



BARTREAD



WARTIME VEHICLE CONSERVATION GROUP
SOUTH AUSTRALIA



NEW EDITOR APPOINTED

AT THE LAST AGM. TONY VAN RHODA WAS ELECTED YOUR NEW EDITOR OF THE BARTREAD NEWSLETTER. IT IS GOOD TO BE BACK IN THE CHAIR AND I HOPE I WILL BE ABLE TO KEEP ALL MEMBERS INFORMED OF CLUB EVENTS AND SOME INTERESTING READING. YOUR FEEDBACK IS INVITED AS ARE TOPICS OF INTERESTS YOU WISH TO SEE PUBLISHED.

Vickers Mk VI (Light Tank Mk VI) Light Reconnaissance Tank

The Light Tank Mark I to Mark V were a series of related designs of light tank produced by Vickers for the British Army during the interwar period. Between the First and Second World Wars, the British produced a series of similar light tanks. They saw use in training, and in limited engagements with British Empire



units such as the South African Army during the East African Campaign of 1941. All were around 5 long tons (5.1 t) in weight and capable of 30 mph (48 km/h) on roads and around 20 mph (32 km/h) cross-country. The British did not expect their light tanks to be used against anything except other light tanks at most and as such armament was

a machine gun only—Vickers machine guns firing either a .303 inch or .0.5 inch (12.7 mm) round. Suspension ; (*Continued on page 3:*)

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was Hartmann coil spring on bogies. The engine was a Meadows 6-cylinder petrol. Up until the Mk V, they were crewed by a driver-commander and gunner. The Mk V had a driver, a gunner and the commander helping on the gun.

The Light Tank Mark VI was the most numerically important light tank to see service with the British Army, with 1,682 produced in four versions between 1935 and 1940. The basic Mark VI was very similar to the Mark V, but with extra space in the turret to hold the No.7 Wireless Set, which had a range of about ten miles and was a great improvement on the No.1 Wireless. A circulating pump was added to the header tank for the water cooling system for the two machine guns. A new clutch was installed, but otherwise the engine, transmission and general layout remained the same. The maximum thickness of armour was increased to 15mm from 12mm. The increase in weight meant that the Mark VI had a better ride than any earlier entry in the light tank series.

Light Tank Mark VIA

Three main changes were introduced on the Light Tank Mark VIA. On the Mark V and Mark VI the single return roller had been attached to the front bogie, and the rear part of the track had rested on the rear bogie. On the Mark VIA the return roller was mounted on the hull, between and above the two bogies, lifting the rear part of the track off the back wheels. This helped to solve a problem that had seen the rear part of the track pick up vibrations from the ground and sometimes come off the wheels. The circular commander's cupola on the Mark VI was replaced with a octagonal model with two lookout slots in the front. The Meadows ESTL engine of the Mark VI was replaced by a Meadows ESTB.

Light Tank Mark VIB

The Mark VIB was produced in larger numbers than any other version of the tank, and was the version that saw most combat during the Second World War. It was very similar to the Mark VIA, but reverted to the circular cupola of the Mark VI, although with the two glass block lookouts of the Mark VIA. The number of armoured cooling louvres over the radiator was reduced from two to one. During 1940 six Mark VIBs were given rear idler wheels, as used on the earlier Mark II and Mark III. Tests with the 1st Armoured Division in France showed that this greatly improved the cross-country performance and smoothness of the ride, but a few months later the German campaign in the west proved that the light tank was no longer of any real use, and this modification was never adopted.

The Mark VIB was also produced in an India pattern, without the cupola but with a periscope for the commander.

Light Tank Mark VIC

The Light Tank Mark VIC resembled the India pattern Mark VIB, with no cupola and a periscope mounted on the roof. The Vickers machine guns used on all earlier British light tanks were replaced with two Besa air cooled machine guns, one 7.92mm and one 15mm, adopted by a Czech design. These were the first guns in the British Army to use rimless cases instead of rimmed cartridges, and were adopted as the standard gun for the Royal Armoured Corps. The 7.92mm gun was a success, and remained in service on British tanks until 1958, but the 15mm gun was less reliable and less accurate than the Vickers gun, and was soon replaced. The Mk VIC had a wider track and suspension wheels, reducing the ground pressure.

Combat

The Light Tank Mk VI made up a large proportion of the British tank force in France in 1940, equipping four regular and three Territorial divisional cavalry regiments and accounting for 108 of the 321 tanks in the 1st Armoured Division. When the light tank had originally been introduced into the British Army, the War Office believed that tanks would rarely fight other tanks, and at worst British light tanks would have to deal with enemy light tanks, both acting as scouts ahead of the main tank forces. This was quickly proved to be false in France in 1940, where the under-armed and under-armoured light tanks soon found themselves coming up against the main German tank forces.



The most common German tank in 1940 was actually the Panzer II, which had similar armour to the Mark VI, and didn't out-gun it by much, carrying a 20mm gun, and was the sort of enemy light tank that the Mark VI was expected to face. Unfortunately it also had to cope with the Panzer III, with either a 3.7cm or 5cm gun, and captured Czech Panzer 38(t)s, and these more heavily armed tanks inflicted heavy losses on the thin skinned British tanks.



The Light Tank Mark VI was also used by the Heavy Brigade of the Mobile Division in Egypt (later to become the 7th Armoured Division, or Desert Rats), arriving in 1939. By September 1940 there were two armoured brigades, each with three regiments, all of which were equipped with some Mark VIs during the fighting in 1940. Once again the light tanks were overwhelmed by their more heavily armed German and Italian opponents, and suffered heavy losses. Much to the relief of their crews the Mark VI was replaced by the American Stuart Tank during 1941. which had similar armour to the Mark VI, and didn't outgun it by much, carrying a 20mm gun, and was the sort of enemy light tank that the Mark VI was expected to face. Unfortunately it also had to cope with the Panzer III, with either a 3.7cm or 5cm gun, and captured Czech Panzer 38(t)s, and these more heavily armed tanks inflicted heavy losses on the thin skinned British tanks.



Statistics:

Production:

VI: 51 (1935)

VIA: 210 (1936)

VIB: 914 (1936-38)

Plus another 173 of Mk VI to Mk VIB
from September to December 1939

VIC: 334 (1939-40)

Total: 1682

Hull Length: 13ft 2in

Hull Width: 6ft 10in

Height: 7ft 5in

Weight: 4.8 tons (VI and

VIA), 5.2 tons (VIB and VIC)

Engine: Meadows six cylinder 88bhp

Max Speed: 35mph

Max Range: 125 miles operational radius

Armament: One .303 and one .5 Vickers
Machine Gun (VI, VIA and VIB); One
7.92mm and one 15mm Besa machine
gun (VIC)

Armour: 15-4mm

Colin JONES, in Penfield SA, is currently restoring two Vickers Light Tanks completely from the ground up. He has had to fabricate nearly all parts using old drawings and patterns from old metal parts. He has a keen eye to detail and his professional approach has restorers around the world in a spell as these two tanks take shape, which are well on the way to completion. These vehicles will no doubt be built better than the originals and follow Colin's work with wonder as he works towards finishing this mammoth undertaking. He certainly deserves the title of; "The quiet achiever". See below a pictorial record of his work.





On August 28, 1944, their usefulness was formally recognized within the Canadian War Establishment by the designation '1st Canadian Armoured Personnel Carrier Squadron' with Capt. F.S. Cordeaux, commanding. October 19, 1944, the 1st Canadian Armoured Personnel Carrier Squadron was disbanded and became a squadron of the newly-created 1st Canadian Armoured Personnel Carrier Regiment. The Regiment was to be commanded by Lieut. Col. Gordon M. Churchill.

By December 1944 the combat strength of the CAC Regiment was 106 carriers. 1CACR also had a sister regiment in the 79th Armoured Division, the British 49th Armoured Personnel Carrier Regiment (also equipped with Ram Kangaroos). Each unit had 106 Ram Kangaroos in its inventory and regularly supported each other moves as one unit. Many Ram Kangaroos were equipped with pintle hooks and were also pressed into service moving guns and as armoured ambulances.



Ram Kangaroo (Canadian Archives)

The Kangaroo, 1st Canadian Armoured Carrier Regiment

In a response to mounting casualties in late WWII the Canadian Army reinvented an obsolete under-gunned Ram tank into an Armoured Personal Carrier. The idea of removing turrets from tanks for the purpose of creating observation posts and prime movers was not a new idea. However using them to deliver troops to the front line was a new and innovative idea in 1944.



Crusader Tank Converted to Observation Post and Primer mover for a 17 pounder

The initiative was headed up by General Guy Simonds OC, 2nd Canadian Corps in 1944 with the conversion of (72) M7 Lend Lease Priests. The measure was temporary and although guns were removed the mounts were left in place with the intention of reinstalling the 105mm guns. By late 1944 the Priest kangaroos were in a bad state of repair and required overhaul and were replaced by surplus de-turreted Ram Tanks.

Modifications included removal of the turret and main armament, locating a standard No.19 wireless set to behind the co-driver/gunner, and cleaning up the interior of the hull to accommodate a section of infantry. The first Ram Kangaroos were delivered to the Squadron at Pierre Ville, near Rouen, France, on 1 October 1944 and were used until the wars end and beyond.



Priest Kangaroo (Canadian Archives)

A column of 'Priest' Kangaroos, carrying troops of the 7th Battalion, Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, 154th (Highland) Infantry Brigade (although the chalked 'HD' is barely visible beside the number '69'), moving toward their 'forming up point' for the start of Operation TOTALIZE.

Operation Totalize (also spelled Operation Totalise in recent British sources) was an offensive launched by Allied troops in the First Canadian Army during the later stages of Operation Overlord, from 8 to 9 August 1944. The intention was to break through the German defences south of Caen on the eastern flank of the Allied positions in Normandy and exploit success by driving south, to capture the high ground north of the city of Filasse. The goal was to collapse the German front and cut off the retreat of German forces fighting the Allied armies further west. The battle is considered the inaugural operation of the First Canadian Army, which had been activated on 23 July. In the early hours of 8 August 1944, II Canadian Corps launched the attack using mechanized infantry. They broke through the German front lines and captured vital positions deep in the German defences. It was intended that two fresh armoured divisions would continue the attack but some hesitancy by these two comparatively inexperienced divisions and German armoured counter-attacks slowed the offensive.

US Army's latest light vehicle (might as well be a Jeep)

US Army's latest light vehicle (might as well be a Jeep)

I caught a newsfeed story about the US Army changing the name of its ultralight Ground Mobility Vehicle which was a name used by SOFCOM for a heavy HMMWV fighting vehicle.

It seems the Army wants something to move paratroopers etc., from a landing zone more quickly to the objective than by the Mk II Leather Personnel Carrier, Black, Lace-Up. The links mentioned Polaris has a four-seat side-by-side utility vehicle already in limited service. I checked the link and wonder of wonders, the MRZR is just about the same size and performance as a WWII Jeep. This is more powerful, but it is interesting how the needs of the soldier have perpetuated and manifested almost the same way twice.



NOW FOR SOMETHING DIFFERENT

On Sunday 22nd October I attended a local event at the Strathalbyn Oval to view a line up of beautiful restored Classic Cars and Hot Rods for their annual "Show and Shine Event. I must confess one of the main reasons was because my brother Ron and my nephew Darryl . He displayed his Best in Show winning 1970 Chrysler Charger. It is the only surviving Charger of only six made specially for the Federal Government. This vehicle is the pride of his many Classic Cars he has. The Charger took out the best in show at the Chrysler Dodge Nationals held in Melbourne a two years ago. As I am interested in anything Military, brother Ron loves Classic Cars , which he started restoring from the age of 16 years.



MORE FROM THE STRATHALBYN SHOW and SHINE DAY



FOR SALE NOTICE

SHOULD MEMBERS HAVE ANY ITEMS FOR SALE THEY WISH LISTED IN BARTEAD. PLEASE FORWARD DETAILS WITH A PHOTOGRAPH BY EMAIL TO THE EDITOR AT; gumbraea44@tpg.com.au REMEMBER IT IS YOUR MAGAZINE SO USE OUR FACILTIES.

Tony Van Rhoda. Editor

SPECIAL NOTICE

IF MEMBERS HAVE AN INTERESTING ITEMS OR STORY THEY WISH INCLUDED IN BARTEAD MAGAZINE PLEASE TYPE UP DETAILS, INCLUDING ANY PHOTOGRAPHS. AND IT FORWARD IT TO THE EDITOR AT gumbrae44@tpg.com.au I DO APRECIATE YOUR FEEDBACK COMMENTS. REMEMBER IT IS YOUR MAGAZINE.

Tony Van Rhoda. Editor

ITEMS FOR SALE

KEVIN TIPLER HAS THE FOLLOWING ITEMS FOR SALE

2 X JEEP CRANKSHAFTS (NEED A GRIND) FOR \$40 EACH

IF ANYONE IS INTERESTED PLEASE GIVE KEVIN A CALL.

MOBILE: 0403 267 294 or EMAIL: kevintipler.kt@gmail.com

A SPECIAL REQUEST

DON'T THROW AWAY THOSE OLD USED JEEP BARTREAD TYRES. RICK SHEARMAN WILL TAKE THEM OFF YOUR HANDS. IT DOESN'T MAKE ANY DIFFERENCE WHAT CONDITION THE TYRES ARE IN AS LONG AS THEY ARE NOT HOLED OR CRACKED.

CALL RICK SHEARMAN on 0408 835 018 or EMAIL: rickshearman@bigpond.com

VISIT TO THE FARM

Last month Mick Jenner and I visited Rick's farm for one of our regular visit's. We caught up with the rest of the guys working on the additions to the building. Boy, was I surprised at the work that had been done since my last visit over a year ago, then all it was, was a large pile of steel on the ground. It was good to be back and chew the fat over a good BBQ Lunch. The main task of the day was to raise and fit the large main sliding door weighing one and a half ton. It was interesting to see Rick manoeuvre the door into position and onto the rail. There was a sigh of relief to see it all go perfectly on the first attempt. I took some photographs to show the progress to date.





A great day was had and I am looking forward to my next visit. It is always good to get together with old mates for some male bonding. *To be continued*

CLUB RUN TO NATIONAL AUTO MUSEUM

Saturday, 28th October was the day of the WVCG Club outing. We gathered at the Gumeracha Oval to travel in convoy to The National Auto Museum in Birdwood. Most of the participants had their vehicles on display at the Oval before moving on in convoy to the Auto Museum, past the biggest Wooden Rocking Horse in Australia. It was a terrific drive through the country side and many waves from passing vehicles. It certainly was a spectacle to see so many WWII vehicles travelling together. Probably never seen before by a most travellers on the road. After entering the Auto Museum area, we lined up the vehicles for members of the public to admire our beautifully restored old vehicles. It was sunny day for our BBQ Lunch. Our appreciation must go to Fiona Shearman and Mick Jenner who worked hard to feed all the hungry guys and gals. The Auto Museum, is a great venue to show off our vehicles and this year they displayed Holden manufactured vehicles from the first to the last Holden. Hard to believe it was only a week ago that the Holden Factory closed for the last time in Australia. The day was perfect and we look forward to our next club outing. Those of you who didn't attend certainly missed a great day.







Thank you to everyone who attended our Club drive to the National Auto Museum. To display our vehicles and enjoy an excellent BBQ. See you all at our next function.
Tony Van Rhoda Editor.

THANK YOU

THANK YOU ALL FOR GIVING ME THE OPORTUNITY TO ONCE AGAIN EDIT AND PRODUCE THE BARTREAD MAGAZINE. IT HAS BEEN A PLEASURE TO ONCE AGAIN RESEARCH INTERESTING ITEMS FOR OUR READERS TO ENJOY. I DO SEEK YOUR FEEDBACK SO I CAN CONTINUE TO PROVIDE A QUALITY PRODUCTION. IT HAS BEEN REWARDING FOR ME TO ONCE AGAIN BE BACK IN THE CHAIR. I PROMISE YOU WILL FIND FUTURE EDITIONS OF MUTUAL INTEREST AND YOU WILL EASILY RECOGNISE ME, I AM THE ONE WITHOUT A VEHICLE, BUT WITH A CAMERA IN HIS HAND. SO BE ON GUARD. YOU COULD APPEAR IN THE NEXT MAGAZINE.

TONY VAN RHODA, EDITOR and PUBLISHER

