015**  
 ISBN **978-8364596247**  
 Language **English**  
 Binding **Paperback**  
 Pages **96**  
 Size **210x297mm (8.25x11.75in)**  
 Price **£15**  
[www.casematepublishing.co.uk](http://www.casematepublishing.co.uk)

In this book's 96 pages are illustrations of 14 paint schemes and 263 photos of the AMX-30 which was used as the basis for a range of armoured vehicles that have seen extensive service in the French Army and elsewhere. In this 'Photosniper' volume, which completes the study of the AMX-30 series by M P Robinson, the stories of France's specialised artillery and engineer variants are detailed.

Variants such as the AMX-30D recovery vehicle, the GCT and Au-F1



series of self-propelled guns, the AMX-30R Roland and AMX-30SA Shahine anti-aircraft missile launchers, the AMX-30 Bitube DCA anti-aircraft tank, the AMX-30H Bridgelayer and the EBG armoured engineers' vehicle are included. In addition the French military's comprehensive rebuilding programmes that led to the development of the Au-F1TA and

the sophisticated mine clearing versions of the AMX-30B2 since the end of the Cold War are all detailed in the text and illustrated in the selection of photographs.

This book is an excellent and comprehensive reference and its photos are selected from the GIAT - now Nexter - archives,

vehicles in military service, from training grounds to deployments in the deserts of Iraq.

**Verdict:** Undoubtedly a comprehensive reference guide to one of the less well-known post-war tanks

## Pojazdy Ludowego Wojska Polskiego

Author **Tomasz Szczerbicki**  
 Publisher **Vesper Publishing House**  
 Year **2014**  
 ISBN **978-83-7731-192-9**  
 Language **Polish**  
 Binding **Hardback**  
 Pages **740**  
 Size **220x287mm (8.75x11.25in)**  
 Price **103,03 zł/£21**  
<https://vesper.pl>

Very soon after the Berlin Wall came down, a friend of mine bought a military surplus GAZ-69A in Poland and A-framed it back to Yorkshire. He lent it to me and, still on its Warsaw number plates, I took it to the military vehicle rally at Elvington near York. It was an interesting thing and left me curious about much of the machinery from behind the Iron Curtain. Unsurprisingly then I flicked excitedly through the pages of this hefty hard-back even though I don't speak a word of Polish.

The title of the book translates as Vehicles of the Polish People's Army and it is an epic because it contains around 1,000 black and white photographs of everything from motorcycles to tanks that were used by the People's Army

of Poland.

The book concentrates on the vehicles used between the end of World War Two and 1990, rather than the politics and history of the Cold War and, as such, is a delight. Within the pictures are lend-lease machines, amphibious vehicles, ZILs, MZ solo motorcycles, motorcycle combinations, tracked and truck-based missile

launchers, full-tracks, BDRMs, UAZ 469Bs, saloon cars, 4x4s and more ranging from the Polski Fiat 500 to the Tarpan Honker 4x4 are all included. The photos are largely from training exercises, off-road tests and the huge parades beloved of the Eastern Bloc countries.

With the Polish equivalent of National Service being compulsory, the scale of the Polish military, and the numbers of vehicles it required, is evident from this book, believed to be the first of its kind in Poland. Also evident is how different life was behind the Iron Curtain to that in western Europe in the 1960s and '70s.

**Verdict:** Even if you can't read Polish, this is a fantastic book that offers much more than a glimpse into Eastern Bloc Poland.





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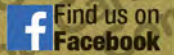
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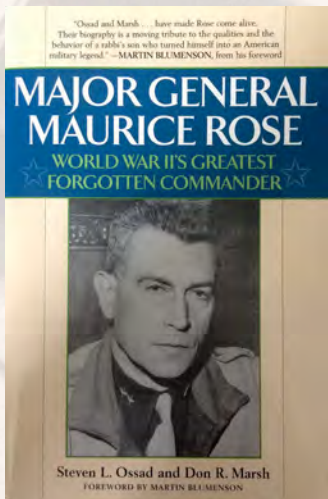
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# Major General Maurice Rose

World War II's Greatest Forgotten Commander



Authors **Steven L. Ossad and Don R. Marsh**

Publisher **Taylor Trade**

Year **2006**

ISBN **0-89839030-3**

Language **English**

Binding **Paperback**

Pages **427**

Size **154cm x 230cm (6 x 9in)**

Price **\$18.95**

'Major General Maurice Rose (1899-1945) is the highest-ranking American Jewish officer ever killed in battle, and the only individual casualty to spark a War Crimes Investigation'. That one sentence on the dust jacket alone is enough to inspire one to delve into the book's pages.

He started his military career in the cavalry during World War One, and ending up commanding Combat Command A of the 2nd Armored Division in Sicily and in Normandy, and then serving as commanding general of the 3rd 'Spearhead' Armored Division. It is hard to comprehend the changes he had to adapt to in his long career but short life.

Rose is to a certain extent, unknowable; a private, taciturn man and suffering an untimely death before he could speak in his own words about his war experiences. His secrecy is compounded by the

subsequent loss of many of his personal effects in a flood.

It is abundantly clear that Rose is the consummate professional soldier, capable and willing to make difficult decisions. Here he comes across as single-minded and driven, focused absolutely on accomplishing his goals but stands accused of being less than compassionate and with little regard to the lives of his men. This is somewhat at odds to other accounts, which record the affection and admiration his men held for him. His commanding officers rated his abilities too.

Whether he was killed because he was Jewish, or because he went for his weapon is one of World War Two's mysteries but the authors of this book, through meticulous research have managed to shed new light on his death.

After investigation it was officially recorded as 'in the confusion of battle' but the authors' review of the autopsy reports led them to conclude "The shooting was unprovoked, deliberate.....murder" (p344). His death occurred two days before VE day after his infamous and perhaps foolhardy 100-mile drive to Paderborn, Germany.

**Verdict:** *A spotlight turned on one of World War Two's lesser-known great men. I'm not sure I like him, but without him, would the outcome have been the same?*



the radio heard it crackle as General Rose, now next to General Hickey's jeep, sent this message over the commander's net, "Ottawa Six and I are now crossing the line." Among the first men of the division to cross the border were Wesley Ellison and Neil Fleischer, radio operators, and message center code clerk William Harry, each of whom always accompanied General Rose.

As the lead vehicles rumbled across the border, Rose ordered Shaunce to pull the jeep off to the side of the road so that General Hickey could be the first general across the border.<sup>60</sup> In spite of 3rd Armored love, however, it was men of the 82nd Reconnaissance Battalion, 2nd Armored, who crossed the Belgian border first at 0930 on September 2, 1944, at a point northwest of Mons. The honor that Rose wanted for Hickey probably belongs to Brigadier General John "Pea Wee" Collier, successor to Rose as commanding general of CCA, 2nd Armored. Whatever the actual facts about the crossing, Maurice Rose was a man who understood the importance of such gestures; and stepping aside at the border was a tribute to,

# Spearhead in the West

The Third Armored Division 1941-45

Author **United States – official project of the Third Armored Division**

Publisher **Battery Press**

Year **1980, reprint of 1945 original**

ISBN **0-89839030-3**

Language **English**

Binding **Hardback**

Pages **260**

Size **(11.3 x 8.7in)**

Price **£25 paid (secondhand), none for sale in UK. Some available in USA, price range \$35-\$600**



An unusual book, created in an unusual format. It was originally written and compiled in 1945 before being issued to all the veterans of the Third Armored Division, to serve as a reminder and tribute to lost colleagues. It is dedicated to the American soldiers killed in action and features several biographies and epitaphs of the fallen, including Major General Maurice Rose 'a soldier's soldier'. It feels like this might have been an early effort to deal with what we know of now as 'combat stress'. In compiling this, perhaps those involved did begin to 'process' - to use very modern terminology - what they'd witnessed and been part of.

I've not had the privilege of seeing a copy of the original publication; this is a new edition and the print quality isn't the best - maybe it's down to the age of the original book and the quality of the photographs therein and we shouldn't be surprised by the grainy black and whites. It doesn't detract from the experience, if anything it adds to the nostalgic feel.

With printed maps, hand-drawn sketches, personal photos, soldiers' poems, and individual recollections, this feels almost like a private diary of events and even at times, a macabre cartoon. Men have scribbled small jokes and caricatures and the book is littered with informal snaps of hundreds of smiling and youthful faces that leap off the page; it's a very moving reminiscence. It brings home the reality of young men at war, with their black, self-preserving humour (German dead shown with the caption 'A German soldier who forgot to duck') and tales of

GI Joe's bravado as he faces Jerry, completed by ubiquitous flirtatious liaisons with local ladies.

It charts the division's training in England as a newly formed unit, and then, via Omaha Beach, onto the campaign trail in France, to the Battle of Bulge, the Ardennes, and onto Cologne, taking out Jagtigers in the Paderborn drive along the way. The book flits between the people, the tanks, the tools, the tasks and the terrain and it isn't always easy to follow. It's an enlightening read and gives a comprehensive insight into the journey, both mental and physical, of this band of brothers. They were thrown together and faced the horrors of the European battlefields thousands of miles away from friends, family and the familiar: 'they went into battle as green kids, and came out - veterans. Some stayed there in Normandy'.

**Verdict:** *Just looking at the photographs is fascinating, the sketches are talented and the stories incredible, if you ever get chance to pick this book up; don't miss it.*







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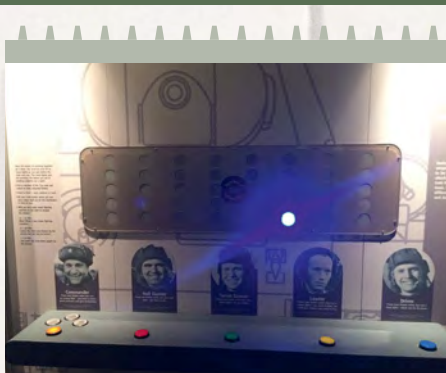
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Printed material forms a large part of the collection including newspapers, propaganda and posters



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## Our Friends in the North

The Imperial War Museum North covers a wide range of conflicts from before the turn of the 20th Century to the present day, including both world wars, the Cold War, the Troubles, the Holocaust, the Falklands War and the Gulf War. It deals with the politics of war, the mechanical and technical developments that conflicts around the globe have sparked, as well as the human casualties.

The collections are interesting; it is not rammed full of stuff, unlike older museums, but what it has, is fascinating. Unusual objects, such as a twisted chunk of the collapsed World Trade Centre towers, and a canoe fashioned by the people of Laos from the external fuel tanks of an American fighter-bomber or the first gun fired by the British in World War One, are well displayed. There is full interactivity so that visitors may engage with as much or as little as they like and personally tailor their experience of the museum to suit themselves.

The building itself is worth a visit in its own right. It was designed by Daniel Libeskind who 'created the building to enhance the museum's subject matter - the sharp angles, sloping floors, leaning walls and imposing exterior are deliberately in place to unsettle and disorientate you'.

Its three distinct shards represent air, sea and land, the three battle zones of warfare. Its external walls have become emblematic of modern Manchester's skyline, and its internal walls are the screen upon which the cinematic content of the museum is projected.

It is this aspect which makes this museum stand out - film images and recorded narratives serve to bring the past alive and conjures up the times of the conflict in a powerfully graphic way, that no amount of stuff can. The museum runs one of their multi-media shows every hour; the interior darkens and visitors are encouraged to sit and absorb the spectacle of audio and visual history as it is presented. It's a clever touch which engages all, but particularly seems to absorb and have an impact upon younger visitors more than the display cases of artefacts do.



The internal walls of the building become the screen on which to project the museum's audio-visual archive

### Imperial War Museum North

**Where:** IWM North, The Quays, Trafford Wharf Road, Manchester M17 1TZ

**Opening times:** Open every day from 10am - 5pm including bank holidays  
Last admission is 30 minutes before closing  
Closed December 24, 25 and 26

**For Info:** [www.iwm.org.uk](http://www.iwm.org.uk) +44 (0)161 836 4000

**Prices:** Free admission, although some special exhibits are chargeable

Daniel Libeskind created the building to enhance the museum's subject matter with sharp angles and sloping floors to disorient visitors





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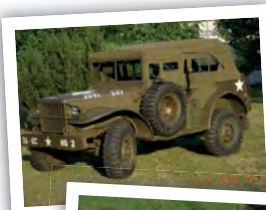
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# Going Back to Beltring

As War and Peace returns to its spiritual home at the Hop Farm, Nigel Hay looks at who might be there



**Marcus Glenn's M18 Hellcat advertised as live-firing but can be deactivated**

The revival's renaissance at the Hop Farm can only be a good thing for our hobby and of course for the market in military vehicles and spares. Undoubtedly several million pounds changes hands at the show and many traders rely on it as an integral part of their annual turnover. Major players such as Witham's are returning to the Hop Farm - in their case after a gap of six years. Among both traders and the enthusiasts, there has been a surge in positive comments about the show returning to the Hop Farm and it seems the enthusiasm for War and Peace is rekindled.

Let's hope we see people weighed down with their purchases and the show continues to dominate our calendar for many years to come. War and Peace will also be the last appearance of Jeeparts under the stewardship of Graham and Amanda Lycett - the new owners Tey Restorations take over the business in August.

With the new EU laws on the sale of deactivated weapons now on the UK statute books, this will inevitably affect the sale of deactivated weapons at shows across the nation.

This affects us military vehicle owners as well as re-enactors and collectors. It has also meant extra vigilance for us here at Milweb - for example, a Jeep up for sale with its deactivated .50 cal included is no longer an advert we can accept if it has the wrong certificate and the deac cannot be sold with the vehicle.

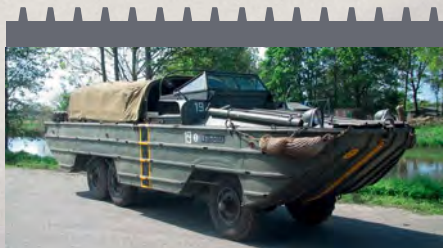
The cut of the new law is that it, while you can continue to own a previously deactivated weapon, it is now illegal to sell (or swap or even give away) a deactivated weapon without an EU-UK deactivation certificate. So if you are buying or selling a deac, whatever anyone says, you must comply with the new law.

The good news is that London and Birmingham proof houses are now issuing EU-UK certificates and the 're-deactivation' work on collectors' deacs is being carried out by a number of specialists in

the UK such as D and B Militaria.

We would urge collectors to join the Deactivated Weapons Association - DWA, who continue to fight for our rights to continue to own deactivated weapons. ([www.ukdwa.org](http://www.ukdwa.org))

We are seeing more and more tanks being advertised for sale with live guns. This of course means that prospective buyers are limited to



**DUKW with just 3,900 miles from new**



**Challenger 1 offered by Tanks Alot - not for the faint-hearted**



**A nice but unpriced Dodge WC53 Carryall**

those with the appropriate licence - the other option is to get the gun deactivated, which is often not a cheap undertaking. But some tank owners perceive the increased value in keeping the gun intact and live, this is of course fine if you have or can obtain the necessary licence before buying the tank or artillery piece.

As we expect with good weather we have seen good numbers of Jeep sales - and those sales are happening very quickly. Older restorations continue to come onto the market with the occasional barn find.

This DUKW, which was in French Army storage until three years ago, is being offered by a Dutch dealer. With just 3,900 miles on the clock it appears to be one of the nicer DUKWs we have seen in recent years - and perfect for next month's Amphib Rally on the River Thames.

We are seeing a crop of Dodge restoration projects around the £4-5,000 mark being offered in Belgium. These include WC51s and WC52s and an unusual bodied ex-French pompiers (fire brigade) WC64 6x6 with an overhead gantry.

These are proving to be a good source of viable restoration projects and there is still no shortage of spares for the Dodge WC series. At £27,500 we saw a very nice Dodge WC53 Carryall come up for sale, on the same day an equally nice but un-priced WC53 Carryall was offered by an Italian collector. For the enthusiast the WC53 is the most luxurious Dodge you can buy - it's fully weatherproofed and lockable making it ideal for shows. It is also very comfortable and that is a major selling point when you think they are currently almost double the price of a restored weapons carrier.

Certainly the Challenger One tank is not a common collectors' vehicle - in fact we believe there are only two in private hands worldwide.

The man who likes a challenge, Nick Mead of Tanks Alot, has put his live-firing Challenger up for sale, having we assume, checked the fuel tank thoroughly for gold bullion. It is certainly a restoration project, but he says is probably complete enough to make a starting and driving vehicle.

Parts for Challengers do come out of the MoD via Withams so in theory the missing parts and fittings can be obtained and probably reasonably priced as there is little demand for these.

It seems little of real interest is coming out of the MoD at the moment - they appear to be keeping hold of a lot of vehicles and material, probably due to the changing global situation which may in the future put some vehicles back into use.

The MoD still recall having to buy all its Humber Pigs back from a certain surplus dealer at a premium to help police Northern Ireland when the sectarian problems accelerated in the 1980s. Withams are still selling healthy numbers of lots on their daily online auctions from the stock they currently hold for the MoD - but it won't last forever. ◀





## July

### 25-29 War and Peace Revival

Hop Farm Showground, Paddock Wood, Tonbridge, Kent, TN12 6PY  
[www.warandpeacerevival.com](http://www.warandpeacerevival.com)

Blitz years. Camping, re-enactors and vintage vehicles, plus a marquee dance. Weekend pass £10, concession £7. Baston is on the A15, midway between Market Deeping and Bourne.  
[www.bastonblitz.org](http://www.bastonblitz.org)

Open 10am-5pm daily  
[www.rafharrowbeer1940s.co.uk](http://www.rafharrowbeer1940s.co.uk)

### 13 Chatham Fair

Historic Dockyard, Chatham, Kent. ME4 4TZ  
[www.chathammilitariafairs.co.uk](http://www.chathammilitariafairs.co.uk)

## August

### 5-6 Croft Nostalgia Festival

Includes military vehicle displays and living history encampments along with iconic car racing. Croft Circuit, Dalton-On-Tees North Yorkshire, DL2 2PL  
[www.croftnostalgia.co.uk](http://www.croftnostalgia.co.uk)

### 12-13 The Essex HMVA Military & Flying Machines Show

Chigborough Road, Maldon, Essex. CM9 4RE. Open from 10am-5pm daily  
[www.militaryandflyingmachines.org.uk](http://www.militaryandflyingmachines.org.uk)

### 19-20 Combined Ops Military and Air Show

Headcorn Aerodrome near Maidstone, Kent  
[www.combinedops.co.uk](http://www.combinedops.co.uk)

### 5-6 Baston in the Blitz

Celebrating the music, style and spirit of the

### 12-13 RAF Harrowbeer 1940s Weekend

Including military vehicle displays and the BBMF Spitfire flypast, free entry and free parking. Yelverton PL20 6BT

### 24-28 Great Dorset Steam Fair

Southdown, Tarrant Hinton, DT11 8HX (On A354 between Blandford and Salisbury)  
[www.gdsf.co.uk](http://www.gdsf.co.uk)

### 26-28 Military Odyssey

Kent Show Ground, Detling, Maidstone. Living History Event. James Aslett 07595 511981  
[www.military-odyssey.com](http://www.military-odyssey.com)

### 26-28 Tanks, Trucks and Firepower show

Dunchurch, Rugby, CV22 6NR 10am-5pm daily, camping available  
[www.tankstrucksandfirepower.co.uk](http://www.tankstrucksandfirepower.co.uk)

### 27-28 North East Military Vehicles' DLI Rally

The club will be holding its new rally for the first time at Ryhope Engines Museum, Sunderland.  
[www.nemvc.org.uk/events](http://www.nemvc.org.uk/events)







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### 22 Chelmsford Militaria Fair

Marconi Social Club, Beehive Lane, Chelmsford  
[www.chelmsfordmilitaria.com](http://www.chelmsfordmilitaria.com)

## November

### 5 Northern Military Expo

Indoor show at Newark County Showground, 200 trade stalls selling militaria and vehicle parts. For more information (traders and public) either call 01302 739000, email [jeep.promotions@btconnect.com](mailto:jeep.promotions@btconnect.com)  
[www.northernmilitaryexpo.co.uk](http://www.northernmilitaryexpo.co.uk)

### 12 Chatham Fair

Historic Dockyard, Chatham, Kent. ME4 4TZ  
[www.chathammilitariafairs.co.uk](http://www.chathammilitariafairs.co.uk)

### 19 Malvern Militaria Fair

Three Counties Showground, Malvern, WR13 6NW.  
Militaria, vehicle spares, books, badges and Jeeps for sale at this well established event.  
9am-3pm. Admission £5  
Amanda Lycett 01743 762266  
[sales@jeeparts.co.uk](mailto:sales@jeeparts.co.uk)  
[www.militaryconvention.com](http://www.militaryconvention.com)

## December

### 3 Chelmsford Militaria Fair

Marconi Social Club, Beehive Lane, Chelmsford  
[www.chelmsfordmilitaria.com](http://www.chelmsfordmilitaria.com)

### 10 Chatham Fair

Historic Dockyard, Chatham, Kent. ME4 4TZ  
[www.chathammilitariafairs.co.uk](http://www.chathammilitariafairs.co.uk)

## January 2018

### Croydon Airport Aviation & Military Collector's Fair

Croydon Aerodrome (Hallmark) Hotel, Purley Way, Croydon, Surrey  
40 tables/traders all indoors.

## September

### 1-3 1st International Army Show

Twenthe Airport, an old military airbase in the Netherlands. Camping is available in the recreated 'army-style' camp.  
[www.armyshow.eu](http://www.armyshow.eu)

### 2-3 Classic and Vintage Vehicle Fair

Open to classic and vintage cars, caravans, motorcycles, scooters, buses and commercial, agricultural and ex-military vehicles. Staged by Peterborough City Council at Embankment, PE1 1EQ  
[www.peterborough.gov.uk](http://www.peterborough.gov.uk)

### 10 Chatham Fair

Historic Dockyard, Chatham, Kent. ME4 4TZ  
[www.chathammilitariafairs.co.uk](http://www.chathammilitariafairs.co.uk)

### 10 Speech House Vintage Show

Hosted by the Forest Vintage Vehicle and Machinery Club Including military vehicles, large display of Land Rovers. [www.fvmmc.co.uk](http://www.fvmmc.co.uk) for further details and exhibitor entry forms  
The Speech House, Speech House Road Coleford GL16 7EL UK

### 17 Chelmsford Militaria Fair

Marconi Social Club, Beehive Lane, Chelmsford  
[www.chelmsfordmilitaria.com](http://www.chelmsfordmilitaria.com)

### 23-24 Wheels of War

Crewe Heritage Centre, Vernon Way, Crewe CW1 2DB

Military vehicle displays over two days including tanks, Jeeps, artillery, weapons display, armoured vehicles, traders and activities. 1940s big band on Saturday evening. [www.cdmvc.co.uk](http://www.cdmvc.co.uk)

## October

### 8 Chatham Fair

Historic Dockyard, Chatham, Kent. ME4 4TZ  
[www.chathammilitariafairs.co.uk](http://www.chathammilitariafairs.co.uk)

### 8 RAF Kenley Autojumble







ABOVE: Armed and Ambulance Minerva Series Ones  
LEFT: 1951 ex-RAF crash rescue vehicle has been lovingly restored

June's biennial outing for the Dunsfold Collection event provided visitors with a varied field of Land Rovers. Among the standard specification and special-bodied conversions, were a host of military examples for the public to feast their eyes upon.

The Series One Club stand had a pair of ex-Royal Air Force 80in vehicles that looked resplendent in the sun. John Place's example entered service in September 1951 before being released in 1958. It was then owned by the first private owner for the next 43 years before changing hands several times and eventually being restored to celebrate its history as an aircraft crash rescue vehicle.

At the far end of the field, the Ex-Military Land Rover Association proudly displayed two

# A Feast for the Eyes

military police vehicles – a 1951 80in that was delivered to 1st Vehicle Group Royal Ordnance Corps and a 1968 Series IIA – both of which were specially adapted to serve with 247 (Berlin) Provost Company, carrying out ceremonial and VIP escort duties.

Naturally there was no shortage of Minerva-bodied Series One Land Rovers: still pre-

senting a good alternative to traditional-bodied examples from a financial point of view. The Series One Club also threw up another gem – this time in the form of a 1956/57 88in. This was one of a batch of 63 10CWT

ordered by the MOD and one of two that were put into service on RAF Radar Station at Aird Uig on the Isle of Lewis in the Outer Hebrides.

It was subsequently released from duties in 1962 and bought by an airman on the base before making its way to the south of England several years later. Although the current owner has had the vehicle since 1969, it has only been back on the road for a couple of years after being laid up in 1976. ◀



Stunning pair of military police VIP escort vehicles



There was an excellent turnout of Minerva Series Ones



88in was originally stationed in the Outer Hebrides





**A Sherman tank forms part of the vehicle parade.** RICHY LEESON

It must be on most people's 'bucket list' to one day visit the famous five beaches of Normandy, see the actual sites of Pegasus Bridge, Point du Hoc, Sainte-Mere-Eglise and many more. There are well over 20 museums dedicated to the Allied landings all within the 50-mile stretch of the Normandy coast.

The best time to go is the early summer when the French put on a bit of a show.

A whole schedule of more than 100 events starts in mid-May and lasts for about four weeks: concerts, firework displays, plays, walks, tours, parachute drops and fly-pasts.

Vehicle collectors, history buffs, family historians and an ever-decreasing smattering of real life Normandy veterans all mingle, have a drink, reminisce and share little snippets of history.

Ride or walk through the towns whose names you know so well; Caen, Bayeux, Tilly-Sur-Seulles and Villers Bocage. At Arromanches, when the tide is out, you can actually touch parts of Mulberry Harbour. Vehicle collectors converge from France, Britain, Belgium, Spain, Netherlands, Denmark, Estonia, Sweden and even Russia.

Arrive, and you'll discover you have not only been in the place where military history was made, but experienced something almost magical. It was rumoured that more than 600 Jeeps attended this year. Mix them with

# Living History

motorcycles, trucks, armoured cars and amphibious craft and you'd think the Normandy council would lay on a Scammell just in case anyone broke down on the beaches (you can actually drive on a few miles of the hallowed sands).

This place is a living, breathing museum - imagine a huge re-enactment weekend but placed over the biggest field ever. Find spare parts and uniforms or buy some empty bullet shell casings actually fired in Normandy during World War Two. Best of all, have a photo of your truck, Jeep and even yourself in the very place that helped cement these vehicles into the history books. Campsites are numerous and of a very high standard, so it's an affordable trip.

There are few things more poignant and heart-warming and which bring a tear to the eye than to stand in a Commonwealth grave site and watch a World War Two veteran lay a wreath for his fallen comrades.

Next year why not give it a go, or maybe 2019 for the 75th anniversary? ◀



**Just a small selection of the estimated 600 Jeeps out on parade this year**



**An M29 Weasel threading its way through the crowds**



**A Ford GPA on parade during the month-long celebrations in France.** CHRIS COOKSON



**At Juno Beach Centre's vintage vehicles day.** TONY LEONARD





ABOVE: Four GMCs of the 514th Q M Truck Regiment Re-enactment Group with an early hard-cabbed example nestled in the middle  
LEFT: S O E member Matt Kill takes his FV603 Alvis Saracen for a spin around the arena

Described as the south coast's premier military spectacular, the Overlord Show at Denmead in Hampshire is run by the Solent Overlord Military Collectors' Club (SOE). This year's event attracted around 300 military vehicles ranging from World War One up to some of the more recent releases from various military forces around the world.

The Royal Armouries museum at Fort Nelson displayed its World War Two Sexton which was bought in 1989 before undergoing a detailed restoration. From the same time period it was also refreshing to see Richard Salters' 1942 Leyland Hippo, which is a British vehicle

# South Coast Spectacular

that you don't come across too often on the show scene these days.

Then there is of course the post-war era of vehicles, and although the Land Rover seems to be taking over from the Jeep as the four-wheel-drive choice of military vehicle, there was still a number of green machines to catch the

eye including Dave Barratt's Scania SBAT 111SA Gun Tractor and a very interesting Bombardier BR-100+, which showed its agility around the arena on more than one occasion.

It isn't all about the vehicles though, with a high number of re-enactors also adding to the military theme. Although these covered mainly the World War Two period there were also representatives of World War One as well. Finally, it is worth mentioning as well that all the proceeds from the Overlord show go towards organising the following year's event with any surplus then being donated to the selected charity – which in 2017 was the Invictus Games Foundation. ◀



The Sexton was first used by the British Army in 1943 with this example being bought as a non-runner by Fort Nelson in 1989 before being restored



The Bombardier BR-100+ was designed specifically for use in snow, swamplands and desert terrains



This Ford Model T was representing World War One and made up a very nice re-enactment section



This Bedford QL dates from 1944 and served in Holland and Germany during World War Two. It was sold out of service in 1978 and bought by the current owner in 1986



Piet Devriese made the trip from Belgium to bring his lovely 1939 Austin 8 AP Military Tourer to the show



All action at Overlord!





THE AUSTRALIAN  
**ARMOUR &  
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— MUSEUM —



Some confirmed vehicles for this year's **AUSARMOURFEST** include a **Jagdpanzer 38T (Hetzer), T72, M110 and Leopard** (just to name a few)

**THE AUSTRALIAN ARMOUR & ARTILLERY MUSEUM**  
*Proudly presents...*

# AUSARMOURFEST

To mark the third anniversary of the Australian Armour and Artillery Museum opening, and to celebrate Father's Day, we will be holding our second AusArmourfest on the **2nd and 3rd of September 2017**

## Why visit Cairns, Far North Queensland, Australia, in September for AusArmourfest?

- We have an international Airport with flights to and from Hong Kong/Singapore
- Cairns is the perfect gateway to explore both the Great Barrier Reef and the Wet Tropics Rainforests. These two World Heritage sites are areas of captivating natural beauty, each renowned for different features, both equally remarkable.
- Our museum is strategically placed in one of Cairns' tourist precincts and is only a 10-15 minute drive from the city

**This event will feature approximately 16 historic vehicles running over the course of the weekend allowing visitors to see these vehicles in action as well as purchasing tickets to ride in them on the day.**

Please visit the below link where you will find for further information, as well a short video from last year's event.

**[WWW.AUSARMOUR.COM/AUSARMOURFEST](http://WWW.AUSARMOUR.COM/AUSARMOURFEST)**



*“They say seeing a lion in a cage is one thing, but seeing one running free is another matter, for us, the same goes with heavy armoured vehicles!”*







ABOVE: The only example of the French-built St Chamond tank makes its mobility debut at Tankfest  
LEFT: A life-size replica of the Hillman 'Gnat' to show what might have been used by the British Army had it gone into production

From the smallest to the largest and the slowest to the fastest, this year's Tankfest hosted by the Tank Museum at Bovington in Dorset, proved to be another unforgettable experience for all military vehicle enthusiasts. They had come to see some very rare vehicles, including an appearance by the only operational St Chamond tank in the world making a visit from France. The design was in service from 1917 and, together with dozens of other vehicles, provided a time-line spanning 100 years of tank history brought up to date with the Challenger II. A continuous programme of mobility displays throughout each day kept one's attention focused on the arena as the demonstrations alternated between historical and modern AFVs.

# Full of Surprises

Around the site there were static displays by historical re-enactment groups depicting armies of World War Two, featuring vehicles, weapons and equipment of the period. A vehicle park allowed closer inspection of vehicles in-between arena displays and comparisons to be made. For example, a full-sized replica of a tiny vehicle known as the Hillman 'Gnat', built by

Bob Grundy, showed what the British Army could have used in 1940 had it gone into service production. This was dwarfed by the massive German Jagdpanther and other vehicles from the period. Joining the line-up were two vehicles specially brought over for the show from the Dutch Cavalerie Museum; a Canadian-built 'Otter' and a British-built Humber Mk IV Armoured Car.

Each day ended with a lively World War Two battle re-enactment to recreate a scenario which, this year, was themed as Normandy 1944. Tankfest is a well-rounded show which continues to grow and is always full of surprises. The museum organises other events during the year and details of these, along with preparations for Tankfest 2018, which will be June 30 to July 1, can be found at the website: [www.tankmuseum.org](http://www.tankmuseum.org)



German tanks are a perennial favourite at Tankfest and this Panzer III certainly pleased everyone



This version of the Canadian-built 'Otter' had been brought over specially for the show from the Netherlands



Whichever way one looks at it, and even when not moving, the Jagdpanther is impressive



This AVLB, known as 'Titan', is in current service with the British Army and was one of a series of vehicles used to demonstrate modern armoured vehicles



This re-enactment group depicting the 101st Airborne Division has used a Jeep to create a static display to represent Normandy 1944





**Steve Greenberg and his M3A1 Stuart. This tank was originally sent to Brazil during World War Two as Lend-Lease. It then came back to the USA in the 1980s**



**Aermoto Volugrafo paratrooper minibike**

Well organised, and blessed with beautiful sunny weather, the sixth annual Tankfest Northwest (TFNW) was a tremendous success.

Hosted by the recently renamed Flying Heritage and Combat Armor Museum (FH-CAM), this military vehicle show is a firm favourite for military enthusiasts in the Pacific Northwest.

Formerly known as the Flying Heritage Collection (FHC), the FHCAM is a world-class collection assembled by Microsoft co-founder Paul Allen. Paul created the FHC to restore and display rare military aircraft, primarily of World War Two vintage. Soon after its start, the FHC branched out to collect vehicles as well, starting with an M4A1 Sherman tank.

With the addition of several more tanks and armoured vehicles, the FHC held the first TFNW in 2011. Patterned after the original Bovington Tankfest, the TFNW is held on the US Memorial Day weekend (this year, May 27), at Paine Field, Everett, Washington, USA.

The FHCAM's collection of vehicles includes some very interesting and unique items. These include a Soviet T34/85 and a Scud missile and launcher, a US M55 8in self-propelled howitzer, and an Australian-made 17-pounder anti-tank

# From mini-bikes to Scud launchers

gun. New tanks this year included a Churchill Mk VII Crocodile (flame-thrower version) and an M48A1 Patton. An M2 155mm 'Long Tom' heavy artillery field gun was also new this year. They hinted that there are still more items undergoing restoration.

Besides the big stuff, there were some

fascinating small pieces as well. New this year was the three-wheeled Scheuch-Schlepper

per tow vehicle for moving the rocket powered Me 163 Komet aircraft. And yes, they do have a Komet on display!

In addition to the FHCAM's own collection, many private collectors display their own vehicles at this event. Regular attendee Steve Greenberg of Oregon brought his M3A1 Stuart light tank and put on a great demo, spinning the Stuart around the gravel track like a sports car!

David King displayed a Harley-Davidson 1942 Servi-Car Type G tricycle. It had eye-catching artwork on the trunk, reminiscent of aircraft nose art. Peter Lahmann had a very rare mini motorcycle. Made in Italy, the Aermoto Volugrafo is a tiny thing, meant to accompany paratroopers.

Besides the vehicle demos, there was other entertainment. A local re-enactor group, Army Group 1944, put on a lively display, complete with a blank-firing firefight between US and German troops.

It is this variety from mini-bikes to a Scud launcher that makes this event a real winner. ◀

FHCAM [www.flyingheritage.com](http://www.flyingheritage.com) Army Group 1944 <https://tinyurl.com/yauncs5j>



**Scheuch-Schlepper tow vehicle for Me-163 Komet, with a Komet in the background. Also visible at left is the rocket engine on a display stand**



**Soviet T34/85 in winter whitewash camo. The original paint scheme would have been green - as visible under the open hatch**



**Soviet R-11M (NATO codename SS-1b, Scud A). The complete transporter, erector, launcher system is an imposing sight**



**M4A1 Sherman parked on gravel track in front of FHCAM hanger**





*Those not wanting to tackle the via ferrata, went in Jeeps and Champs to enjoy the stunning scenery*

I was lucky enough to be asked by Help for Heroes if I wanted to go on a residential trip to the Lake District with the North East Military Vehicle Club. I am studying photography so I wanted to get some good images of the vehicles, both in convoy and stationary, for my portfolio.

We spent a couple of days at the watersports centre taking part in such activities as canoeing and water skiing and going out onto the lake on the Stalwart, DUKW and Gaz. We spent another couple of days at the Honister Mine tackling the via ferrata. If anybody was unable (or unwilling) to take part in this activity they went on road runs around the local area; a beautiful, peaceful and restful part of the world with members of the public waving and cheering.

It really was an incredible experience. The club

# Lakes escape

and its members are fantastic people who make a lot of sacrifices for the veterans. These trips offer veterans a chance to escape the normal humdrum of everyday life. It is definitely escapism and a respite for me, and more importantly, for my wife.

Being around other veterans is a massive help,

you get back the sense of camaraderie knowing that you have support. No matter how bad you feel, there is always somebody who has gone through the same thing. If you aren't feeling great, there is no need to explain to anybody - the other veterans just know, and if you need to speak to somebody you can.

There is also the social side of things; it is great to have a few beers with like-minded people knowing that at the end of the night there isn't going to be any drama, just a lot of laughing and reminiscing of good memories, not the stuff that causes you nightmares or trauma. Trying to explain to somebody who has never served is difficult, because the bond between veterans and serving personnel is unique. We all have a common bond and events like these facilitate us to get together. Thank you NEMVC. ◀



*Stalwart which spent a lifetime in the British Army, going three times to Germany, but is now owned by Arran Whitaker, Birmingham*



*1972 Alvis Stalwart swimming. It has a Hiab crane, Rolls-Royce B81 engine and weighs nine tonnes*



*Volkswagen Kubelwagen*



*This GAZ 46 was manufactured in 1949 and was used by the Czech army*

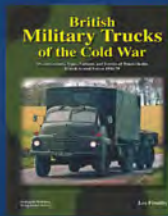


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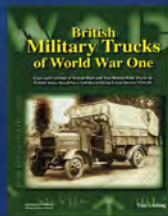
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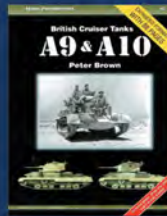
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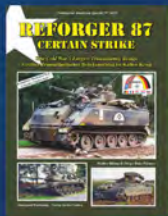
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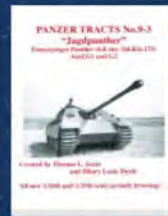
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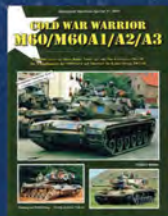
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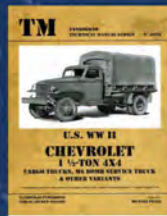
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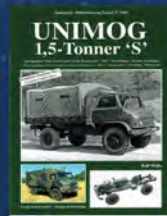
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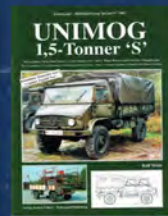
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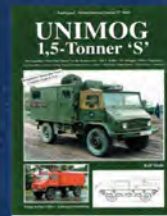
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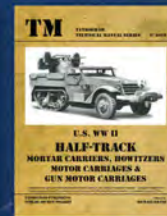
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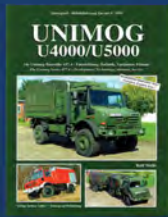
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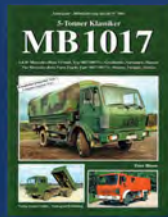
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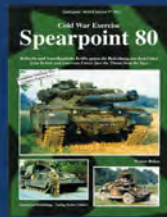
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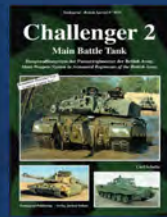
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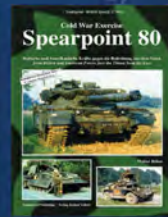
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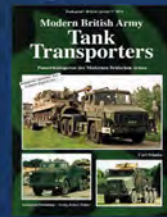
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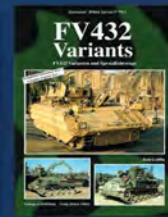
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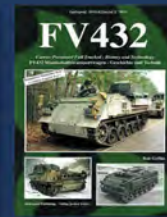
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*Vietnam-era MUTT leading this line-up of Willys Jeeps around the arena*

**W**artime in the Vale is a show you hear before you see it. Standing in the queue to get into the show on the hottest weekend of the year, strains of wartime music drifted across the field. The crack of replica artillery and the rumble of a tank moving somewhere in the distance were eerily evocative. It is a show for all the senses and all the family; and for a fan of military vehicles, it's absolutely fascinating.

There was everything here, from bicycles to tanks, from Allied and German encampments to Vietnam-era Jeeps and displays from the Northern Irish troubles too. With more

# Wallowing in Nostalgia

than 400 vehicles on site, there were simply too many to mention in a short report. The standard was exceptionally high; every vehicle we saw had its own story; and the time, effort

and attention to detail which goes into the living history displays is a credit to all involved. The Spitfire flypast brought a lump to our throats: the sound of that Rolls-Royce Merlin engine is so unique; the Tanks and Tracks pyrotechnic display was amazingly skilful; and all the drivers, passengers and crews seemed to really enjoy their time in the arena.

All the usual show elements are here: plenty of refreshments, plenty of shopping opportunities and the chance to catch-up with old friends and make new ones too. Next year's show: 'Keeping the Legacy Alive', will be on June 16 -17, 2018; the dates are in our diary already. ◀



*German Army BMW Motorcycle and sidecar*



*Panzer 38T owned by Tim Chance; believed to be the only working example in the world. It still has bullet holes to the hull and shrapnel inside*



*1986 RAF 'Vee-Pee' 6x6, built by French manufacturers Poncin to traverse marshland; part of the Walter Family collection, lined up behind*



*Tanks & Tracks driving skills and pyrotechnic display*



*Armoured Caterpillar D2; these vehicles were produced from 1938-57 and had a four-cylinder Caterpillar diesel engine. Prestone 44 denotes the brand of antifreeze used and year it was put into the vehicle*



*Entertaining the 'troops'*



*1953 Scammell Explorer, part of the Walter Family's extensive collection, bought by them in 1990 and still their favourite*



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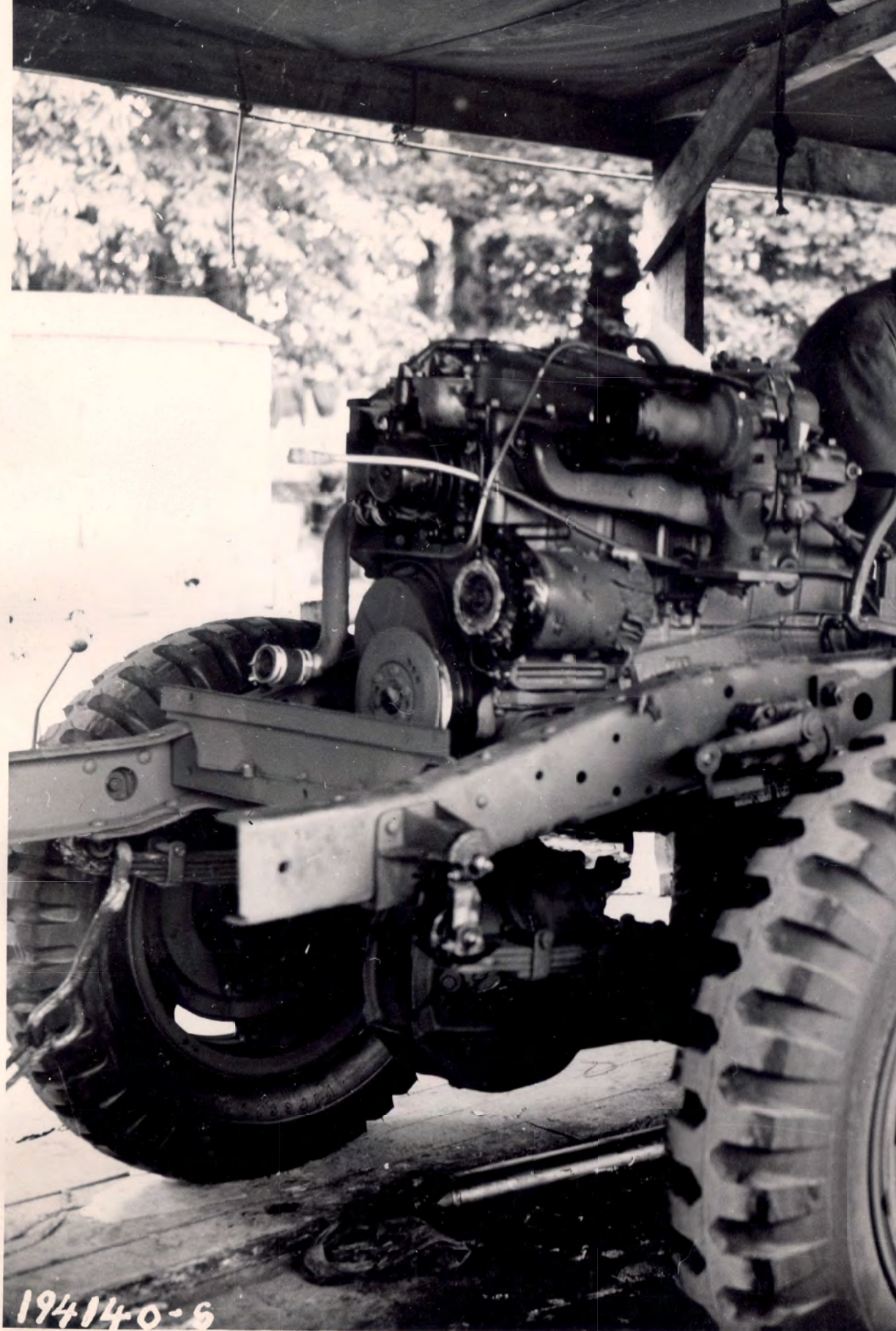
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*The original caption for this US Army Signal Corps photograph of September 16, 1944 reads: "GI mechanics install the motor in a US Army vehicle as it moves among the assembly line at an Ordnance Depot in Normandy, France." The vehicle in question appears to be a GMC 6x6 'deuce-and-a-half'*



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Thanks to teamwork, D-Day veteran David Teacher realises his long-held dream

# Bedford *on the Beach*

**T**hey say one thing leads to another and that fate has a date for you. Well, a chance meeting and the need to take a photograph changed the fate of a World War Two D-Day veteran, a military vehicle collector and a young disabled historian from the Netherlands.

The story started more than two years ago. David Teacher MBE arrived at the Imperial War Museum North to be interviewed for the museum's audio archive. This was my first meeting with David and the very beginning of our friendship.

Once David's story had been recorded he told me he had started writing a book and we sat down to look at what he had written. The story needed substantiating with facts and figures from his war service, which I happily researched and added. We then looked to illustrations. We had some old maps and photographs but it was agreed that an up-to-date photograph of David, preferably with a Bedford truck, the type he drove onto Juno beach on June 6, 1944, would be ideal.

Asking around, we were put in touch with Craig Keeble, owner of Hindle Hire Ltd, well-known

on the military collectors' circuit and owner of a 1943 Bedford QL. A quick email and phone call later and Craig was 'chuffed to bits' that he might be able to help a D-Day veteran get into a Bedford truck again.

It wasn't going to be easy. David is wheelchair-bound so, despite Craig's offer, he wouldn't be getting in the cab or driving it. Craig was, however, pleased to chat with a real D-Day veteran who was a mechanic during the war and knows the Bedford inside and out. The two of them got on great guns and we took loads of photos and retired to the yard's hut for a cup of tea.

It was over tea that the idea came to Craig to offer to take the Bedford to Normandy on David's annual pilgrimage to Juno Beach.

I pointed out that if David can't get in the truck it's an expensive prop for another photo. "Leave it with me," said Craig. A few days later he called to say a good friend of his, Steve Garrett, could design and build a lift to help David get up into the cab.

At this point we are all very excited; getting David, in a QL, back on Juno beach as part of ▶





*'Military vehicle and wartime enactment groups  
kicked into gear to raise money'*



*Sunrise on June 6. Nancy looking immaculate,  
and a testament to a whole host of people's hard work.*





*Craig decides that driving into the sea makes for better photos and more befits the occasion for David*

the D-Day commemorations, would be incredible, but we still had practical issues to address. We would have to pay for everything, and as Juno beach is now a nature reserve and bird sanctuary on which you are not allowed to even walk your dog - getting permission to drive three tons-worth of World War Two hardware along it was going to be tough.

But wheels were set in motion. Military vehicle and wartime enactment groups kicked into gear to raise money, 1940s enthusiasts held swing dances and produced a calendar and David and I attended numerous 1940s events in the north west so he could sell his book with profits going into the fund. Heywood Tanks donated steel needed to build the lift, newspapers and magazines wrote articles and promoted our crowdfunding page.

Juno Beach



*04:30 Dark, it is cold and windy but the team begin to prepare*



*Huge thanks go to the friends, family, military vehicle owners, enthusiasts and re-enactors who have all contributed to making this happen*

Centre, Normandy, is well aware of David as he's been interviewed for their archive and the curator was on board and helpful. He helped us to understand another problem we'd had to overcome. Our research showed exactly where David landed in 1944 - right on the edge of Mike sector, Juno beach. This very place is marked in French history and there is now a 18m high Croix de Lorraine marking the spot; it just happens that General Charles de Gaulle landed there too, on June 14. This part of the beach is run by not one, but two, town councils. Courseulles-sur-Mer and Graye-sur-Mer and we would have to get the permission of both.

We asked: "Can we drive a three-ton Bedford on your nature reserve please?" To which the answer came back "non". But when we explained that it is for a D-Day veteran and he landed on that very spot in a Bedford QL on D-Day, both mayors are happy to help.

There are conditions we must obey. We can only use a 400m section of the beach, we





**This young Dutchman has never driven any kind of vehicle in his life, yet here he is driving a World War Two truck on the historic sands of Gold Beach**

cannot drive past the Cross of Lorraine and we must follow tidal patterns.

Fast forward to May 2017, the monies have accumulated gradually, the practical hurdles are being overcome and the bespoke lift has been designed and built and it is time to test the system. David is helped out of his wheelchair and onto the lift's seat, strapped in then slowly lifted into the air. Brought up to cab height all he now needs to do is slide over into the cab.

As the rest of us stand around debating how to best to get him in, David says "bugger this" and hauls himself across into the seat. His smile says it all; a magical moment for us all. I climb into the driver's seat and ask him if everything is OK. He looks as happy as I've ever seen anyone and he says: "It's really happening isn't it?"

After a meeting with both mayors, they say they will allow us two attempts. The first on Monday June 5 to test the sand and shoal and make sure we can actually get the truck onto the beach. It's a very early start at 5am. While David sleeps in the hotel Craig and friends guide the truck carefully onto the beach to test the going of the tidal sands and it's good job the Bedford is four-wheel drive. They notice one thing more than anything else - the tide comes in very, very quickly.

We are to return on Tuesday June 6 for the main event with David, but we must start even earlier at 4.30am.

It's a short, five-mile drive from hotel to the very spot on Juno Beach where David landed all those years ago.

Team Teacher got together and headed on down to Juno. It was dark but David looked resplendent as usual in his blazer complete with medals. Craig had outdone himself, he'd bought



**The very spot where David landed on June 6, 1944 with the 18m high Croix de Lorraine**



**'We're 75 yards away but you can still see David's smile'**



**After 70 years David Teacher gets into a specially-adapted Bedford QL and the memories come flooding back. CHRIS COOKSON**

an RAF regiment, combined forces uniform, the same as David wore on D-Day.

David was lifted into the Bedford QL and a collection of friends and supporters all watch a Bedford QL truck slowly make its way onto the beach. We're 75 yards away but you can still see David's smile.

Craig lined it up and drove the 400m and turned and came straight back. He did it again and again. There were tears of joy from the people all around. We'd done it, we'd actually got a real-life World War Two veteran back to the very spot he landed on June 6, 1944, being driven around in a real life World War Two Bedford.

Craig had an idea. He drove it partly into the sea as it'll make for great photos. It does, and as the sun rose Craig parked up and Team Teacher all gathered round for a group photo: Bedford,



**ABOVE: A smile that launched a Bedford QL  
LEFT: David, Craig and Maurits with the Bedford QL after the trip on the beach; a little relieved that the plan went without a hitch**

veteran and support team.

We all drove back to the hotel for breakfast followed by a few hours sleep. At lunchtime we were up and away again for commemorative ceremonies at Juno Beach Centre.

More than a year of hard work, lots of people from military vehicle and re-enactment groups coming together helping, supporting and making one special dream come true. All this coming from the need for one photograph, and a chat over a brew.

The story does not end here. Enter 19-year-old Dutch historian Maurits Huijbrechtse. Maurits is a friend of mine and David's. He works at Museum Engelandvaarders in the Netherlands. Maurits suffers from cerebral palsy and like David, is confined to a wheelchair. He knows about the lift, the Bedford and simply just wants to see it in action but we have other plans. Craig calmly informed him he'd be going for a ride.

Maurits' mother and uncle rode in the back of the truck with me, we watched the Normandy scenery pass by. Craig went down the D514 then turned left onto Gold Beach.

He drove the truck onto the sands of Normandy and pulled up, offering a shocked Maurits a chance to drive the truck.

The Bedford has a throttle attached to the steering wheel and so Maurits drove the truck, with Craig helping with gear changes. This young Dutch man has never driven any kind of vehicle in his life, yet here he was driving a British World War Two truck on the historic sands of Gold Beach. ◀



**We named the Bedford Nancy in memory of David's wife. They were together for 75 years before she died**

*Thank you Team Teacher and everyone who has supported us. But most of all, thank you Craig Keeble, you're a true gentleman.*



words Ross Bannon pictures Andrew Craig

Buying a Mk3 Morris Commercial C8 gun tractor when he was a boy shaped **Ross Bannon's** choice of career

# Irish





# Quad



*The C8 in all its fully restored condition after Ross' years of research, dedication and hard graft*

In the early 1990s, in the aftermath of Desert Storm, I had a discussion with my dad about the possibility of restoring something military. I was about 15 when we brokered a deal and bought an absolute wreck for the princely sum of 50 Irish Pounds. Little did I know that 24 years later I would be launching my own restoration business, CombatCars.

At the time I had no idea what I had even bought, and its description varied depending on who you asked. To my mother, it was just another piece of scrap shedding bits of rusty steel on the road as we towed it home. For me, what started out as a bit of living breathing history and a link to the past and brave fighting men, became much, much more. It led to some interesting career choices and developed some father/ son memories worth far more than the vehicle's perceived value.

I have often read in previous Classic Military Vehicle magazine articles about the driving force behind owners' pride and joy rebirths. Model kits and military service are probably the top two. Although both are in my past, I think my enthusiasm comes from something deeper and instinctual.

As a kid, the unmistakable smell after the angle-grinder had cut some steel, the sound of a clicking ratchet and the blinding flash from the welder as my dad worked away, are embedded into my subconscious and have manifested to shape who I am and what I do today.

After consulting a very tatty first edition copy of Bart Vanderveen's Historic Military Vehicles Directory, also known in our house as 'The Bible', we discovered that we had bought a Mk3 Morris Commercial C8 gun tractor (Beetle-back) 'quad'. The light cream paint still on the vehicle led us to believe it had spent some time in the North African desert during World War Two. It conjured up mental images of the quad in Caunter camouflage. But no matter on which forum I posted its markings, or whom we asked, no one could tell me what they were. It wasn't until much later in the restoration that we discovered the quad was ex-Irish Army and the cream paint was actually a very pale green used by the army in the 1960s.

Unfortunately the quad didn't come with a logbook or a registration number, but during a trip to the army archives in Dublin I was able to match the chassis number and engine number with records held there to reveal its reg number, ZD 3178. I thought that armed with this information and photos of the documents held in the archive, retrieving a log book would be straightforward. It took a further two years and an unbelievable amount of effort before I finally got a log book with the original reg number on it and I got very tired of being told to re-register the vehicle. For me this was not an option; a vehicle's history is directly linked to its reg number, and I felt changing that meant losing its history.

The quad was bought new from Morris Commercial Cars Ltd in 1941 and was attached to





*Ross' brother Mark gives it a coat of green paint*

an anti-aircraft battery pulling a Bofors gun. According to Ralph A Riccio's book *The Irish Artillery Corps Since 1922*, all of the serviceable AA guns were deployed around Dublin city. Assuming the quad stayed with the gun and crew after it was deployed then I suppose you could argue that the quad was one of a handful of vehicles to see action during World War Two when the Germans bombed Dublin, allegedly by mistake. Whatever it did during its military service, the quad finished off its first life in a hedge. It had been bought by a farmer, had the back cut off it and had been used as a tractor during the 1960s.

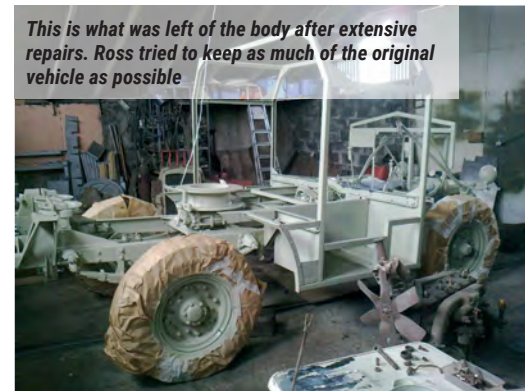
After I bought it, the decision was made from the very start to strip it right back for a thorough restoration. Getting it to the rolling chassis stage was relatively straightforward. The four-wheel-drive linkage had shattered and was probably the reason the vehicle had been retired. But the farmer was kind enough to tie all the broken bits together and attach them to the top of the gear box. He may have intended to repair it but never



*Making up the wiring loom, this was mostly done by Ross' dad*



*New boots! Note the colour of the wheels. At this stage it was still thought to be an ex-British Army vehicle*



*This is what was left of the body after extensive repairs. Ross tried to keep as much of the original vehicle as possible*

## THE START OF THE RESTORATION



*ABOVE: The sub-frame gets fitted to the main chassis, there are lots of subtle differences between the MKs*

*LEFT: The main chassis stripped down. The rear body supports had been butchered by who ever cut up the body*

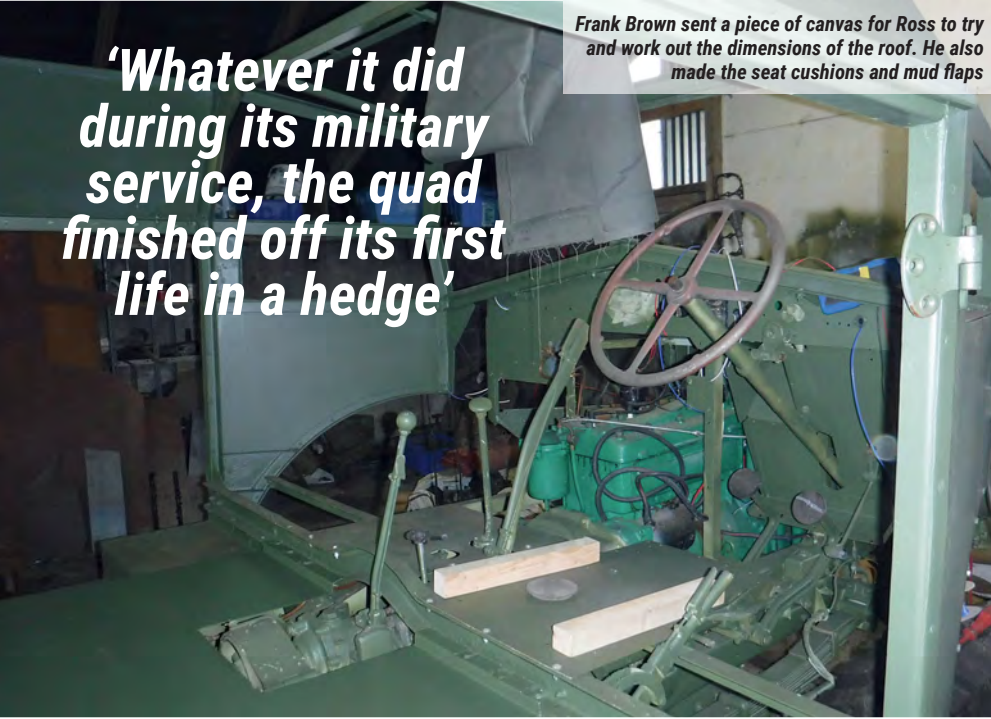
*ABOVERIGHT: The engine gets a liberal coat of paint after it has been rebuilt*  
*RIGHT: Ross had one original seat as a template (left) but it was in poor shape. Unfortunately he didn't have access to a bead roller for the pressed 'x' in the base*





**'Whatever it did during its military service, the quad finished off its first life in a hedge'**

**Frank Brown sent a piece of canvas for Ross to try and work out the dimensions of the roof. He also made the seat cushions and mud flaps**



**Just one more window to go and the quad is watertight!**



**A little bit of artistic licence was exercised in the layout of the lights and number plate**



mise enough, and you add years onto the build. I think we got it just right.

The painting of the vehicle was a story in itself. First I got some Portland stone from the UK, back when we thought it was a British Army quad. Then I colour-matched the pale green paint that was on it (no one could give me a definitive answer as to what the colour actually was) and painted it with that. I hated it; it just didn't look military enough. Next, I painted it BS 630 French Gray. I really liked this as a compromise but then decided to change it again. In the end, I opted for Olive Green, Ral 6003. I used a satin finish to give the vehicle a better weather protection. After all, it rains 359 days a year here. ◀

**Test fitting the can holder prior to painting**



got around to it.

The engine was seized but luckily the white metal bearings were in exceptional condition. The decision was made early on to drive it to as many shows as possible and later to use it as an advertising platform for CombatCars so reliability was essential. Because of this we put as many new parts into the engine as we could find and the result is a sweet little motor.

The bodywork is where the real labour was. I found two other Irish quads that were un-restored and in very poor condition that I could take measurements from. Even after taking hundreds of pictures, drawings and measurements I found I still ended up making most of the panels at least twice.

But it was important to get right. Having said that, there is a line that had to be drawn between getting the project finished and getting bogged down in detail and accuracy. Getting this line right was crucial to the build. Compromise too much and the vehicle loses its integrity, don't compro-

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# Wheel



## Tim Gosling recounts how the Renault EG military tractor fared during World War One

**T**rench warfare created a 'static battlefield' where, without the rapid movement of armies, the nation that had the most powerful artillery with the longest range would be at a distinct advantage. This was demonstrated by the observation that about 75% of the casualties throughout the war were caused by artillery fire.

In 1914 the French army had 3,960 light guns and 688 heavy guns that were mobile (although half of these were older pieces with no recoil mechanism) compared to the Germans who had 5,600 light guns and 3,500 heavy guns. In

the period just prior to the outbreak of war the French had become aware of this disparity and started developing new guns and the tractors to move them.

In February 1914 the first military tractor trials took place at Rheims using a selection of French-built machines which had been submitted in order to identify those which could meet the stringent government specifications. Among those models which were accepted was the Renault EG which is perhaps unsurprising as Renault had specifically designed the EG to ensure that it closely met all of the French

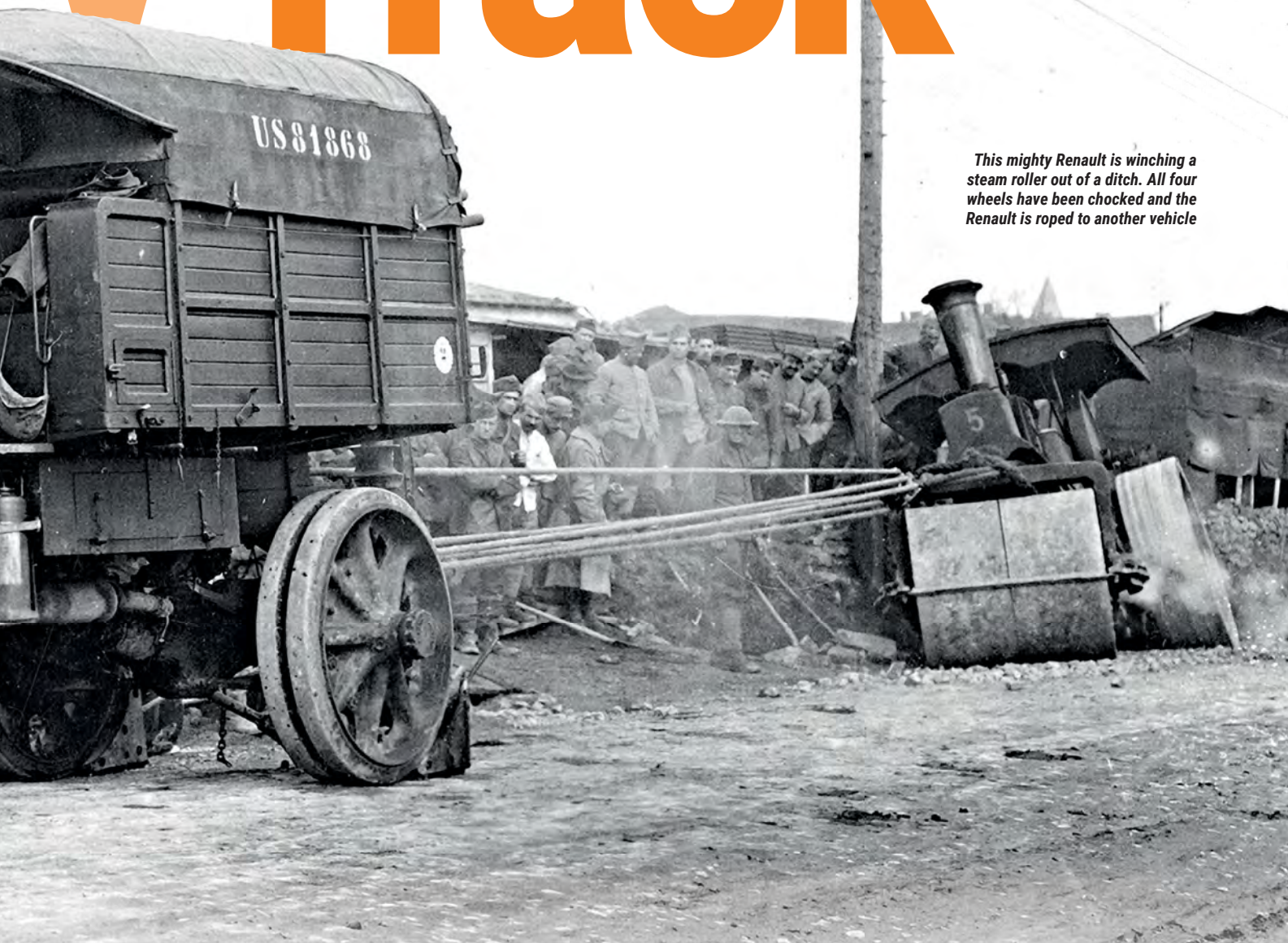
War Department's requirements.

There is no doubt that the EG was an impressive-looking machine. With the radiator located behind the engine and the stylish curved bonnet it was obviously a Renault but it appeared to be just a much larger version than anything that they had made before.

The 50/60bhp 8.5-litre engine allowed the machine to carry a payload of five tons while towing an additional 15 tons. This, combined with its four-wheel drive, four-wheel steering and capstan winch made it ideal for manoeuvring heavy artillery into position.



# vTrack



*This mighty Renault is winching a steam roller out of a ditch. All four wheels have been chocked and the Renault is roped to another vehicle*

***'There is no doubt that the EG was an impressive-looking machine'***

Unusually for a vehicle of this age the differential in each axle could be locked without leaving the cab by engaging a lever next to the gear change. The gear-change lever also allowed the driver to engage the capstan winch.

The Renault performed to a high standard on the trials, the only problem being that its smooth tyres gave poor road adherence which created several exciting moments including, as one observer reported, that its brakes locked up when descending an 11% hill causing it to skid entirely across the road. Similar adherence problems occurred when going up hills and the

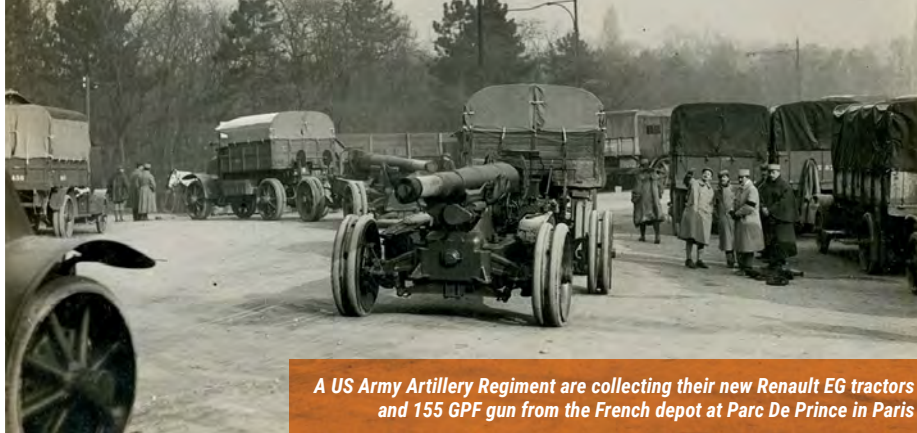
trailer which all the entrants were tasked with hauling had to be unhitched and winched up once the Renault had reached the top. These problems could be overcome to some extent by fitting the wheels with the set of chains supplied with each truck, but this was a laborious task and they had to be removed again once driving on metalled roads.

When the United States declared war on April 6, 1917, the US Army was woefully ill-equipped for the conflict that would follow. Short of every type of equipment and weapon, they faced significant problems not only in equipping

the army that they had but they also lacked the manufacturing capability to construct the equipment that would be required for the planned mobilised force of four million. The number of heavy artillery pieces available (540 3in guns and 60 4.7in guns) was only enough to provide between one and four guns for each regiment. The problem was further compounded by a lack of ammunition and the logistical challenge in maintaining a steady supply of munitions to France.

It was therefore decided to adopt a mixture of artillery pieces from their British and French ►





**A US Army Artillery Regiment are collecting their new Renault EG tractors and 155 GPF gun from the French depot at Parc De Prince in Paris**

equipped just with the Renault and they do not seem to be very complimentary of them. They got off to a bad start when one Renault with a gun ran away down a hill crashing into the back of another gun, damaging both; while another Renault, driving in convoy, broke the front axle creating a very effective road block. The smooth tyres of the Renault could not possibly compete with the tracks of the Holt in muddy conditions and on one occasion it took them all night to move their guns just 20ft out of a wood and onto a road before they resorted to



**A column of well-loaded Renault tractors towing 155mm GPF guns pass by the pitiful sight of horses killed by shellfire**

allies which would certainly make the supply of ammunition and spares more convenient. The French were just taking into service a new 155mm gun which was termed the 'Canon de 155 Grande Puissance Filloux (155mm GPF or the M1917 as the US Army would refer to it). Although delivery was slow the Americans would have acquired 233 of these guns by the war's end. These guns were to be operated by the coastal artillery (who were more used to firing guns that were emplaced around port installations) and the field artillery, neither of which had even seen the guns or their tractors before arriving in France. Their first task was to attend the newly-formed artillery school to gain

experience of the capabilities of both. Each artillery battery was equipped with four guns and five tractors. Manufacturing of artillery tractors within the USA was beginning to catch up with demand and the 75bhp Holt caterpillar tractors were beginning to arrive in France. In order to make up the shortfall the French supplied the American Expeditionary Force with the Renault EG. Some regiments were equipped just with Hols, some just with the Renault while some others had a combination of both. As you would expect they started putting the tractors through their paces in order to see which machine was best. The 148th Regiment of Field Artillery was

borrowing two Holt tractors to pull them out. The 148th joined the army of occupation in Germany until May 1919 when they handed in their guns and tractors and sailed for home. Their Regimental history is very complimentary of the gun but hardly mentions the Renault. When the 55th Coastal Artillery received Holt 75 tractors to replace their Renaults shortly before going into action for the first time, the debate as to which was the better vehicle lasted for weeks. The argument that the Renault was faster and quieter than the Hols was soon forgotten about when another regiment asked to borrow their Holt tractors to tow Renault gun tractors which had become heavily mired in mud.

## RENAULT EG RESTORATION



**ABOVE: In an authentic camouflage scheme this magnificent example of the Renault EG and 155 GPF gun was restored by the Balmoral Green Association near Versailles**

**TOP RIGHT: A detailed replica of the original wooden cab and body was made. The light blue seen on the chassis would be applied to the whole truck**



**BOTTOM RIGHT: Shortly after arrival the restoration has commenced. Apart from the wooden bodywork the only missing component is the fan. The radiator looks enormous**





## SPECIFICATIONS

Make **Renault**  
Model **EG**  
Nationality **France**  
Year **1914**  
Used by **France, United States.**  
Production Run **1914-1918**  
Engine **Renault G2**  
Type **Four- Cylinder**  
Fuel **Petrol**  
Displacement **8,495cc**  
Power **50/60 bhp**  
Transmission **Single speed**  
Type **Manual**  
Gears **Four forward, one reverse**  
Suspension **Leaf springs front and rear. Brakes Drums rear**  
Wheels **Metal spoke**  
Tyres **1160 X 140.**  
**Twin tyres front and back**  
Crew/seats **Three**

### Dimensions(overall)

Length **5.60m**  
Width **2.19m**  
Wheelbase **3.63m**  
Weight **5,350Kg**



*In service with the French 82nd Artillery Regiment the markings indicate its normal load is a 220mm mortar. Beneath the passenger is a large fire extinguisher*



*At the heavy artillery school at St Maur des Fosse, American soldiers practice winching the 155mm GPF gun into position using the Renault capstan winch*

One unlikely attribute that the Holt gun tractors did have over the Renault was the sheer amount of noise that their 75bhp engine would make. Normally, when moving artillery behind the lines and under the cover of darkness excess noise is to be discouraged in order to prevent unwanted enemy attention, but this was not always the case.

When the 2nd Battalion of the 55th Coast Artillery was preparing for a nighttime move towards the front line from the town of Abbaye d'Igny, a German raider swooped down on them just as all the Holt engines were started simultaneously. As the exhausts all belched flames and loud bangs the raider must have thought he had dived on to an anti-aircraft battery and promptly fled without dropping a bomb.

On October 27, 1918, a battery of French field artillery emplaced themselves next to the 55th Coast Artillery in exceptionally muddy conditions. Unfortunately, the mud was so severe that their Renault tractors quickly became mired and to extract themselves they called



*Weighing 13 tons the 155mm GPF gun was a heavy load. As can be seen here it had a handbrake and brakeman to help when going downhill*



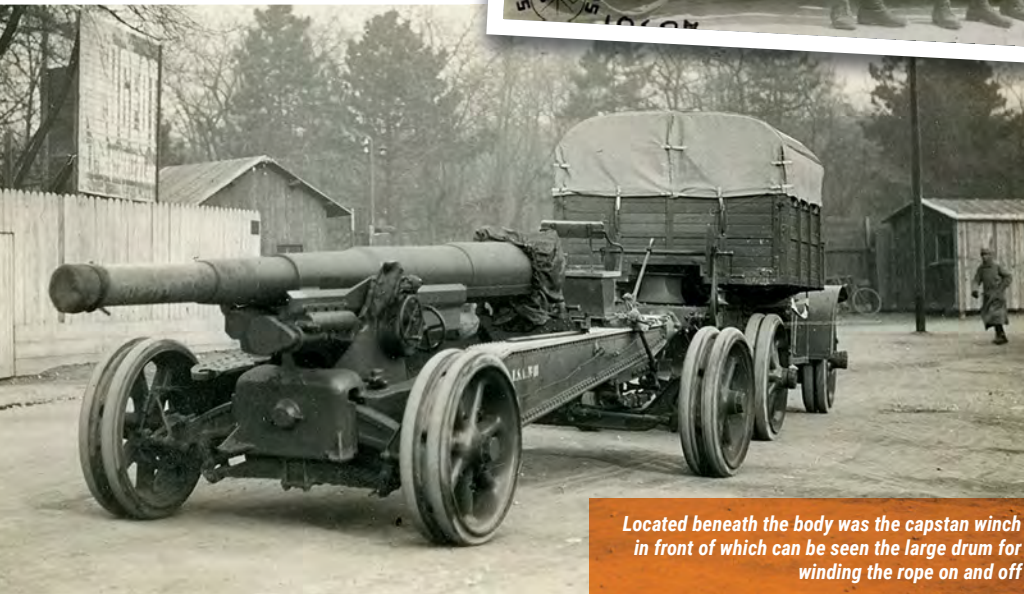
upon the Holt tractors of the 55th. The unit history of the 55th states that it was at this time that the Holt was finally declared the victor over the Renault in the war against the mud.

It was not just the artillery which made use of Renault EG Tractors. The engineer regiments undertaking road repair also received a small number of these machines and employed them on recovering other vehicles which had either become mired on the soft verges or had even left the road altogether.

The capstan winch was a perfect tool for this job, but in order to prevent the tractor from being hauled backwards by the winch the Renault was either secured to a large object (such as a



**The Holt. The 51st Coastal Artillery received the more powerful Holt 75 caterpillar tractors to haul their guns. Much slower and noisier than the Renault but virtually unstoppable**

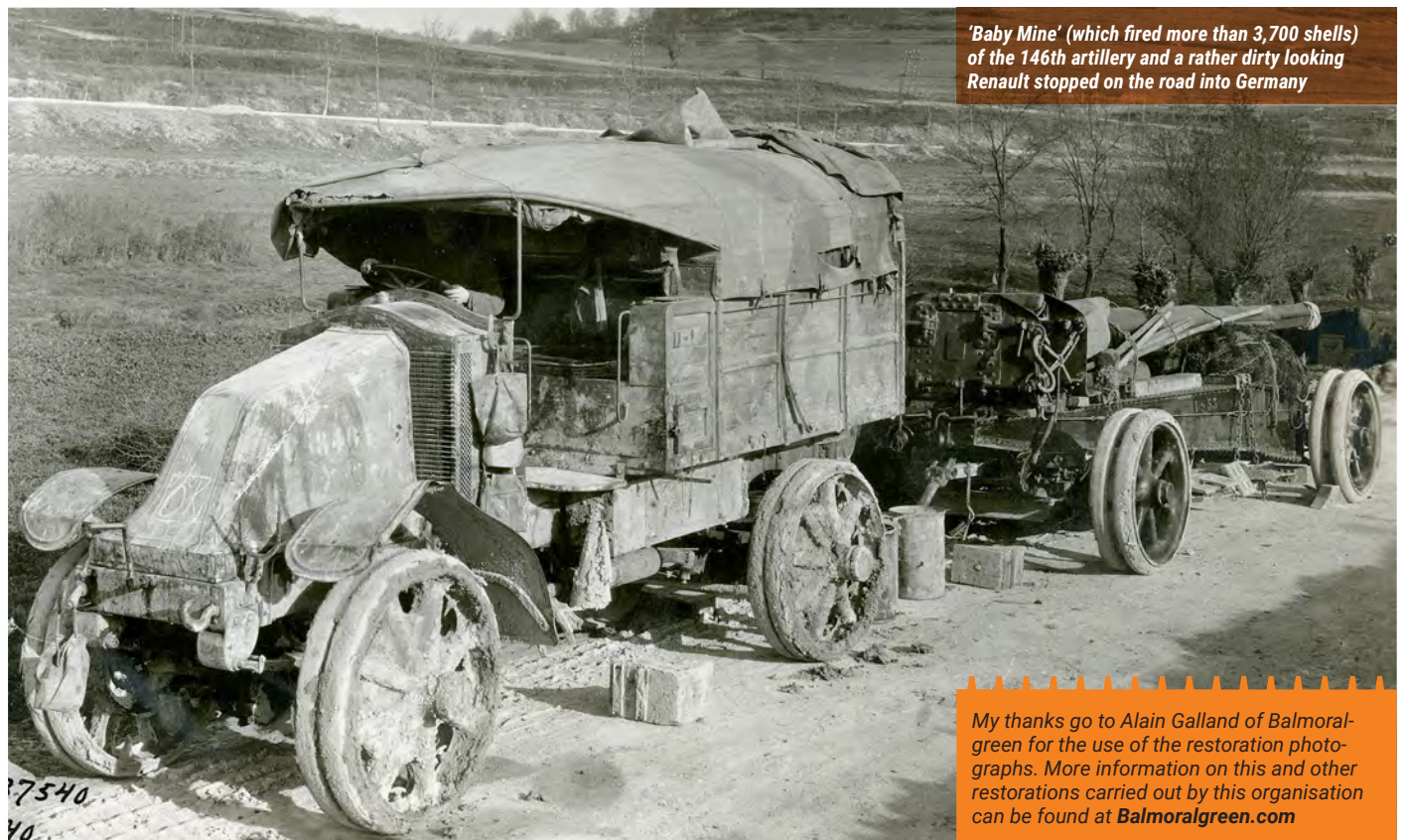


**Located beneath the body was the capstan winch in front of which can be seen the large drum for winding the rope on and off**

convenient tree), had all of their wheels chocked or, as it appears in period photographs, both. For a vehicle that did not cope well towing guns through the mud it was an ideal choice for towing vehicles out of mud and back on to the road!

At the end of the war there were around 700 Renault EG in French military service, most of which were still in service at the start of World War Two, performing the same task it had been designed to do - hauling the 155mm GPF gun.

There is a restored Renault EG at the Berliet foundation museum in Bordeaux, but in 2016 a second example came up for sale. This was restored by members of the Balmoral Green Association near Versailles and it is currently displayed at the French artillery museum at Draguignan along with the gun it was designed to tow: the 155mm GPF. ◀



**'Baby Mine' (which fired more than 3,700 shells) of the 146th artillery and a rather dirty looking Renault stopped on the road into Germany**

My thanks go to Alain Galland of Balmoral-green for the use of the restoration photographs. More information on this and other restorations carried out by this organisation can be found at [Balmoralgreen.com](http://Balmoralgreen.com)



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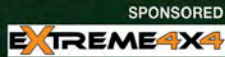
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In 1971 a group of young lads and their Jeeps conquered Cheviot

# WHEN *Dinosaurs*



*Tom Hall comes to grief on the ascent of Cairn Hill*



*Nowhere to Run To...Peter Brock's hard-top Jeep stuck in the peat.*



*Nick Johnson overseeing running repairs on his Jeep*



*Rod Elgey's Jeep well and truly stuck in a dry peat-hag on the ascent*





# ROAMED THE EARTH

*'Four-wheel drive, a steady pace and a lot of luck seemed to be the best approach'*

The great whaleback-shaped ridge of The Cheviot rises to 2,676 feet above sea level and lends its name to the range of hills that sit astride England's border with Scotland. The Cheviot itself is the core of an ancient volcano much weathered into the familiar rounded profile beloved of Northumbrians and those who seek out wild and lonely places.

Writing in 1728, Daniel Defoe, the author of *Robinson Crusoe*, was so concerned at the steep ascent that he was sure the summit would be surrounded by precipices. In fact, the top of Cheviot is broad and flat and was described in the late 1800s by William Weaver Tomlinson as "a desolate looking tract of treacherous moss hags and oozy peat-flats traversed by deep sykes and interspersed by black, stagnant pools."

In 1971, the military vehicle scene was very much in its infancy in the north east but, to a young man from Durham in his early twenties called Nick Johnson, reaching the summit of Cheviot was to become something of an obsession.

Nick had acquired a rather beaten-up but serviceable early MB Jeep but his first two attempts at the climb ended in abject failure and he came to the conclusion that the only way to make a successful assault was to tackle it mob-handed so that there would always be someone on hand to pull him out of whichever bog-hole he found himself in.

He approached fellow Durham resident

*On the forestry track  
beyond Uswayford*





**ABOVE: Breakfast time at the overnight campsite near Alwinton**  
**BOTTOM: The Jeep convoy takes a break in the sunshine beyond Uswayford Farm**

and Jeep owner, Rod Elgey to join him on the quest but Rod, drawing on previous experience, flatly refused on the grounds that such a venture would need at least three machines well equipped with ropes and other recovery paraphernalia.

Undaunted, they went about assembling the team and by mid-September a total of six Jeeps and their owners; Nick and Rod, Alan Tate, Peter Brock, Jim Arthurs and Tom Hall had joined up to the venture along with assorted friends and thrill-seekers who jumped at the chance to ride shotgun.

The summer of 1971 had been long and hot which boded well for a successful ascent as a wet year would have recharged the bogs and made the peat-hags virtually bottomless.

In early September, five of the party made the trip up through Northumberland arriving at the small village of Alwinton where they set up camp for the night on the flat ground next to the shallow, rushing waters of the Usway Burn.

They would be joined for breakfast the following morning by a slightly hungover Jim Arthurs after a very early departure from Gosforth where he had been attending his brother's stag do the night before.

The day dawned bright, clear and cool. The conditions were as good as they could be for a successful climb.

During Nick's previous solo attempts, he had made contact with the Wilkinson family who farmed the lonely hills at the foot of Cheviot. So, it was to the isolated farm of Uswayford that the group of six Jeeps made their way through the Otterburn Ranges and along narrow stone tracks to the farm gate.

Colin Wilkinson had volunteered his services as a guide and his local knowledge of the terrain and the many potential pitfalls were to prove invaluable as the group set off on the first leg of the ascent: the climb up Hen Hill.

Skirting patches of rushes and hidden drains overhung with vegetation, the Jeeps picked their way up the steep gradient keeping a wary eye open for the patches of dark green that signified a boggy area which could spell disaster.

Tom Hall would later recall that it had taken five hours to go four miles and the going got significantly harder once the six Jeeps passed from the drier, grass dominated 'white ground' into the peat bogs of the upper slopes of Cairn Hill.

The hot, dry summer had reduced what would

have been wet, impenetrable boggy holes into tracts of dry, powdery, desiccated peat which were almost as difficult to drive through. Tom Hall said it felt like "driving through sawdust."

Even in dry conditions, there were significant areas of wet bog to contend with and the group rapidly devised what appears to be a counter-intuitive technique to get them through. If the first vehicle found a route then it would seem to make sense that the others should follow.

However, the first vehicle would weaken the crust of vegetation over the waterlogged peat below. The second vehicle would complete the job and the third would almost inevitably break through and sink up to the axles requiring time-consuming effort to haul it back out often risking bogging down the rescue vehicle.

The upshot of this was six vehicles all trying to take slightly different routes through the bogs with the inevitable results and further rescues required as they zig-zagged between the mires.

As the vehicles reached the flanks of Auchope Cairn, the going became increasingly treacherous with a prevalence of wind-eroded peat hags forming small, unstable cliffs that were often virtually invisible until you were



***'Even in dry conditions, there were significant areas of wet bog to contend with'***



right on top of them.

Jim Arthurs would later remember: "It was extremely hairy at times as I recall, especially navigating the peat hags. These were times you felt that your Jeep might tip over at any moment and you just had to keep it going forward."

The fact that progress was made at all is remarkable considering that one of the vehicles only had road tyres fitted although, as Rod Elgey would later point out, it made little difference as the treads of the off-road tyres became clogged with peat and gave no more traction than the road tyres.

Four-wheel drive, a steady pace and a lot of luck seemed to be the best approach and to this day Jim Arthurs remains proud that he was the only vehicle not to get stuck on the ascent although he did succumb on the way back not far from the safety of Uswayford Farm.

Having a number of passengers was a distinct advantage on the frequent occasions when one or more Jeeps got stuck. In addition to ropes and chains, liberal use was made of muscle power and the grab handles on the tub to heave and rock the stricken vehicle until it found some traction and slithered free. Significant time was



*Overnight campsite on the banks of the River Alwin*

halt a few dozen yards from the trig point that marks the summit. Their sudden arrival was much to the surprise of a group of hill walkers, one of whom burst out: "How the hell did you get up here?"

Flushed with success, Peter Brock made an attempt to get to the Trig Point but only made a few yards before being sucked into the morass that surrounds the summit and had to be recovered.

The success of the venture was toasted with a brew-up and the obligatory line-up for a photo to record the achievement for posterity before embarking on the hour-long descent back to

Hall's 21st birthday but, as he says: "No-one felt much like celebrating."

Two weeks later Rod Elgey and Jim Arthurs returned with two Jeeps and Nick's mother and stepfather to scatter his ashes along part of the route they had taken on that September day when a group of young lads and their Jeeps conquered Cheviot.

Nick Johnson and Peter Brock had worked for a film and photographic company in Newcastle and had shot a considerable amount of film on the day. It was processed and delivered to the shop but Nick was out and didn't pick it up. He was killed the following day.

Later enquiries failed to locate the film which has never been found.

Such a journey would be virtually impossible 46 years on. Although little has changed on Cheviot itself, the lower slopes up from Uswayford are now clad in dark rows of sitka spruce planted between the mid-seventies and the early eighties.

Changes in land ownership and increased environmental regulation would make such an ascent almost impossible to gain permission for anyway. It is probably fair to admit that the 1971 ascent probably did cause some damage to the fragile mountain habitat although it generally doesn't take long for nature to heal the scars.

Echoes of that September day linger on in the Coquet Safari event which takes to the high hills of the Cheviot range every year as long as ground and weather conditions permit and permissions can be secured. Both Jim Arthurs and Alan Tate have taken part in this event and Tom Hall's Jeep, now in the ownership of Geoff Maskell, still has to be pulled out of bogs on occasion.

However, it seems unlikely that the original feat of September 1971 will ever be repeated. ◀

*Footnote: This article is dedicated to the memory of Nick Johnson. The author's grateful thanks are due to Jim Arthurs, Tom Hall and Rod Elgey. Photographs courtesy of Rod Elgey*



*A stop for a brew-up while bogged down in the peat near to the summit of Cheviot*



*Crossing the open moorland before making the final ascent*

lost on these episodes during the climb.

As the Jeeps battled into the final mile before the summit of Cheviot, they passed the strewn wreckage of a Vickers Warwick which crashed on the side of Cairn Hill on July 23, 1946 on its way from Thornaby to Brackla in Fife for scrapping after the war.

The Warwick was predominantly used as air/sea search and rescue aircraft and was made of the same geodetic construction as its more famous cousin, the Wellington. Warwick HG136 should have followed the coast on its journey and how it came to crash on the flanks of The Cheviot remains a mystery. All three crew members were killed and their bodies were recovered days later by RAF rescue crews.

Much of the wreckage has now been 'souvenired' but as the Jeeps passed much remained including the engines and an undercarriage strut complete with a fully inflated Dunlop Airwheel tyre.

The Jeeps fought on over the final quarter of a mile and finally surmounted the broad plateau that forms the top of Cheviot and came to a

Uswayford where a pleasant surprise awaited the group and their guide. Mrs Wilkinson had laid on a splendid buffet tea for the adventurers. A fitting finale to an extraordinary day.

The story should end there but it has a sad and tragic coda. While out on a drive near Chollerford just a month later, Nick Johnson lost control of his Jeep which flipped, badly injuring his two travelling companions. Nick himself died as a result of the accident. It was Tom



*The line-up on the summit of Cheviot with the Trig Point in the background. L-R Tom Hall, Jim Arthurs, Rod Elgey, Nick Johnson, Peter Brock, Alan Tate*



**Modified tanks**, called Hobart's Funnies, were used during World War Two, this A27L Centaur Dozer is one of only a few to survive







During World War Two, specialists from the Royal Engineers created a limited number of unusually modified tanks called Hobart's Funnies named after the commander of the 79th Armoured Division of the British Army, Major General Sir Percy Cleghorn Stanley Hobart KBE, CB, DSO, MC.

The armoured bulldozer is a basic tool of combat engineering combining the earth-moving capabilities of the bulldozer with armour which protects the vehicle and its operator in or near combat. Most are civilian bulldozers, modified by the addition of vehicle armour and military equipment, but some are tanks stripped of armament and fitted with a dozer blade.

Also, some tanks have bulldozer blades while retaining their armament, but this does not make them armoured bulldozers as such, because combat remains the primary role and 'earth and wreckage' moving is a secondary task.

The first armoured bulldozer was developed by the British during World War Two. This was a conventional Caterpillar D8 bulldozer fitted with armour to protect the driver and the engine. The work was carried out by Jack Olding & Company Ltd of Hatfield.

Bulldozers were produced in preparation for the Battle of Normandy with the tasks of clearing the invasion beaches of obstacles and quickly making roads accessible by clearing rubble and filling in bomb craters.

As allied armies advanced through Europe, the armoured bulldozer was found to be too slow and there was a need for a well-armoured, obstacle clearing vehicle that was fast enough to keep up with tank formations.

This need was met by the Centaur Bulldozer, a Centaur tank with the turret removed and a bulldozer blade fitted.

These special tanks were designed in light of problems that more standard tanks experienced during the amphibious Dieppe Raid, so that the new models would be able to overcome the problems of the planned Invasion of Normandy in June 1944. They played a major part on the Commonwealth beaches during the D-Day landings and afterwards during the liberation of Europe in 1944-1945.

Plans to invade continental Europe were completely revised after the failure of the raid on Dieppe in 1942. Allied units in Normandy would need to overcome terrain, obstacles and coastal fortifications if the invasion was to succeed. General Sir Alan Brooke, chief of the imperial general staff decided in 1943 to create special units and assigned responsibility to armoured warfare expert Percy Hobart for the development of vehicles and training crews to use them in action.

Many of the ideas had already been tried, tested or were in experimental development ▶

# Moving Earth





*In 1987 this Centaur Dozer was found in a scrapyard*

both by Britain and other nations. For example, the Scorpion flail tank (a modified Matilda tank) had already been used during the North African campaign to clear paths through German minefields. Soviet T-34 tanks had been modified with mine-rollers. Close-support tanks, bridge layers, and fascine carriers had also been developed elsewhere. However, the Funnies were the largest and most elaborate collection of engineering vehicles available.

By early 1944, Major General Hobart could demonstrate to Eisenhower and Montgomery a brigade each of swimming Duplex Drive tanks, crab mine clearers, and AVRE engineer tanks along with a regiment of Crocodile flame-throwing tanks.

Montgomery considered that the US forces should use them. A third of all the Funnies available were offered to the Americans but take-up was minimal. Eisenhower was in favour of the Duplex Drive (DD) amphibious



*Major General Percy Hobart*

tanks but left the decision on the others to General Bradley. None of the other designs were used, because it was thought that they required specialised training and an additional support organisation. Also, the Americans were reluctant to make use of Funnies based on the Churchill tank as they did not want the logistical complexity of adding another tank model to their own existing inventory.

In the light of operations during the US landing on Omaha beach, Bradley's decision has been criticised as it was felt that use of the Funnies would have saved American lives. After D-Day, American forces did however make limited use of the Sherman Crab mine-clearing tank.

### **The Centaur in action**

The Centaur was used for training, and only the specialised versions saw active service in the frontline. 95 mm (3.74 in) howitzer CS versions, although few in number, were part of the Royal Marine Armoured Support Group on D-Day. Many other specialist vehicles rendered services to the Royal Engineers, like the combat engineering vehicles and dozers. Even the observation post version was in active service. They participated in the whole North European campaign, from the Normandy beaches to north-western Germany in April-May 1945. Unlike the Sherman, they had a low silhouette and were faster. But they also shared the relatively cramped interior and small hatches of the Cromwell.

### **Designs**

The majority of the Funnies were modified forms of the Churchill tank or the Sherman tank. Both were available in large numbers. The Churchill had good (though slow)

***'This example is equipped with the famous original V12 27-litre Liberty engine built by Nuffield'***



*After its third restoration phase, the Centaur Dozer is on show at the stand of the Dutch company BAIV B.V. and in the arena of the War and Peace Revival 2016*





After racing around the arena, the Centaur Dozer created a new path

cross-country performance, heavy armour, and a roomy interior. The Sherman's mechanical reliability was valued.

Among the many specialist vehicles and their attachments were:

- Centaur bulldozer: A Centaur tank with the turret removed and fitted with a simple winch-operated bulldozer blade. These were produced because of a need for a well-armoured obstacle-clearing vehicle that, unlike a conventional bulldozer, would be fast enough to keep up with tank formations. They were not used on D-Day but were issued to the 79th Armoured Division in Belgium during the latter part of 1944.

- Armoured bulldozer: A conventional Caterpillar D7 bulldozer fitted with armour to protect the driver and the engine.

- Crocodile: A Churchill tank modified by the fitting of a flame-thrower in place of the hull machine gun.

- Assault Vehicle Royal Engineers (AVRE): A Churchill tank adapted to attack German defensive fortifications. AVREs were also used to carry and operate equipment such as the bobbin, fascine, small box girder, bullshorn plough and the double onion.

- Armoured Ramp Carrier (ARK): was a Churchill tank without a turret that had extendible ramps at each end; other vehicles could drive up ramps and over the vehicle to scale obstacles.

- Crab: A modified Sherman tank equipped with a mine flail, a rotating cylinder of weighted chains that exploded mines in the path of the tank.

- Duplex Drive tank (DD): An amphibious Sherman or Valentine tank fitted with a large watertight canvas housing able to float and reach the shore after being launched from a landing craft several miles from the beach. They were intended to give support to the first waves of infantry that attacked the beaches. The Valentine version was used only for training.

- LVT 'Buffalo': British name for the American LVT2 and LVT4: lightly armoured amphibious landing vehicles. The latter having a ramp to ease loading of cargo. It was used in several operations including the crossing of the Rhine.

- Canal Defence Light: A powerful carbon-arc

searchlight carried on several types of tank inside a modified turret.

### Post-World War Two use

This special fully-restored example was built as a Centaur tank in 1943 and converted to a Centaur Dozer in 1944. After the war the Centaur bulldozer continued to be used by the British Army for some years and saw action during the Korean War, as did the Churchill Crocodile.

Also, small numbers of Churchill AVREs and Sherman BARVs were used until the 1960s when they were replaced with similar vehicles based on the Centurion Tank. The Royal Engineers subsequently used modified Centurion and Chieftain tanks that were designed to fulfil the same roles in battle as the Funnies. The last examples of FV4003 Centurion Mk 5 AVRE 165 saw combat in the Gulf War/Operation Granby of 1991. The most recent vehicles in this line are the Titan and Trojan variants of the Challenger 2 tank.

Armoured bulldozers continue to be used by the Israel military forces and have been recently adopted by the US Marine Corps and the US Army in Iraq.

### Surviving Centaurs

The example currently being offered by British & American Infantry Vehicles (BAIV) is a fully-restored Centaur Dozer. This particular one was originally bought from Pounds scrapyards in 1978 and was discovered by a British collector. Its first restoration was finished in the '80s. Due to the fact that the collector was not satisfied with the result he decided to perform a complete ground-up restoration over the next 15 years. The dozer was finished in July 2016 and made its first public appearance at that year's War and Peace Revival.

All track guards, stowage bins and many other sheet metal parts are new, NOS wartime tracks and road wheels in near perfect condition have been installed.

This example is equipped with the famous original V12 27-litre Liberty engine built by Nuffield. The dozer comes complete with radios and intercom, auxiliary generator, tools and lots of really hard-to-find accessories; a great opportunity to buy an extremely rare and

### SPECIFICATIONS

Model **A27L Centaur Dozer**

Manufacturer **Leyland Motors**

Weight **22.4 tons**

Bridge Classification **26**

Crew **Three-five**

Engine **Nuffield built V12 Liberty engine producing 395bhp at 1.500rpm (power/weight ratio of 14.1 bhp/ton)**

Transmission **Merritt-Brown combined gearbox and steering five forward, one reverse**

Suspension **Christie Type with top rollers and rear drive sprockets**

Speed **45 km/h (28 mph) on road and 26 km/h (16 mph) off road. Field test performances showed it could climb**

**a 25° gradient and 0.91m vertical obstacle, cross a 2.36m trench and ford**

**a 1.20m deep river without preparation which was superior to the American Sherman tanks.**

Range **Fuel capacity 527 + 136 (rear auxiliary tank) litres of petrol. This allowed for a 266mile (363 km) range on flat ground – equivalent to 1.7mpg**

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Centaur Dozer with happy Dutch people in 1945, after liberation



**Centaur Dozer with its blade down in World War Two**



**Centaur Dozer in Holland 1945, carrying local people to celebrate the liberation**



**After the first restoration phase the Centaur Dozer was thoroughly tested at an event in 1990**

Crusader (and the interim A24 Cavalier), the Cromwell had the significantly more powerful Meteor. Apart from the engine and associated transmission differences, the two tanks were the same and many Centaurs built were fitted with the Meteor to make them Cromwells.

If you compare, for instance, the Liberty V12 with the radial engines as installed in a lot of US-built tanks this engine is without any doubt superior to the American variants. Even the semi-epicyclic gearboxes as installed in later British tanks make them highly manoeuvrable. This dozer is therefore able to make a neutral turn as demonstrated at the 2016 War and Peace Revival.

(See <https://tinyurl.com/yicsd9ras>)

unusual World War Two vehicle. British World War Two historic armour is a good investment. It is often technically superior, rarer and much more interesting than US-built armour.

Apart from this Centaur, the only other vehicles which can be seen today are at Bovington (dozer, non-running), two in Normandy; one at Benouville near Pegasus Bridge and one at La Brèche d'Hermanville and one has survived in the Tank Museum of the Greek Army Armoured Training Center at Avlona near Athens (non-runner).

### **Most successful British tanks**

The Tank, Cruiser, Mk VIII, Cromwell (A27M), and the related Centaur (A27L) tank, were one of the most successful series of cruiser tanks fielded by Britain in World War Two. The Cromwell tank, named after the English Civil War leader Oliver Cromwell, was the first tank put into service by the British to combine a dual-purpose gun, high speed courtesy of the powerful and reliable Meteor engine, and reasonable armour, in a balanced package. Its design formed the basis of the Comet tank and later on the famous Centurion tank.

The Centaur and the Cromwell are narrowly related. In fact, both are derived from the Centaur I, the A24 cruiser Mark VII. In 1942, the A27L was named 'Cromwell II' and, afterwards, Centaur. Its origin can be traced back to the common specifications for a replacement of the Crusader, issued in late 1940. Designs were submitted in 1941 and production was scheduled for 1942.

However, the troublesome Nuffield Liberty engine had proven its limited power, limiting upgrades in armour and armament of the new generation of cruisers.

Eventually, the choice of a suitable engine was the reason that split the new Cruiser programme in three according to their powerplant manufacturers.

This development took time and the Cavalier, based on the existing Nuffield engine, was ready first with the Centaur second.

Leyland and Birmingham Railway Carriage & Wagon (BRC&W) were chosen for the A27 programme, according to the general staff's second specification. However, development took time, mostly to design a turret suitable for a six-pdr gun, and the Crusaders were upgraded in

the meantime.

In January 1942, Rolls-Royce and Leyland/BRC&W each produced a prototype equipped with the 600bhp Meteor engine based on the Rolls-Royce Merlin engine. Mobility was excellent but, unfortunately, cooling and manufacturing problems soon erupted. As a result, Leyland proposed an intermediary solution with its A27 design re-equipped with the Nuffield Liberty engine that could be delivered sooner.

In November 1942 this became the A27L Centaur Design. Although the three cruisers are difficult to tell apart visually at first glance, many details allow to distinguish the Cavalier from the other two. In common, all three are obviously based on the Crusader, sharing many parts. The hull is low and with many flat surfaces, with riveted and welded cold steel RHA plates, including the front hull and sides. The large rear deck had to accommodate the engine. The suspension consisted of six unevenly spaced large rubber-clad roadwheels per side, rear drive sprockets and front idlers. Large storage boxes added some form of layered protection on each side of the fighting compartment.

The turret was hexagonal, with a flat front face protecting the internal mantlet, and two small two-piece roof hatches side by side, for the loader and commander.

The Cromwell and Centaur differed in the engine used. While the Centaur had the Liberty engine of the predecessor cruiser tank, the

**Centaur Dozer with blade up and driving, World War Two**





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# of



**MAIN IMAGE:** 1940: This photo issued on April 25, shows a group of Royal Army Signals Corps riders on a training exercise. They are riding BSA WD M20 motorcycles, a side valve single of 496cc displacement

**LEFT:** 1939: When World War Two started in 1939, the Triumph Tiger evolved into the military 3HW model but Triumph's Coventry works was destroyed by German bombers on the night of November 14, 1940





# Vital Role

Part two of Steve Wilson's history of the despatch riders of World War Two focuses on the home front



**'Station X one of Pamela's regular runs was to the code-breaking centre at Bletchley Park'**

**D**espatch Riders (DRs) on the home front were equally active in wartime Britain, a potentially hazardous environment where road deaths peaked in 1941 at 9,916. Bombing and bomb damage, the blackout, the absence of road-signs (and even shop signs bearing a town's name were painted out), road surfaces which included cobblestones and greasy wooden blocks, English weather, plus from 1943, large numbers of forces' vehicles piloted by Americans accustomed to driving on the right – all had to be contended with.

Many UK-based DRs were female, Auxiliary Territorial Service (ATS) or Women's Royal Naval Service (WRNS), to free up manpower for combat roles. Their number included the future 'Avengers' star, Honor Blackman. The Senior Service in particular initially recruited from the upper end of the social strata.

The redoubtable Virginia Hussey's future first husband Lord 'Bim' Northampton was a friend of Lady Cholmondeley, who happened to be the head of the WRNS. Aged 18 and lying about previous motorcycling experience, Virginia was soon competent enough to be issued, as a DR at the Admiralty in the Mall, with a conscripted pre-war Triumph Tiger 100. Senior Service indeed, as the sporting Tiger twin was a highly desirable motorcycle.

She served in Naval Intelligence under Commander Ian Fleming, the future creator of James Bond, and frequently encountered Winston Churchill from the nearby Cabinet War Rooms.

Fleming, who she describes as "very strange, I thought, with a rather sadistic face. But all right to work for," has been depicted in a TV biopic as having an affair with one of the WRNS riders, who was then shown as being killed by a bomb while running an errand for him.

Virginia confirmed this but said: "She was called Muriel Fitzherbert-Wright. Only she was actually killed when looking out of a window at the admiralty during a raid. Silly ass."

The Admiralty WRNS riders wore a smart uniform of breeches, jacket, white shirt and tie, with "a little hat on top of our head. Nothing sissy like a helmet," says Virginia. One regular ▶



duty was a 6pm run through the city down to the Port of London Authority. The Blitz was still in full swing, and one evening, below St Paul's, riding in the blackout down Queen Victoria Street she suddenly disappeared down a fresh bomb crater. She says: "Afterwards, they had a devil of a job to get both me and the bike out of the hole."

There were lighter sides to wartime life. "Because we rode eight hours-plus every day, we became able to do anything on the Triumphs. Another girl and I would ride side by side down the Mall. There were old boys from the Home Guard on sentry duty at the Admiralty Arch and...we learned to how to change bikes on the move, saddle to saddle, coming towards them, for the fun of seeing them leap out of the way,

Mounted on a 350 Ariel W/NG, Pamela recalled that: "We used to speed along, with almost nothing on the roads bar army convoys. We rode really fast – 60 to 70 mph, I don't think there was a speed limit." (This was incorrect – army DRs would have three days' pay docked for speeding.) Unlike the admiralty girls, Pamela took full advantage of regulation DR wear – crash helmets (made by Briggs Motor Bodies, with a paratroop-shaped steel outer, plus a leather and cork lining), goggles, breeches, gaiters ("a bit like hockey pads"), boots, jackets, leather jerkins, short macs, and gauntlets – "a lot of clothing, but with the weather, we needed it." Unlike their male equivalents, the women were not issued with side-arms.

As D-Day approached and "things hotted

day, it was vital to have rapid delivery of the encrypted messages from the listening Y-Stations such as Beaumanor Park near Loughborough, some 70 miles distant. Though teleprinters gradually took over transmission of some of the traffic, the DRs were an essential link. Mostly from the Royal Army Signals Corps (RASC) elite,

## 'The hard riding also brought less glamorous hazards'

petrified," says Virginia.

The hard riding also brought less glamorous hazards. "The great thing to avoid was haemorrhoids, you know, piles. If you were always on the motorbike in the wet and cold, it could be a real problem." Virginia survived that plus two years of the worst of the Blitz, before marrying Lord Northampton.

Another WRNS rider, whose experiences were recorded by the Imperial War Museum, was Pamela Mary Pope, working out of Fort Southwick near Portsmouth, eventually the headquarters for Overlord, the Normandy invasion. (One rider hazard associated with delivering to the docks at Portsmouth and Dover, which were frequently bombed, was a combination of the thick mobile smoke-screens released to protect the ships during raids, and the tramline-like raised tracks for cranes; this brought more than one DR off.)

up", at Fort Southwick Pamela recalled seeing Eisenhower, and Montgomery with his caravan. But it was one of her friends who rode escort for General De Gaulle's vehicle. "She said he was lovely, when they arrived and she saluted, he got out of the car and said: 'If I had violets I would give them to you,' but since he didn't, he gave her the money to buy a bunch instead!", says Pamela.

Station X one of Pamela's regular runs was to the code-breaking centre at Bletchley Park, Buckinghamshire, where DRs played a vital role. The coded German signals could not be intercepted at Bletchley itself, as the technology of the time required a vast layout of aerials to do so – 400 acres of them to cover European radio traffic alone – which would have given away the real, top secret purpose of the Government Code and Cypher School' at Bletchley.

With the German Enigma code settings changing at midnight each

they worked eight-hour, round-the-clock shifts in all weathers, including the frozen, snowbound winters of 1941 and 1944.

My late Aunt Sylvia and her friend Miss Gurr were also working eight-hour shifts as ATS Log Readers in Hut 6 at the park, and the latter recalls DRs arriving at midnight and later. Today exhibits at the excellent Bletchley Park visitor centre, which include a WD M20 and a Norton 16H, carry texts based on testimony from former riders. At RAF Chicksands Priory outside Bedford, machine mileages and departure times were recorded before DRs signed for and rode off with messages for Bletchley, and recorded again on arrival there.

There was no stopping en route except in emergencies. Leaving their machines at the park's rear gate, satchels were handed in immediately and signed for at the main entrance of Bletchley House itself, before the return journey, with time/mileage again recorded. The DRs on duty at the Y-Stations operated this service at hourly intervals, so it would soon be time to start again. They travelled up to 1,200 miles a week.

For the riders permanently on stand-

**LEFT: 1941: The original caption to this photograph, issued on September 25, reads: 'A mock invasion was held recently at a south coast town, in which the Army, Air Force, Navy and Home Guard participated. Part of the Navy's duties during the exercise was the stopping of all vehicles.' In this case the stopped vehicle is an Ariel WN/G. This is a OHV, 346cc, single made in Bournbrook, Birmingham**







1943: Women despatch riders played a crucial part in the war effort in all branches of the services. The original caption to this photo of February 17, reads: 'Fire Force Commander C.D. McDuell and Deputy Commander Butten, watch a girl despatch rider ride the see-saw plank, during training.'

by at the park, the journeys with de-crypted 'product' to the allied commanders, sometimes in London, could be hairier, though that task would usually be done by teleprinter.

One DR recalled in 1941: "About 20 miles north of the City of London, I could read my map by the reflected light from the burning buildings caused by bombing." Accurate map-reading was vital, as routes might be closed by bombing and debris, and working out a quick alternative would be essential.

As well as the colour-coded armbands, changed every day, for each journey, the Bletchley DRs wore blue and white bands around each arm. These gave them the right not to be held up at military or police roadblocks; to stop any service vehicle and get petrol; and to seek assistance and shelter at any army camp. They were top priority, but were strictly encouraged to be deliberately incurious about what they were carrying, and about Bletchley. "It was a secret place," said one, "What they did I didn't know."

A Y-Station DR serving in 1941, with the perceived threat of invasion still present, told how he would vary his routes, and wear his specially-designed satchel slung across his body from right to left, to keep his right hand free for his service S and W .38 revolver. But as the volume of traffic grew, two of the satchels were carried, one on each side, plus the essential map-case slung on the chest; apparently, due to the load, many riders stopped carrying their gas-masks.

The bags were often heavy, and once underway, would be rested on the tank. From 1942 pannier racks and bags were fitted, but for security these do not appear to have been used to transport the large 'Most Secret' envelopes with their red seals. The panniers had their uses, though. From Hut 6, where the main room was heated by an iron stove, one operative wrote: "I can still see an army motorbike DR arriving one dark winter night from an intercept station. Covered from head to foot in snow, he dumped on the floor two

large pannier bags full of logs."

As top code-breaker Gordon Welchman wrote: "The debt we owe to those riders, who faced all kinds of weather on their motorcycles, has never to my knowledge been properly recognised." But despite a wage of just 2/6d (12½ p) a day, in general these young men and women, at peak fitness and constantly busy and on the move, did not complain. Commando Ray Mitchell recognised that: "The lifestyle of a DR was remarkably unfettered compared to a rifleman's," while WRNS rider Pamela Pope thought that: "We had a great war...we were out and about all the time." ◀

#### Further Reading

**Commando Despatch Rider: From D-Day to Deutschland 1944-45** by Raymond Mitchell (Publ. Pen and Sword. ISBN 14 7 3822920)

**Bletchley Park Visitor Centre, Bletchley, Milton Keynes MK3 6EB.** Tel: 01908 640404 [www.info@bletchleypark.org.uk](http://www.info@bletchleypark.org.uk)



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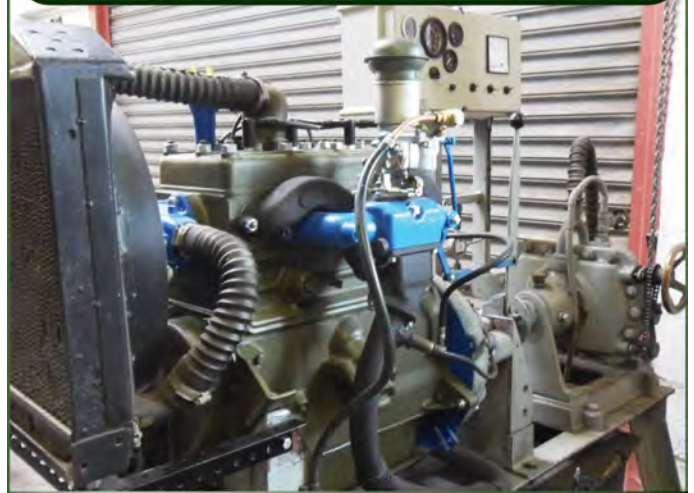
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# A Russian Museum with a Difference...

The recently-opened Museum of Russian Military History is well worth a visit, says **James Kinnear**

There are museum collections around the world that one can visit once a year, or even once every ten years, and the exhibits have remained static in the meantime. In the Russian Federation however, several museum collections have been established in recent years that have grown rapidly from scratch, based on a heady mix of enthusiasm, patriotism and high-level business acumen.

These privately developed museums house world-class collections with an attention to detail in restoration projects that is second to none. One such museum is the recently-opened Muzei Otechestvennoi Voennoi Istorii (MOVI) - the Museum of Russian Military History - located in the village of Padikovo, in the western suburbs of Moscow.

The MOVI museum has been in existence for only three years, having officially opened on May 9, 2014, on the 69th anniversary of Victory in Europe, and yet has already amassed a superb collection of weapons and equipment. Although most exhibits are 'Russian standard' vehicles known to Russian adults and children alike, the museum has made a concerted effort to







*The main display hangar houses an eclectic mix of wartime and post-war Soviet armour*



gather together exhibits which are rare, unusual or in some cases entirely unique. So that, although the museum is not extensive, the collection is particularly interesting to those with a specific, rather than touristic, interest in the subject.

The collection started with the museum founders having a personal interest in historic small arms and edged weapons from the 19th and 20th centuries, and has already expanded exponentially to include the post-war Soviet-era and many armoured vehicles that are still in service with the modern Russian Army.

The location of the museum is, in itself, historic. The area to the west of Moscow where it is located, just south of Lenino-Snegiri, is where, in 1941, the Wehrmacht was stalled on the western outskirts of Moscow by the 108th Rifle Division under the command of General-Major I I Birichev, in what was known as the Battle of the Pavlo-Slobodsky bridgehead.

The division deployed nearly 10,000 men at the commencement of combat operations in late November. At the end of the battle on December 5, this had been reduced by combat losses to 800, a statistic which says more than words can possibly describe.

The MOVI museum complex consists of two purpose-built two-storey buildings, which house the World War Two and 19th Century to Soviet-era collections, a large open-sided storage hangar housing tanks and heavy armoured vehicles, and an open display area where World War Two and modern artillery is located. At first glance, the museum might appear to resemble many other recent museum collections in the Russian Federation and around the world, however besides the rarity of some of the exhibits, there are two other distinct differences to the collection, which provide an astounding resource for military researchers, historians and modellers.

The first nuance is that, almost without exception, nearly all vehicles in the museum have been restored to running condition. In the case of modern AFVs this is not such a major undertaking, as many of the relatively recent production vehicles have low service miles and spare parts availability. The majority of World War Two exhibits have also been restored to running condition however, using where possible mechanical components original to the vehicle type concerned.

The other specific is that almost all of the tanks and AFVs are displayed in 'combat order'. Rather than a collection of armoured vehicles which are externally complete but internally stripped out, the majority of the tanks are stowed with inert main and ancillary armament ammunition, small arms, sights, optics, and radios.

With approximately 30 tanks in fully-equipped and running condition, the museum as a private collection compares not unfavourably with the British Army's current combat readiness - which says more about the state of British government defence expenditure in recent years than it does about the museum under review!

The MOVI museum collection at Padikovo is a highly eclectic mix of small arms, armoured and softskin military vehicles, tanks and self-propelled and towed artillery. As mentioned, there are many rare and in some cases unique exhibits, including some weapons that the author had never personally seen before despite



*The T-20 'Komsomolyets' was a standard Red Army light artillery tractor in the late 1930s and the early months of World War Two. This example is restored to full running order*



*The 'Tachanka' was a horse-drawn machine gun cart used by the fledgeling Red Army during the Civil War that followed the Russian Revolution in 1917 and has been a standard feature of historic parades to the present day*



*The Padikovo museum's M3 Stuart is also in running condition*



*The IS-2 heavy tank, the ultimate symbol of Red Army armoured strength at the end of World War Two*

*The T-26 M-1933 was a Soviet development of the 'Vickers 6 ton' tank, mounting the same turret and armament as the BT-5 and early BT-7 fast tanks*







A unique and fascinating exhibit, an NKL-26 raider aerosan, restored from remnants salvaged from the region of the wartime Leningrad front



The 125mm 2A45 'sprut' was developed as an auxiliary propelled anti-tank weapon for VDV airborne forces, following the design principles of the similar 85mm SD-44 dating from the 1950s



Another rarity, a 20mm 'RES'M-1942 anti-tank rifle mounted on a purpose built ski sled. Approximately 200 of these weapons were manufactured. The museum at Padikovo has a rare surviving example of the type

**'The exhibits are remarkably well restored, and are thoughtfully displayed'**



The T-62 MBT was introduced into service with the Soviet Army in 1961, to complement rather than replace the T-54 and T-55 in a long-range over-watch role. It was widely exported to the Middle East



The T-60 located at the Padikovo museum is one of the few tanks at the museum which is not entirely original. It will be rebuilt in the near future



A 2S7, exploration of which answered the author's curiosity as to the internals of this huge vehicle, not least the layout of the compartment where the gun crew are seated during transit. Note the barely visible shell transport trolley



The BM-14 multiple rocket system (MRS), mounted on the ZIS-151 chassis, was a standard Soviet Army MRS in the 1950s



The 4x4 GAZ-61-73 all-terrain transport vehicle was built in small numbers at GAZ, but production was cancelled in the autumn of 1941 in favour of more urgent T-60 light tank assembly



having studied the subject for quite a few years.

The origin of some of the tanks and armoured vehicles is also interesting considering their current Russian location. The collection's PT-76B amphibious light tank is for instance from former DDR (East German) inventory rather than Soviet service, while the museum's IS-3(M) heavy tank is one of the rebuilt tanks originally exported by the Soviet Union to Egypt after they had been replaced by the somewhat less troublesome T-10 heavy tank series in Soviet Army service.

The MOVI museum also has a good collection of wartime tanks, armoured vehicles and softskins, complemented by the larger display of post-war tanks and vehicles. There are plans to add the early twin-turreted T-26 M-1931 and final single conical-turreted M-1939 variants to the existing T-26 M-1933 currently in the collection. Moving forward to very recent history, the museum has plans to add a T-80 MBT to its collection and may even acquire and display an early T-90 MBT, which would be the first current-service T-90 to be put on display in a museum collection anywhere in the Russian Federation.

The museum has a handful of foreign tanks and vehicles, which are representative of the lend-lease types used by the Red Army during World War Two. These include an M3 Stuart light tank, of which the Red Army received 340 together with 1336 later M3A1 variants, and a MkIII Valentine, of which 3,782 were delivered to the Red Army. With regard to rare Soviet types, two examples of the particularly rare and unique exhibits at the museum in Padikovo are a 4x2 ZiS-21 truck, designed to run on solid fuel and as such being more traction engine than truck, and an NKL-26 raider aerosan which had served on the Leningrad Front. The latter, largely wooden, vehicle has been rebuilt with meticulous detail by the museum, using new wood mounted on the recovered remnants of the original steel framework.

The MOVI museum in Padikovo is growing on a continuous basis, and has a full range of acquisitions and restorations planned for the foreseeable future. Within the museum is a large display table with model tanks, representing the museum's 'shopping list', with a red star being placed in front of each model once a real example has been procured, restored and added to the museum collection.

The MOVI museum in Padikovo is well worth a visit for anyone with an interest in Russian military history from 1800 through to the present day. The exhibits are remarkably well restored, and are thoughtfully displayed with enough space around them for photography purposes. The museum itself is well organised, there is a 'stolovaya' (canteen) serving excellent food (which also houses a huge indoor horse riding facility, one of the largest in Europe) and even the bathrooms are spotlessly clean! ◀

*The author would like to give his personal thanks to the general director of the museum, Dmitry Viktorovich Shersheev and his technical management team, who provided unprecedented access and assistance for our visit, during which, perhaps remarkably, nobody fell off anything or got their fingers caught. In tankers' terms, a successful day out!*



**An S-65 artillery tractor. This particular vehicle was used after World War Two as an airfield tractor, and is fitted with the 'de-luxe' wooden cab. Few wartime S-65 driver-mechanics had the luxury of protection from the elements**



**The '4M' quadruple 7.62mm 'Maxim' water-cooled anti-aircraft machine gun system was generally mounted on GAZ-AA and GAZ-AAA trucks for air defence purposes. This is believed to be the most complete surviving original 4M system**



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**Working hours:** Saturday & Sunday noon-4pm or see website

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**A Belgian Press Agency photograph of Willys CJ-3B/M606 of the 2nd Recce Squadron of the Force Publique during the Leopoldville Riots of January 1959**

The Willys CJ-3B Jeep was introduced in 1953, the same year Willys-Overland was acquired by Kaiser-Frazer. The part of the resulting corporation charged with Jeep production was Willys

with a blackout driving light on the fender, a military trailer electrical socket, military pattern stop and tail lights, a pintle tow hook, magnetic drain plugs, 7.00x16 NDT tyres and a coat of olive drab paint.

harshly in trying to contain the situation. At least 49 people were killed and total casualties were probably much higher. Further riots took place in Stanleyville - now Kisangani - later in the year. ◀

## **'At least 49 people were killed and total casualties were probably much higher'**

Motors Inc. The model's new F-head engine was taller than the previous flathead so the bulkhead, hood and grille were made 3in taller to accommodate the engine. The remainder of the body remained unchanged from the CJ-3A.

Military versions of the CJ-3B were designated M606 and were exported through the auspices of the Military Defence Assistance Programme (MDAP). This programme sought to supply military equipment to 'friendly' nations and in the case of non-tactical vehicles were usually militarised versions of civilian production vehicles. The M606 was equipped

The withdrawal from empire was a difficult process for many of the colonial powers as well as the countries that they were leaving. The Belgian Congo in central Africa was no exception and, in January 1959, an outbreak of civil disorder in the capital city Léopoldville - now Kinshasa - became known as the Léopoldville riots. It was an important moment for the Congolese independence movement and occurred when members of the Alliance Des Bakongo (ABAKO) political party were not allowed to assemble for a protest at the YMCA. It took place regardless and the Belgian colonial authorities reacted

### **Additional Information**

*The Congo achieved independence on June 30, 1960, and became the Republic of the Congo. But independence was the beginning of more turbulent times that saw military mutinies, the secession of Katanga, Cold War manoeuvring and civil war that involved both UN peacekeepers and European mercenaries. Between 1971-1997 the country was renamed Zaire and it is now the Democratic Republic of the Congo where January 4 is celebrated as a public holiday, known as Day of the Martyrs.*



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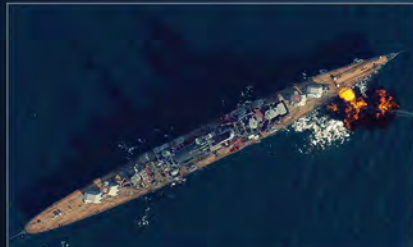
## ACTION STATIONS

### Battle of the Denmark Strait Bismarck's Pyrrhic Victory

In the early morning of May 24, 1941, several giants rocked the Atlantic in the Battle of the Denmark Strait. Kriegsmarine battleship SMS Bismarck and heavy cruiser SMS Prinz Eugen clashed with the pride of the Royal Navy. Battle cruiser HMS Hood and battleship HMS Prince of Wales were all that stood in the way of Operation Rheinübung.

Just 15 minutes after the start of encounter – at 05:52 – Hood unleashed a salvo from around 15 miles (24km) away. But in doing so, she could not escape covering fire from Bismarck. At 06:00, an explosion engulfed the artillery cellars in Hood's hold. All the while, Prince of Wales fired blindly and managed to score a hit. The great wound caused by this tore Bismarck open and British ships hounded her oil trail, following her as she attempted to escape her fate.

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