

# BARTREAD



**WARTIME VEHICLE CONSERVATION GROUP**  
SOUTH AUSTRALIA



We did the Madigan Track.



ISSUE 49 - JUNE 2023



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## WVCG MONTHLY MEETINGS

ARE HELD AT THE TOWER HOTEL, MAGILL SA ON THE FIRST TUESDAY OF THE MONTH STARTING AT 1900 HR'S. MEALS AVAILABLE, ORDER AT THE BAR AND MEAL WILL BE SERVED IN THE MEETING ROOM.

ALL CONTENT OR COMMENTS CONTAINED WITHIN THIS MAGAZINE ARE NOT NECESSARILY THE VIEWS OF THE WVCG MANAGEMENT OR EDITOR OR PUBLISHING STAFF OF THE WVCG CLUB MAGAZINE "BARTREAD". WE THEREFORE DENY ANY RESPONSIBILITY OR LIABILITY FOR ANY CONTENT MAY IT BE WRITTEN OR PHOTOGRAPHIC NATURE.

# "BARTREAD MAGAZINE"

## TO ALL MY VERY SPECIAL READERS

IT IS WITH SOME SADNESS AND DISSAPPOINTMENT THAT I HAVE TO ADVISE YOU ALL THAT THIS, THE JUNE 2023 ISSUE WILL BE MY LAST ISSUE OF THE MAGAZINE "BARTREAD" I HAVE PRODUCED AS YOUR EDITOR /PUBLISHER.

IT HAS BEEN A HONOUR AND PRIVALIGE TO HAVE BEEN ABLE TO DO THE RESEARCH AND PUT THE MAGAZINES TOGETHER FOR YOU. I HOPE YOU HAVE ENJOYED READING THEM AS MUCH AS I HAVE HAD IN PRODUCING THEM.

I HAVE CONTINUALLY TRIED TO MAKE IT AN INTERESTING READ FOR OUR READERS. I HAVE LOVED THE MANY MANY YEARS WORKING ON PRODUCING THE MAGAZINE. I WAS LUCKY FROM THE START THAT I HAVE ALWAYS HAD FULL SUPPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE / COMMITTEE, THEY GAVE ME COMPLETE FREEDOM TO PUBLISH ANY STORIES AND CONTENT.

THE MAGAZINE IS CURRENTLY DISTRIBUTED TO ALL WVCG MEMBERS, AND TO OTHER LIKE MINDED MILITARY VEHICLE CLUBS IN AUSTRALIA, NEW ZEALAND, USA AND ENGLAND. AND RE DISTRIBUTED TO MANY OTHER INTERESTED READERS.

I KNOW YOU ARE NOW ALL WONDERING, WHAT HAPPENED TO CAUSE THIS CHANGE. I ASSURE YOU ALL I WAS NOT PUSHED OR SACKED. I HAD WISHED TO CONTINUE PRODUCING THE MAGAZINE FOR MANY, MORE YEARS.

UNFORTUNATELY FOR SOME TIME NOW I HAVE BEEN EXPERIENCING ON GOING EYE PROBLEMS. I NOW FIND IT DIFFICULT TO SEE CLEARLY, MAKING TYPING THE MAGAZINE EXTREMELY HARD, I FOUND THE CURRENT JUNE ISSUE VERY DIFFICULT FOR ME. CAUSING ME TO MAKE MANY MISTAKES.

I NOW HAVE NO OTHER OPTION LEFT BUT TO LET IT ALL GO, MOVE ON. AND HAND THE JOB OVER TO SOMEONE NEW. I WISH YOUR NEW EDITOR/PUBLISHER WELL AND ALL THE VERY BEST, I HOPE WHOEVER TAKES ON THE MANTEL ENJOYS THE JOB AS MUCH AS I DID. THERE ARE NO FINANCIAL REWARDS, ONLY THE PURE JOY KNOWING A GOOD JOB WAS HOPEFULLY DONE.

ALL THE VERY BEST TO MY READERS.

ANTHONY (TONY) VAN RHODA.  
WVCG EDITOR /PUBLISHER

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# RAAF deploys patrol aircraft to keep tabs on North Korea



By Robert Dougherty

The Royal Australian Air Force has deployed a P-8A Poseidon Maritime Patrol Aircraft on airborne surveillance around North Korea.

The deployment is part of Operation Argos to enforce United Nations Security Council sanctions on North Korea and deter illegal ship-to-ship transfers of sanctioned goods in the region.

Joint Operations Chief Lieutenant General Greg Bilton said Australia has deployed RAAF maritime patrol aircraft on 11 occasions and RAN vessels eight times in support of the operation since 2018.

"Operation Argos reinforces Australia's commitment to nuclear non-proliferation and directly contributes to maintaining the rules-based order in the Indo-Pacific region alongside our partner nations," he said.

"Australia remains committed to enforcing UN Security Council sanctions and our own sanctions against North Korea.

"This operation is Australia's contribution to a multinational effort, alongside Canada, France, Germany, Japan, New Zealand, the Republic of Korea, the United Kingdom, and the United States, who all conduct operations in support of UN Security Council resolutions."



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# Road Workers Amazed By WWII - Era Discovery in Chartres France

By: Rosemary Giles, Guest Author. Photo Credit: Alain Jocard

During the six years that made up the Second World War, both the Allied and Axis powers deployed an astonishing number of troops and armaments. They engaged in countless battles throughout Europe and the Pacific, so it's no wonder that, decades after the conflict's conclusion, remnants continue to be found. The most common are hand grenades, mines and debris, but a discovery made by a group of French road workers in Chartres was something much larger and more incredulous.

## Chartres during the Second World War

Chartres was the site of significant conflict during the Second World War. It was one of many European cities to suffer heavy bombings during the early years of the conflict, and it was also the site of intense fighting in August 1944, just over two months following the D-Day landings at Normandy.



## *Free French members following the liberation of Chartres, August 1944. An amazing discovery beneath the streets of Chartres*

A team of road workers in Chartres were conducting routine maintenance when they ran into what looked like a giant machine located deep in the area they'd dug up. They were unable to lift it with their truck, so used a mechanical digger to pry it from the ground. While they were able to get it out, they needed help from experts to figure out what it was. According to them, it was a World War II-era American tank that had been used during the liberation of France. Astonishingly, they were able to find witnesses who remembered seeing this very vehicle during the liberation efforts, manned by US troops.



*Mechanical digger lifting an American M5 Stuart Light Tank that belonged to the 31st Tank Battalion. The vehicle was discovered beneath a street at Chartres in June 2008.* According to them, it was a World War II-era American tank that had been used during the liberation of France. Astonishingly, they were able to find witnesses who remembered seeing this very vehicle during the liberation efforts, manned by US troops.

This M5 Stuart Light Tank, as they identified it, was part of the 31st Tank Battalion, 7th Armoured Division, who helped with the liberation of Chartres. It was abandoned by the Americans during a reconnaissance mission, after it either slipped off its tracks or ran out of fuel. When the war was over, the locals simply buried it, instead of having it removed.

#### **M5 Stuart Light Tank**

The M5 Stuart Light Tank was developed by the Americans in 1942 as an improved version of the M3. As a result of the increased demand for radial aeroengines, which were in short supply, the US military wanted to design a tank that could operate with another engine. One developed by Cadillac, the V8, was eventually chosen to power the new vehicle, which also featured a redesigned hull.

By the end of the Second World War, a total of 2,074 vehicles had been produced. It was a good tank, but, compared to others, it was rather small..



It's not unusual that the discovery made in Chartres was an M5 tank, given it was readily used by the Americans during their push through France. However, it was a poor match for enemy tanks, as it was only equipped with a 37 mm cannon, compared to the 88 mm ones many German tanks were equipped with.

*M5 Stuart Light Tank, 1940s .*



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# Madigan track.

Madigan track. This track is a continuation of the Mac Clark Track, running east and 38kms north of Old Andado Station. Departure for this track is from Mt Dare and is an east-west direction only toward Birdsville. The actual track intersects with the QAA line at the Eyre Creek crossing (main Simpson Track). Mt Dare to Birdsville is approximately 726kms, eleven hundred odd dunes to cross and very remote. Travellers must apply for an Australian land's Council Permit, as the track predominantly runs through the Northern Territory area. The other permit one must obtain is the Munga-Thirri National Park Permit, the same permit issued to any Simpson Track traveller.

The track crosses many areas of scrub, Gidgee trees, natural grass plains, but predominantly Spinifex. This bush is very thorny and grows high rank seed grass which is everywhere including within the track. So, stopping frequently and using a hooked wire to pull the grass and seed heads out from underneath as this builds up around exhaust, driveshaft, in fact everywhere underneath your vehicle. So clean and check often, prevents the possibility of fire. Each vehicle carried apart from plenty of fuel, water and fuel a 4.5kg fire extinguisher, uhf radio and at least one of the groups, a sat phone.

Dr Cecil Madigan led the first scientific-based expedition across the Simpson Desert in 1939. He led nine men and nineteen camels into this unexplored, trackless, waterless, and extremely harsh environment. The journey took 25 days in total and was led by one of the last true explorers.

**Monday;** The third of March. I and my five companions in five loaded and well-prepared four-wheel drive vehicles met to start our journey at Mt Dare. About fifteen hundred kms North of Adelaide. Five of my companions had been on previous with me when we tackled crossing the Simpson Desert twelve months ago, driving their WW2 Jeeps. The sixth member our group travelling with us this time, was a lady and her Great Dane Dog accompanying Rick from Queensland, she worked for an organisation providing assistance dogs for returning war vets suffering with PTSD.

**Wednesday;** The fifth of March. We departed heading North, stopping for a short break, taking photos at the abandoned Old Andado Station. Very fascinating place as literally everything was left in the house. Surrounding buildings were also left as is. The property was owned by the Clark family, the final resident was Molly Clark who was encouraged to leave twelve years ago and passed away soon after leaving. A trust has since been set up to maintain the buildings and chattels. That evening after we had made camp, I suffered the indignity of setting up my stretcher beneath a hoochie which unfortunately was astride a water way, and it rained heavily in the night. The previous night's heavy rain created a quagmire on the track as we continued eastward, many lagoons had to be skirted which caused some anxious moments for drivers. Apart from having our clean cars covered in red mud all went well. Toward the end of this day, we started to traverse the first sand dunes, finding them easy, however, many had a very steep elevation just before the crest which for the lead vehicle was a nightmare as you couldn't see on the other side which direction the track descended.

After another very memorable night! We discovered to our horror that our campsite had turned into millions of marauding mini ants! Being awakened during the early hours under attack by biting, crawling ants inside our sleeping bags was very unpleasant. After resetting a couple of times, I decided it would be better to sleep inside the vehicle.

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Friday: Was a very eventful one for one of our vehicles, a Mitsubishi Triton with a tray back and canopy. Unexpectedly crossing a deep washout, the Triton's chassis gave way, breaking just forward of the rear axle. Several hours were spent unloading and redistributing the car's tray contents into the other four vehicles. We removed the canopy and with a high lift jack under the rear tow bar lifted the chassis back into its normal position. George came to the rescue with his battery-operated drill and angle grinder, and Rick produced an appropriate piece of flat steel. Which we drilled and remounted it in place held by a couple of good bolts over the worst of the chassis rail break. I must say that it held perfectly well until arriving in Birdsville.

The next four days were much the same, up and over those never-ending sand dunes, being attacked if you foolishly left your windows down by thousands of jumping crickets/grasshoppers. And avoiding the many Golden Orb Spiders with their webs across the track. A couple of snakes were spotted. Most nights we fell asleep to the howling dingoes in the distance. We spied a group of very large camels, but no kangaroos or Emus, most bird life appeared to be raptors.

An awesome trip. Departure times daily were around Nine am, midday stop for a wee break and top up, generally the drive would make camp sometime nearer to four. When nibbles and refreshments were the norm, then of course a small campfire and evening meals. Finally arriving at the Eyre Creek Crossing which was quite dry we continued a further twenty kms and then assembled at the base of big red. The steepest and Highest sand dune on the track, ascent is on the left and by dropping our tyre pressures to ten, three of us were successful. Then a short drive to the outback town of Birdsville. Another great experience over and done. Not a serious challenge for our vehicles, compared to the French line last year in our WW2 Jeeps, but due to the extremities of the track and lack of traffic, we were still confronted by the unexpected! My advice if any is, do it. Just do it.

#### STORY BY:

Kev Tipler. WVCG President and organiser. Accompanied by Rick Canhan, Bruce Pettingill, George Glass, Nick Grey, and Karen with her Great Dane dog!



*One that didn't make it. But probably helped others for spares.*





*A couple of sheds in Old Andado.*



*Old Andado workshop.*



*Old Andado and some dumped gear.*





*My bed set up in the creek. Lesson One, always set up camp on the high ground.*



*Anti Ant can protection.*





*Snapped Chassis cross bar.*



*Spinifex a good way to start a fire off your hot muffler.*





*Dry Lake Eyre*



*Kevin Tipler on top of "Big Red"*





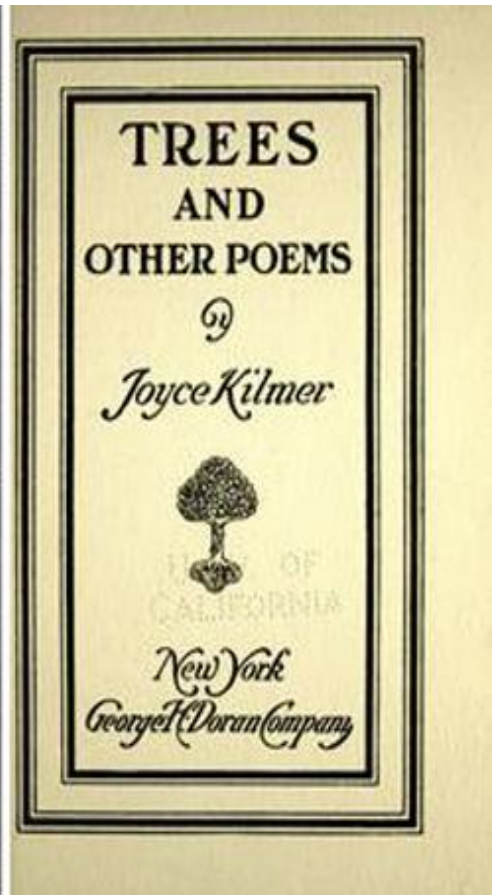
*The Group outside the Birdsville pub*



*Back to where we all started at the Mount Dare Hotel*

# 'Only God Can Make a Tree' Brooklyn's Tribute to Joyce Kilmer

by Lawrence Kadish



Amidst the unrelenting stories of carnage, corruption and incompetence comes a reminder there is good news if you look long enough to find it.

And it should come as no surprise that this reminder comes from Brooklyn.

Generations ago, the New York City Department of Parks took a triangular piece of park property along Kings Highway in Midwood and renamed it "Sgt. Joyce Kilmer Square." It lies along a historic Indian trail that became a major thoroughfare for European settlers traveling between rural communities called Flatbush, Gravesend, and New Utrecht.

In time, New York City would acquire the parcel as the arrival of the automobile required the realignment of many Brooklyn streets, resulting in this modest triangle. It was dedicated as parkland in 1934 and named "Sergeant Joyce Kilmer Square" in 1935.

Today it is lined with benches shaded by large oak trees, with a flagpole along East 12th Street. It is a respite for local neighbours seeking a moment's relief from the challenges of the day.

It is a modest tribute to a giant of an American – and he likely would have had it no other way. Kilmer was born in New Jersey before the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century and educated at Rutgers University and Columbia University, from where he earned his degree. Kilmer married and had four children. After teaching Latin for a year at Morristown High School in New Jersey, Kilmer began his career in 1909 as a dictionary editor with Funk & Wagnall's Company. In 1912, he served as the Literary Editor of *The Churchman*, an Anglican newspaper, also contributing freelance articles and poems to several other publications. On the eve of World War I, he joined the staff of the *New York Times* and subsequently converted to Catholicism.

It was at this time that Joyce Kilmer became one of America's best known and beloved poets. His masterpiece "Trees," would be recited by millions of children and it remains a cherished literary work to this day.



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*I think that I shall never see  
A poem lovely as a tree.*

*A tree whose hungry mouth is pressed  
Against the earth's sweet flowing breast.*

*A tree that looks at God all day  
And lifts her leafy arms to pray.*

*A tree that may in summer wear  
A nest of robins in her hair*

*Upon whose bosom snow has lain  
Who intimately lives with rain.*

*Poems are made by fools like me,  
But only God can make a tree.*

When the United States entered World War I, Kilmer enlisted to fight as a private and would quickly become a sergeant. He would be assigned to the dangerous job of gathering intelligence on the enemy while on patrol in "No Man's Land." While stationed in France, he also wrote for Stars and Stripes, the Army's then weekly newspaper. On July 30, 1918, Kilmer was mortally wounded by a German sniper's bullet and died later that day. He is buried in a French cemetery. But in Brooklyn, on a small triangular piece of park property, a strand of trees shelters the weary visitor. It is a modest but powerful reminder of a great American who wrote words of exquisite beauty before going off to battle, where he witnessed the horrors of modern warfare. Despite his self-deprecating tone, "Poems are made by fools like me...", Kilmer's legacy is found within all of us if we only take the time to embrace his devotional words that remind us: "Only God can make a tree."

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## **New landing craft prototype being built in WA – Australian Defence Magazine**



Construction of a prototype for a new class of military landing craft, specifically designed for the Australian Army, is underway in Western Australia.

**CLICK ON LINK BELOW**

<https://www.australiandefence.com.au/news/new-landing-craft-prototype-being-built-in-wa>

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# Life of a Door Gunner



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

P00788.006

A conversation with a veteran – This was an interview with Victor 'Vic' Smith, a Vietnam veteran who served with the RAAF No. 9 Squadron as a Huey door gunner. Despite being a dangerous job, vets who served as door gunners have been overlooked in many interviews, and we felt it was necessary for all of those who served in Vietnam to have their stories told. Other airfield defence guards like Vic volunteered to work as door gunners with the RAAF's 9 Squadron, which served in Southeast Asia from 1966 to 1975 (the end of the war) and worked as medevac (dust-off), attack/support, and 'people sniffer' (a special program for detecting enemy activity by monitoring air components from the UH-1). The importance of the squadron – such as assisting other forces, working with the SAS (and saving them from dangerous situations), and taking casualties and aircraft losses – is not to be understated. We are taking it upon ourselves to tell these veteran's stories – they deserve to be heard.



TO VIEW THE VIDEO, CLICK ON THE SITE.

<https://veteranweb.asn.au/news/life-of-a-door-gunner/>

# *Lady Be Good* (aircraft)



*Parts were strewn by the Consolidated B-24D Liberator Lady Be Good as it skidded to a halt amid the otherwise empty Libyan desert. Engines 1, 2 and 3 visible in the photograph had their propellers feathered*

## ACCIDENT

April 4, 1943  
Navigation error  
Libyan desert

## COORDINATES

26° 42' 45.7" N 24° 01' 27" E  
26° 42' 45.7" N 24° 01' 27" E

## AIRCRAFT

B-24D Liberator  
United States Army Air Forces  
Soluch Airfield  
Soluch Airfield or Malta

## CREW

9

## DIED

9 (1 initially, 8 subsequently)



*Libyan location of the Lady Be Good crash site in relation to its airbase of the 376th Bombardment Group*





*The crew of Lady Be Good. Left to right: Hatton, Toner, Hays, Woravka, Ripslinger, LaMotte, Shelley, Moore, Adams.*

### ***Lady Be Good***

a B-24D Liberator bomber that disappeared without a trace on its first combat mission during World War II. The plane, which was from 376th Bomb Group of the United States Army Air Forces (USAAF), was believed to have been lost—with its nine-man crew—in the Mediterranean Sea while returning to its base in Libya following a bombing raid on Naples on April 4, 1943. However, the wreck was accidentally discovered 710 km (440 mi) inland in the Libyan Desert by an oil exploration team from British Petroleum on November 9, 1958.

Investigations concluded that the first-time (all new) crew failed to realize they had overflown their air base in a sandstorm. After continuing to fly south into the desert for many hours, the crew bailed out when the plane's fuel was exhausted. The survivors then died in the desert trying to walk to safety. All but one of the crew's remains were recovered between February and August 1960. The wreckage of *Lady Be Good* was taken to a Libyan Air Force base after being removed from the crash site in August 1994

### **Mission**

In 1943, *Lady Be Good* was a new B-24D Liberator bomber that had just been assigned to the 514th Bomb Squadron of the United States Army Air Forces (USAAF) on March 25. The squadron was part of the 376th Bombardment Group (Heavy) based at Soluch Field in Soluch in Libya. The plane, which had the AAF serial number 41-24301, had the group identification number 64 stencil-painted on its nose. It's given name, *Lady Be Good*, was hand-painted on the starboard, front side of the forward fuselage.

*Lady Be Good's* crew were also new, as they had only arrived in Libya a week before on March 18. On April 4 they flew their first mission together, one of twenty-five B-24s assigned to bomb the harbor of Naples in a two-part late afternoon attack. The first wave of twelve B-24s was followed by a second wave of thirteen planes, including *Lady Be Good*. After the attack, all planes were expected to return to their bases in North Africa.

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## Operation

*Lady Be Good*, which was one of the last planes of the second wave to depart, took off from Soluch Field near Benghazi at 2:15 p.m. It joined the formation and continued to Naples. However, a sandstorm caused eight B-24s to return to Soluch, leaving four aircraft to continue the operation. When *Lady Be Good* arrived over Naples at 7:50 pm at 7,600 m (24,900 ft), poor visibility obscured the primary target. Two B-24s attacked their secondary target on the return trip while the other two aircraft dumped their bombs into the Mediterranean Sea to reduce weight and save fuel.

## Disappearance

*Lady Be Good* flew alone on its return trip to its home base in Libya. At 12:12 a.m. the pilot, Lt. William Hatton, radioed to say his automatic direction finder was not working and asked for a location of base. The crew apparently overflew their base, failing to see the flares fired to attract their attention. They continued southward over North Africa, deeper into the Sahara Desert, for the next two hours. At 2 a.m., as fuel became critically low, the crew parachuted to the ground. The abandoned *Lady Be Good* flew a further 26 km (16 mi) before it crash-landed into the Calanscio Sand Sea.

Largely because it was believed that the aircraft had probably crashed at sea, a subsequent search and rescue mission from Soluch Field failed to find any trace of the aircraft or its crew. The disappearance of *Lady Be Good* became a mystery.

## Wreckage: 1958

After the crew abandoned the aircraft, it continued flying southward. The mostly intact wreckage and evidence showing that one engine was still operating at the time of impact suggests that the aircraft gradually lost altitude in a very shallow descent and reached the flat, open desert floor and landed on its belly.

The first reported sighting of the crash site was on November 9, 1958, by a British oil exploration team working for British Petroleum (BP) in the northeast of Libya's Kufra District. The team contacted authorities at Wheelus Air Base, but no attempt to examine the aircraft was made as no records existed of any plane believed to have been lost in the area. However, the location of the wreckage was marked on maps to be used by oil-prospecting teams that were due to set out to explore the Calanscio Sand Sea the next year.

On February 27, 1959, British oil surveyor Gordon Bowerman and British geologists Donald Sheridan and John Martin<sup>[3]</sup> spotted the wreckage near 26°42'45.7"N 24°01'27"E, 710 km (440 mi) southeast of Soluch. This followed up the first sighting from the air on May 16, 1958, by the crew of a Silver City Airways Dakota, piloted by Captain Allan Frost,<sup>[4]</sup> and another flight on June 15. A recovery team made initial trips from Wheelus Air Base to the crash site on May 26, 1959.

Although the plane was broken into two pieces, it was immaculately preserved, with functioning machine guns, a working radio, and some supplies of food and water. A thermos of tea was found to be drinkable. No human remains were found on board the aircraft nor in the surrounding crash site, nor were parachutes found.

Most of the evidence from the wreckage indicated that the men had bailed out. However, the log book of the navigator 2nd Lt Dp "Deep" Hays,<sup>[6]</sup> which was still on board, made no mention of the aircraft's movements after the crew commenced their return leg from Naples. Hays had been on his first combat mission.



*The wreckage of the Lady Be Good in 1958*

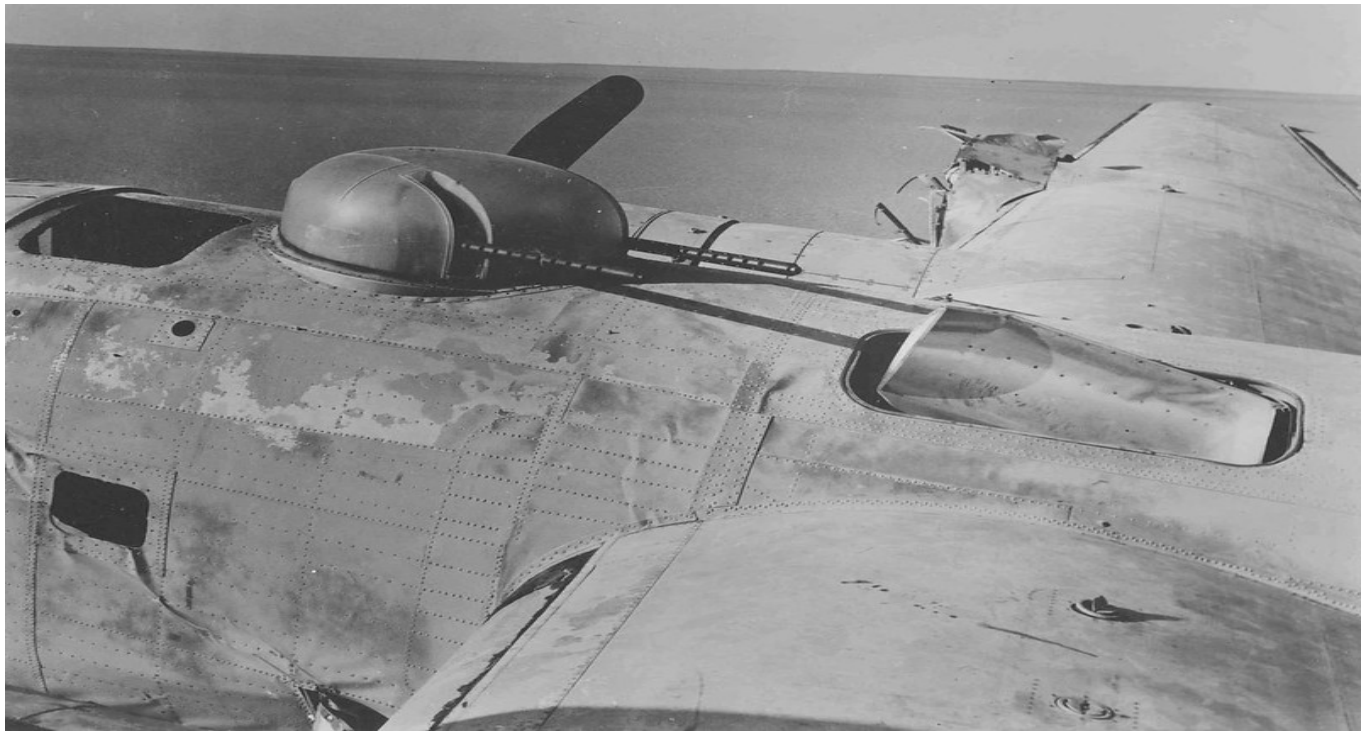


*Intact cockpit and nose with machine guns still in place*



*Tail turret of the B-24D Liberator*





*Top turret and center fuselage*

### Crew remains: 1960.

In February 1960, the United States Army conducted a formal search of the area for the remains of the crew.<sup>[7]</sup> Five bodies – those of Hatton, 2nd Lt. Robert F. Toner, Hays, T/S Robert E. LaMotte and S/Sgt Samuel E. Adams – were found on February 11. The team concluded that other bodies were likely buried beneath sand dunes after finding evidence that at least three of the surviving crew members had continued walking northward.

With the news that five bodies had been recovered, the US Air Force and US Army started an expanded search called Operation Climax in May 1960. The joint operation used a USAF C-130 cargo plane and two Army Bell H-13 helicopters. However, it was a British Petroleum exploration crew that found the remains of S/Sgt Guy E. Shelley, on May 12, 1960, 38 km (24 mi) northwest of the recovered five bodies. A US Army helicopter found the body of T/Sgt Harold J. Ripslinger on May 17, 1960, located 42 km (26 mi) northwest of Shelley's body, over 320 km (200 mi) from the crash site, but still 160 km (99 mi) from Soluch airbase.<sup>[1]</sup> These two bodies were the only ones found during Operation Climax. Another British Petroleum oil exploration crew discovered the remains of 2nd Lt John S. Woravka in August 1960. His body was then recovered by the US Air Force.

The remains of one of the air gunners, S/Sgt Vernon L. Moore, have never been officially found. However, his remains may have been recovered and buried by a desert patrol of the British Army in 1953. As they were unaware that any Allied air crews were missing in the area, the human remains were recorded but then buried without further investigation.<sup>1</sup>

Subsequent examinations of the remains and personal items showed that eight of the nine airmen managed to parachute safely down to the desert from the aircraft. They then located each other by firing their revolvers and signal flares into the air.

However, one crew member, Woravka (the bombardier) did not rendezvous with the others. The configuration of the parachute found with his body suggested that it did not fully open, and that Woravka died as a result of an overly rapid descent.

A diary, recovered from the pocket of co-pilot Robert Toner, recorded the crew's suffering on the walk northward. It indicated that none of the men were aware they had been flying over land when they bailed out, or that they were 400 miles (640 km) inland. It has been speculated that the dark and empty desert floor may have resembled open sea.

The diary also says the group survived for eight days in the desert, with only a single canteen of water to share. After walking 130 km (81 mi) from the crash site, the location of the remains of the five airmen shows they had waited behind while the other three (Guy Shelley, "Rip" Ripslinger and Vernon Moore) set off north, to try to find help. The body of S/Sgt Shelley was found 32 km (20 mi) away while 43 km (27 mi) further on were the remains of T/Sgt Ripslinger. The crew members who survived the descent had died while walking northward, because they believed they were close to the Mediterranean coast. As they walked, the group left behind footwear, parachute scraps, Mae West vests and other items as markers to show searchers their path.

### ***The official report in the American Graves Registration Service states:***

The aircraft flew on a 150-degree course toward Benina Airfield. The craft radioed for a directional reading from the HF/DF station at Benina and received a reading of 330 degrees from Benina. The actions of the pilot in flying 440 miles [710 km] into the desert, however, indicate the navigator probably took a reciprocal reading off the back of the radio directional loop antenna from a position beyond and south of Benina but 'on course'. The pilot flew into the desert, thinking he was still over the Mediterranean and on his way to Benina.<sup>[1]</sup>

The navigator on the *Lady Be Good* thought he was flying on a direct path from Naples to Benghazi. But the base's radio direction finder only had a single loop antenna. As the plane's direction finder could not distinguish between a signal in front or behind the aircraft, there was no way to identify reciprocal readings. The same bearing would be returned whether the plane was heading inbound from the Mediterranean or outbound inland.

The crew might have survived if they had known their actual location. If they had headed south the same distance they walked north, the group might have reached the oasis of Wadi Zighen. After the crew bailed out *Lady Be Good* continued flying south for 26 km (16 mi) before coming to land, and there was also a chance that the crew might have found the aircraft's relatively intact wreckage, with its meager water and food supplies. The aircraft's working radio could have been used to call for help.

### **Parts and crew items**

After the *Lady Be Good* was identified, some parts of the plane were returned to the United States for evaluation while the rest of the wreckage remained. In August 1994, the remains of the craft were recovered by a team led by Dr. Fadel Ali Mohamed and taken to a Libyan military base in Tobruk for safekeeping. They are now stored at Jamal Abdelnasser Air Force Base, Libya.

The U.S. Army Quartermaster Museum at Fort Lee, Virginia has a collection of personal items, such as watches, silk survival maps, and flight clothing from the crew members who were recovered. Several of these items are on display. An altimeter and manifold pressure gauge were salvaged from the plane in 1963 by Airman Second Class Ron Pike and are on display at the March Field Air Museum near Riverside, CA. A Royal Air Force team visited the site in 1968 and hauled away components including an engine (later donated to the US Air Force) for evaluation by the McDonnell Douglas company.

After some parts were salvaged from the *Lady Be Good* and technically evaluated, they were reused in other planes belonging to the American military. However, some planes that received these spares developed unexpected problems. A C-54, which had several autosyn transmitters from the *Lady Be Good* installed, had to throw cargo overboard to land safely because of propeller difficulties. A C-47 that received a radio receiver crashed into the Mediterranean. A U.S. Army de Havilland Canada DHC-3 Otter with an armrest from the bomber crashed in the Gulf of Sidra. Only a few traces of the plane washed ashore and one of these was the armrest from the *Lady Be Good*.

Over the years pieces of the plane were stripped by souvenir hunters. Today, parts can be seen at the National Museum of the United States Air Force. A propeller can be seen in front of the village hall in Lake Linden, the home of Robert E. LaMotte.





*A damaged propeller from the Lady Be Good displayed in Lake Linden, Michigan.*

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#### Memorial

A stained-glass window in the chapel at Wheelus Air Base commemorates *Lady Be Good* and her crew.





# WVCG CLUB MEMBERS NEW RESTORATION PROJECT

WVCG President Kevin TIPLER is well known for his excellent Jeep restorations and has proven their worth on his regular outback adventures, this says a lot for his work and prepared to take them on these trips thereby guaranteeing his workmanship, He has now taken on different projects and shows his capabilities and work ethics. See his ground up work done on 3 tractors and civilian vehicle. He currently has another project, restoring a 1969 Volkswagen Beetle, this project will commence after his next Jeep Bush Bash adventure.







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# NATIONAL SERVICEMEN'S DAY



Today, on National Servicemen's Day, Australia acknowledges the contribution of thousands of our countrymen, also known as Nashos.

Minister for Veterans' Affairs and Defence Personnel Matt Keogh said more than 280,000 Australians served in National Service schemes between 1951 and 1972.

"On 14 February we recognise the contributions of Nashos to our armed services and the important role that they played in serving our country in the 1950s, 60s and 70s," Minister Keogh said.

"Nashos served within Australia and some were also deployed to locations including Borneo, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea and Vietnam and the waters off the Korean peninsula.

"The first National Service scheme, from 1951-59 saw men from across the country called up for training in the Royal Australian Navy, the Australian Army and the Royal Australian Air Force. More than 220,000 served during this period, in many cases putting aside their careers and lives to serve their country.

"The second National Service scheme took place from 1965-1972 and saw more than 60,000 young men called up.

"More than 15,300 Nashos served in the Vietnam War, joining regular army units and becoming part of the Australian Army for the duration of the war. Some 200 lost their lives in Vietnam. One hundred Nashos also served in Borneo, with two losing their lives while deployed.

"Whether their service included deployment overseas, or service within Australia, each and every national serviceman contributed to the defence of our nation and should be proud of their service."

All national servicemen, even if they weren't deployed, are entitled to a White Card from the Department of Veterans' Affairs that includes mental health support.

"The Australian Government is committed to supporting our veterans and families, ensuring they receive all the services they are entitled to," Minister Keogh said.

"I encourage all Australians to pause for a moment today and remember the service of our Nashos and their role in Australia's armed forces."

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# Graduation day for Ukrainian recruits



*FEBRUARY 27, 2023. By Captain Annie Richardson*

On February 24, 2022, Russia invaded Ukraine. On the anniversary of the full-scale invasion, about 200 Armed Forces of Ukraine (AFU) recruits marched out from the UK-led and based training program under the instruction of the first Australian contingent deployed on Operation Kudu.

The program, which has seen nine partner nations train more than 10,000 Ukrainians, has the recruits undergo intensive combat training to rapidly learn the foundations of warfighting, using realistic and relevant scenarios designed to mimic the conditions in Ukraine.

This rotation of the volunteer force has been taught weapons handling and firing, wooded and urban fighting, trench warfare and medical survival skills by Australian instructors – who arrived in January this year.

Lined up in a hollow square on the parade ground of the camp they have been calling home, the trainees awaited the formal acknowledgement of the conclusion of their training, their graduation from civilian to soldier.

The contingent padre opened the graduation ceremony, recognising the sombre date with a prayer and a minute's silence to reflect on the human suffering and tragedy of the conflict. Following the silence, the Commander of the Australian Contingent on Operation Kudu, Major Gregory Sergeant, acknowledged the graduates' dedication and the spirit they displayed throughout the course.

"Some of this training will be close to what many of you will soon be facing, or have already faced at home," Major Sergeant said.

"You have had to learn very quickly, covering multiple topics to make you efficient soldiers, and you have all impressed the training team with your dedication and motivation."

"Our involvement is only a small part of your journey, but we take great pride in that small part we play.

"Look after yourselves, your friends and your families. Good luck and good soldiering."

A Ukrainian National Support Element (NSE) Commander expressed his pride to the new graduates.

"It is a coincidence that you are graduating this day. Throughout this war we haven't been acknowledging holidays or national days. Until the war is over, all our days are the same," the NSE Commander said.

"You have done a lot of training in a short period. You have undergone different courses and drills, all of which will motivate you to continue the fighting.

"I am proud of you. You have worked very hard; your progress has been obvious and you have done very well."

One graduating recruit, speaking in a mix of English and Ukrainian, humbly offered his appreciation for the course and his section commanders.

"Training here is very intense and, with regard to the Australian instructors, they work with love," he said.

"They understand whom and for what they are teaching."

The Ukrainian NSE Commander also expressed his hope and gratitude to the Australian instructors.

"Many of us have already seen combat during the Russo-Ukraine war but, no less, we have been so impressed by the level of knowledge from the Australian instructors who came here," he said.

"We thank you for your motivation to come to help our soldiers and pass on your knowledge."

"It's important that we continue to work together. Australia and Ukraine share common values like freedom – which we are fighting for right now."

The now privates, or 'soldats', will return to Ukraine to join their units and commence their new roles in their home country.

Australian soldiers from the 1st Brigade are deployed to the United Kingdom on ADF Operation Kudu, joining partner nations for the UK-led and based training program for Ukrainian recruits.

The contingent of up to 70 personnel is providing critical training to Ukrainian Armed Forces recruits to support their national defence following Russia's illegal invasion.

Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister Richard Marles visited Operation Kudu earlier this month and said he was proud of the quality of training being provided to the recruits.

"Our men and women of the Australian Defence Force, alongside our partner forces, should be proud of their efforts to provide a training program that will help the AFU soldiers who they have trained," Mr Marles said.

"This training is critical and will help the Ukrainian soldiers to continue protecting their country and bring an end this conflict."

No Australians will enter Ukraine as part of this program.





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# ✧Vietnam War: Coming South to Phuoc Tuy by Land, Sea – and Air”



Hi fellow veterans,

As you are aware, during the Vietnam War, 1 ATF elements fought against both Viet Cong and North Vietnamese Army (NVA) troops – with 1 ATF's principal engagements against North Vietnamese "formations/units" being at Long Tan in August 1966 – ie the D605 NVA Battalion was the third company of the 275th VC Regiment at that Battle; against elements of the 141st NVA Regiment and the 165th NVA Regiment at Coral/Balmoral in May 1968; and 1 ATF later fought against elements of the 33rd NVA Regiment at both the battles of Binh Ba (June 1969) and Nui Le (September 1971). Some of the soldiers and cadre in those NVA formations/units were born in the South – but had "regrouped" to the North and then – years later, returned to fight in the South.

D440 VC Battalion – which also fought against 1 ATF elements in Phuoc Tuy, was originally an NVA unit (arriving in Long Khanh Province in July 1967).

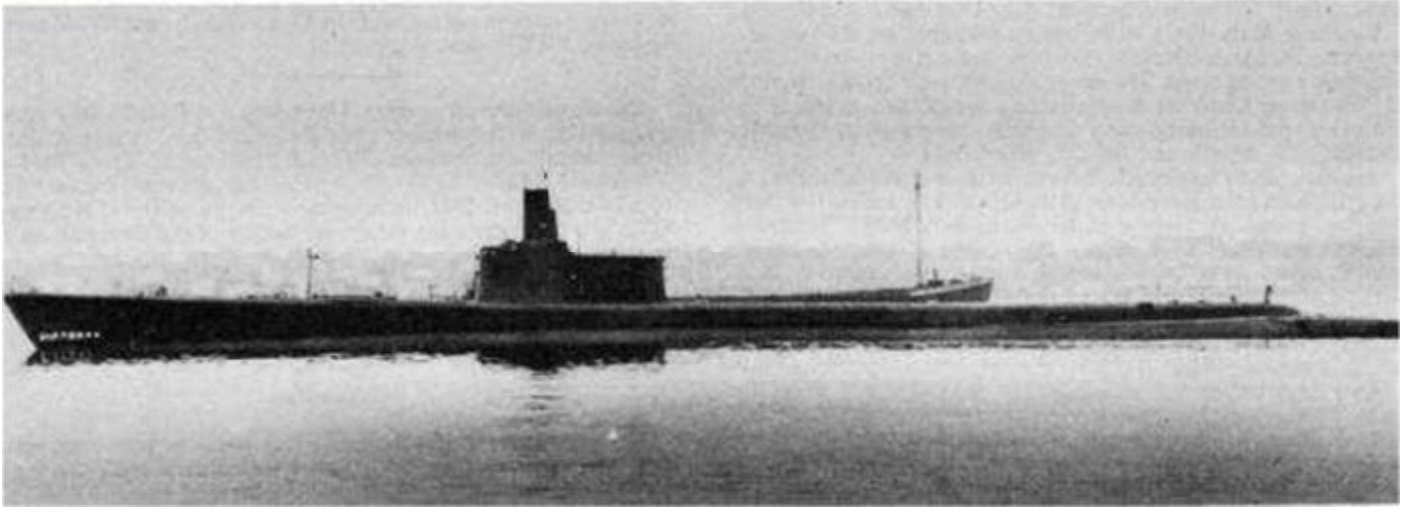
How did these NVA troops come south? I've penned a short five-page page Note titled: "Vietnam War: Coming South – by Land, Sea – and Air", with maps and some photographs. If you would like a complimentary – ie free, copy then email me at; [ernestchris@tpg.com.au](mailto:ernestchris@tpg.com.au) and I'll send you a PDF copy as an email attachment.

Best wishes,

Ernie Chamberlain

[ernestchris@tpg.com.au](mailto:ernestchris@tpg.com.au)

# American submarine missing in World War II is found off of Japan's coast



*The USS Albacore is pictured in Groton, Conn., on May 9, 1942.*

## Naval History and Heritage Command

The wreckage of a U.S. submarine from World War II was found off the coast of Hokkaido in northern Japan — after disappearing almost 80 years ago.

The USS Albacore, credited with sinking at least 10 enemy vessels during the war, was found by the University of Tokyo's Tamaki Ura and positively identified by the Naval History and Heritage Command, the Navy said on Thursday.

Albacore was long assumed to be lost forever. According to Japanese records, the submarine, with a crew of 85 men on board, likely struck a mine just off the shore of Hokkaido on Nov. 7, 1944, the NHHC said.

"Most importantly, the wreck represents the final resting place of Sailors that gave their life in defence of the nation and should be respected by all parties as a war grave," read the Navy's press release.

## HISTORY

Wreck's Identification 95 Years After Ship's Disappearance Puts Theories to Rest

The NHHC said its archaeologists used underwater imagery provided by Ura's team to confirm the remains were those of the Albacore. Data from the Japan Center for Asian Historical Records mentioning the loss of an American submarine steered Ura to the site of the wreckage. Ura's team used data collected from a remotely operated vehicle to verify the historical records.

Six of the Albacore's enemy sinkings were enemy combat ships, making the vessel one of World War II's top combat submarines, according to the Navy.

Wreck Site Identified as World War II Submarine USS Albacore (SS 218) 16 February 2023. From Petty Officer 1st Class Abigayle Lutz, Naval History and Heritage Command.

## RSS

NHHC's Underwater Archaeology Branch (UAB) used information and imagery provided by Dr. Tamaki Ura, from the University of Tokyo, to confirm the identity of Albacore, which was lost at sea Nov. 7, 1944. "As the final resting place for Sailors who gave their life in defence of our nation, we sincerely thank and congratulate Dr. Ura and his team for their efforts in locating the wreck of Albacore," said NHHC Director Samuel J. Cox, U.S. Navy rear admiral (retired). "It is through their hard work and continued collaboration that we could confirm Albacore's identity after being lost at sea for over 70 years."



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WASHINGTON - Naval History and Heritage Command (NHHC) confirmed the identity of a wreck site off the coast of Hokkaido, Japan, as USS Albacore (SS 218) Feb. 16.



Japanese records originating from the Japan Center for Asian Historical Records (JACAR) covering the loss of an American submarine on Nov. 7, 1944, guided Dr. Ura's missions. The location mentioned in the records matched a separate ongoing effort by UAB volunteers to establish the location of the shipwreck.

Dr. Ura's team collected data using a Remotely Operated Vehicle to confirm the historical data. Strong currents, marine growth, and poor visibility on site made it challenging to fully document the wreck or obtain comprehensive images. However, several key features of a late 1944 Gato-class submarine were identified in the video.

Indications of documented modifications made to Albacore prior to her final patrol such as the presence of an SJ Radar dish and mast, a row of vent holes along the top of the superstructure, and the absence of steel plates along the upper edge of the fairwater allowed UAB to confirm the wreck site finding as Albacore..

The wreck of Albacore is a U.S. sunken military craft protected by U.S. law and under the jurisdiction of NHHC. While non-intrusive activities, such as remote sensing documentation, on U.S. Navy sunken military craft is allowed, any intrusive or potentially intrusive activities must be coordinated with NHHC and if appropriate, authorized through a relevant permitting program. Most importantly, the wreck represents the final resting place of Sailors that gave their life in defence of the nation and should be respected by all parties as a war grave.

Albacore was constructed by the Electric Boat Company in Groton, CT and commissioned on June 1, 1942. Before being lost in 1944, she conducted 11 war patrols and is credited with 10 confirmed enemy vessel sinkings, with possibly another three not yet confirmed. Albacore earned nine battle stars and four Presidential Unit Citations during her career. Six of the ten enemy sinkings were enemy combatant ships, ranking her as one of the most successful submarines against enemy combatants during World War II.

NHHC, located at the Washington Navy Yard, is responsible for preserving, analysing, and disseminating U.S. naval history and heritage.

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It provides the knowledge foundation for the Navy by maintaining historically relevant resources and products that reflect the Navy's unique and enduring contributions through our nation's history and supports the fleet by assisting with and delivering professional research, analysis, and interpretive services. NHHC comprises many activities, including the Navy Department Library, the Navy Operational Archives, the Navy art and artifact collections, underwater archaeology, Navy histories, 10 museums, USS Constitution repair facility, and the historic ship Nautilus.

### Albacore (SS 218)



*Albacore* with Lieutenant Commander H.R. Rimmer in command, left Pearl Harbor on 24 October 1944, topped off with fuel at Midway on 28 October, and departed there for her eleventh patrol the same day, never to be heard from again. Her area was northeast of Honshu and south of Hokkaido, and because of the danger of mine-able waters, she was ordered to stay outside of waters less than 100 fathoms deep.

She was to depart her area at sunset on 5 December 1944, and was expected at Midway about 12 December. When she had not been seen nor heard from by 21 December despite the sharpest of lookouts for her, she was reported as presumed lost.

Enemy information available now indicates that *Albacore* perished by hitting a mine. The explosion occurred on 7 November 1944, in latitude 41°-49'N, longitude 141°-11'E while *Albacore* was submerged and was witnessed by an enemy patrol craft. The craft reports having seen much heavy oil and bubbles, cork, bedding, and various provisions after the explosion.

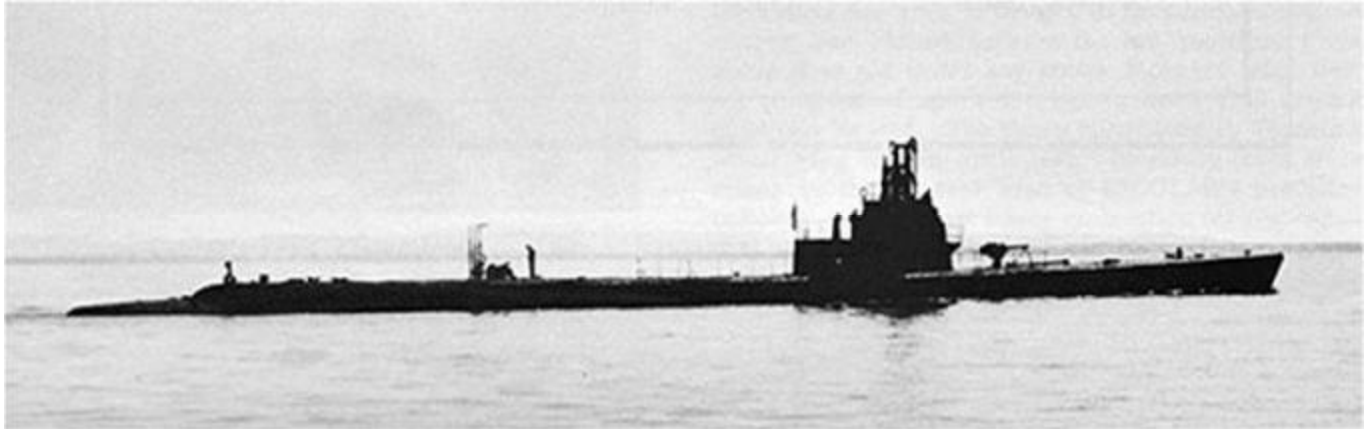
Prior to her loss, *Albacore* had been a very successful submarine, especially in her engagements with Japanese combat vessels. Her record of enemy combatant ships sunk is the best of any United States submarine. She sank a total of 13 ships, totalling 74,100 tons, and damaged five, for 29,400 tons, during her first ten patrols. She began her series of patrols with one at Truk in September 1942, damaging two freighters and a tanker. On her second patrol, near New Britain, *Albacore* sank a transport, and, on 18 December 1942, the Japanese light cruiser *Tenryu*. Her third patrol was in the Bismarck Archipelago; *Albacore* sank an escort vessel and a destroyer. The latter was *Oshio* sunk near the New Guinea coast on 20 February 1943. During her fourth patrol, again in the Bismarck-Solomons-area, *Albacore* was able to inflict no damage on the enemy herself, but she sent contact reports which enabled *Grayback* to sink several enemy ships. In her fifth patrol, *Albacore* covered the same area and damaged a transport. She patrolled the Truk area on her sixth war run, sinking one freighter, and damaging another.

*Albacore*'s seventh and eighth war patrols were both in the area north of the Bismarck Archipelago during the period from mid-October 1943 to the end of February 1944. In her seventh patrol she sank a freighter and in her eighth a transport. In addition, during her eighth patrol on 14 January, *Albacore* sank the Japanese destroyer *Sazami*.

*Albacore* was ordered to patrol west of the Marianas and in the Palau area during the Allied invasion of these places in June 1944. On 19 June she intercepted a Japanese task force proceeding from Tawi Tawi anchorage, in the Sulu Archipelago, toward Saipan to engage our surface forces in the first Battle of the Philippine Sea. *Albacore* torpedoed and sank the aircraft carrier *Taiho*. In addition, she sank a small freighter on this ninth patrol.



*Albacore* conducted her tenth patrol near the southern coast of Shikoku, Japan. Here she sank a medium freighter, a medium tanker, and a large patrol craft. *Albacore* has been awarded the Presidential Unit Citation for her second, third, eighth and ninth patrols, the ones in which she sank enemy combatant vessels.



*USS Albacore (SS-218) Getting Underway.*

## Albacore II (SS-218) 1942-1945

The first *Albacore* retained her former name; the second, SS-218, was named for the "large pelagic mackerel-type fish having long pectoral fins."

(SS-218: displacement 1,526 (surfaced), 2,424 (submerged); length 311'9"; beam 27'3"; draft 19'3"; speed 20.25 knots (surfaced), 8.75 knots (submerged); complement 60; armament 1 3-inch, 2 .50 calibre machine guns, 2 .30 calibre machine guns, 10 21-inch torpedo tubes; class *Gato*)

The second *Albacore* (SS-218) was laid down on 21 April 1941 at Groton, Conn., by the Electric Boat Co.; launched on 17 February 1942; sponsored by Mrs. Marie Elise Cutts, the wife of Capt. Elwin F. Cutts, the commanding officer of the Submarine Base, New London, Conn.; and commissioned on 1 June 1942, Lt. Cmdr. Richard C. Lake in command.

Following shakedown, the submarine proceeded via the Panama Canal to Pearl Harbor and, from that base on 28 August 1942, began her first war patrol which took her to waters of the north and northeast pass through the coral reef which surrounds Truk. On 13 September, *Albacore* sighted two cargo vessels sailing in a column formation and prepared for her first combat action. Lake made a submerged approach and fired three torpedoes at the leading ship and two at the second. One or possibly two torpedoes hit on the first ship; but none struck the second. *Albacore* claimed to have damaged the leading vessel.

Her next enemy contact came on 1 October 1942 when the submarine made a night surface attack on a Japanese tanker. She expended seven torpedoes and scored two hits. Although the tanker appeared to be low in the water, she was still able to leave the scene under her own power. On 9 October, *Albacore* spotted a *Zuikaku*-class carrier escorted by a heavy cruiser and a destroyer but underwent depth chargings by the escorts and was forced to break off her pursuit. The next day, she attacked a freighter. One torpedo hit the mark; and, 12 minutes after firing, the sound of two heavy explosions caused the submarine's crew to presume that they had sunk the vessel.

Beginning at mid-morning on 11 October 1942 *Albacore* underwent a series of depth chargings, all of which exploded close aboard. At 1548, the conning officer finally spotted the Japanese attackers, two submarine chasers and an airplane. A third ship equipped with sound gear joined the group and continued the hunt. The ships crisscrossed over *Albacore* close enough for propeller noise to reverberate throughout the submarine and compelled her to proceed under her most silent running conditions. All auxiliary systems were secured, off-duty men remained in their bunks, and all watch personnel were barefoot. After a chase of nearly seven hours, the Japanese ships disappeared astern, and *Albacore* then surfaced to clear the immediate area. On 12 October, *Albacore* headed for Midway. Although she had had several opportunities to score during the patrol, *Albacore* was not credited with any damage to Japanese shipping. The submarine arrived at Midway on 20 October and commenced a refit.

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With her refurbishing completed and a new 20-millimeter gun installed, *Albacore* sailed on 11 November 1942 for her second patrol. Her assigned areas were the St. George's Channel, New Britain; along the east coast of New Guinea to Vitiaz Strait; and the Dallman Pass off Madang harbor, New Guinea. On 24 November, the submarine spotted a convoy of two cargo vessels and their escorts. *Albacore* maneuvered into position and fired two stern tubes, but neither torpedo found its target. Two days later, on 26 November, *Albacore* herself became the quarry. Two Japanese destroyers' depth charged her, and the explosions caused numerous small leaks around the cable packing glands in the pressure hull. After a two-hour chase, the Japanese retired; and *Albacore* shifted her patrol area to Vitiaz Strait. Another golden opportunity arose on 13 December, when *Albacore* found three Japanese destroyers. She released a three-torpedo spread but again was unsuccessful. On 18 December, *Albacore* was stationed in the area of Madang, New Guinea. The submarine discovered what seemed to be a transport and a destroyer. *Albacore* torpedoed the "transport," and it exploded in a mass of flames and sank. *Albacore* had in fact sunk the light cruiser *Tenryu*, a 3,300-ton vessel and the second Japanese cruiser sunk by a U.S. submarine in World War II. *Albacore* put into port at Brisbane, Australia, on 30 December 1942.

After an overhaul of two of her main engines, *Albacore* got underway on 20 January 1943 to begin her third patrol. Off the north coast of New Guinea, she spotted 11 targets in as many days. The first group, encountered on 20 February, consisted of a destroyer and a frigate escorting a minelayer. *Albacore* fired 10 torpedoes and believed she had sunk the destroyer and damaged the frigate. In the following days, *Albacore* attacked one tanker, several freighters, and another destroyer. Of eight torpedoes expended during these actions, all missed their targets. When *Albacore* ended her patrol at Brisbane on 11 March, she was credited with sinking one destroyer and a frigate for a total of 2,250 tons lost.

*Albacore* was briefly drydocked for repairs and underwent refresher training before sailing for a fourth patrol on 6 April 1943. This time, her area was around the Solomon and Bismarck Islands and off the north coast of New Guinea. While she sighted several convoys, she recorded no hits. *Albacore* returned to Brisbane on 26 May. While *Albacore* was being refitted at that port, Lt. Cmdr. Oscar E. Hagberg relieved Lt. Cmdr. Lake in command of the submarine on 12 June.

On 16 June 1943, *Albacore* was underway for her fifth patrol and waters surrounding the Bismarck and Solomon Islands. During this patrol, she sighted three separate convoys and attacked two. *Albacore* claimed to have damaged a transport on 19 July, but the submarine failed to sink any vessels. *Albacore* arrived back at Brisbane and began a refit alongside *Fulton* (AS-11).

On 23 August 1943, *Albacore* left to patrol roughly the same area as on her previous assignment. She spotted a Japanese submarine on 31 August but was unable to press home an attack. On 4 September, she encountered a two-ship convoy protected by two escorts and sank one of the ships, *Heijo Maru*, with three torpedo hits made shortly after the initial contact. The submarine then pursued the other vessel for the next two days but was able only to inflict minor hull damage on her target. She terminated her patrol at Brisbane on 26 September.

*Albacore*'s seventh patrol began on 12 October 1943. She fired six torpedoes at a large merchant ship on 25 October but recorded no hits. On 6 November, she received a report of a convoy, which had been spotted by *Steelhead* (SS-280) and began to search for it. On the 8th, the submarine found the convoy and started to track it. However, a plane from the 5th Air Force bombed her and caused her to lose contact with the Japanese ships. The submarine sustained no damage from this attack. *Albacore* was again bombed by an American aircraft on 10 November. This time, the submarine suffered considerable damage. All auxiliary power was knocked out, and the submarine was plunged into total darkness. The main induction valve went under before it was shut and began filling up with water. *Albacore* plunged to a depth of 450 feet before her dive was checked. For the next two and one-half hours, she bounced between 30 feet and 400 feet while at various attitudes. She finally managed to return to the surface with her trim almost restored. The submarine resubmerged, and it was decided to continue the patrol while simultaneously making necessary repairs.



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Following this ordeal, *Albacore* received orders to locate and attack the light cruiser *Agano*, which had been hit and damaged by *Scamp* (SS-277). *Albacore* found *Agano* on 12 November 1943 and tried to attack, but Japanese destroyers held the submarine down with a four-hour depth charge barrage. On her return to Brisbane on 5 December, Lt. Cmdr. James W. Blanchard relieved Hagberg of command.

*Albacore* departed Australia on the day after Christmas of 1943 to patrol north of the Bismarck's. She spotted her first target on 12 January 1944 and sank cargo vessel *Choko Maru* with two separate torpedo attacks. Two days later, she blew up the destroyer *Sazanami* with four shots from her stern tubes. Following more than a fortnight of uneventful patrolling, the submarine headed home. She made brief fuel stops at Tulagi and Midway before reaching Pearl Harbor on 22 February. After three days of voyage repairs, *Albacore* continued to the Mare Island Navy Yard, Vallejo, Calif., for overhaul.

*Albacore* left Mare Island on 5 May 1944 and held training exercises with *Shad* (SS-235) in route to Hawaii. The submarine reached Pearl Harbor on 13 May and spent the next two weeks on final repairs and training. *Albacore* began her ninth patrol on 29 May and was assigned waters west of the Marianas and around the Palaus. During the next few days, she made only one contact, a Japanese convoy which she encountered on 11 June. However, before the submarine could maneuver into attack position, a Japanese aircraft forced her to dive and lose contact.

On the morning of the 18th, two days after U.S. forces began landing on Saipan, *Albacore* shifted from her position west of the Marianas to a new location 100 miles further south. Admiral Chester W. Nimitz had ordered this move in the hope of enabling the submarine to intercept a Japanese task force under Admiral Ozawa Jisaburo reportedly steaming from Tawi-Tawi toward Saipan. At about 0800 the next morning,

19 June, *Albacore* raised her periscope and found herself during Ozawa's main carrier group. Blanchard allowed one Japanese carrier to pass unharmed and selected a second one for his target. He fired six bow tubes. Three Japanese destroyers immediately depth-charged *Albacore*. While the submarine was diving to escape, her crew heard one solid torpedo explosion. About that same time, 25 depth charges began raining down on the submarine. Then Blanchard heard "a distant and persistent explosion of great force" followed by another.

One of the torpedoes had hit Ozawa's flagship, the 31,000-ton carrier *Taiho*, the newest and largest floating air base in the Japanese fleet. The explosion jammed the enemy ship's forward aircraft elevator, and filled its pit with gasoline, water, and aviation fuel. However, no fire erupted, and the flight deck was unharmed. Ozawa was unconcerned by the hit and launched two more waves of aircraft. Meanwhile, a novice took over the damage control responsibilities. He believed that the best way to handle gasoline fumes was to open the ship's ventilation system and let them disperse throughout the ship. This action turned the ship into a floating time bomb. At 1330, a tremendous explosion jolted *Taiho* and blew out the sides of the carrier. *Taiho* began to settle in the water and was clearly doomed. Although Admiral Ozawa wanted to go down with the ship, his staff persuaded him to transfer to the heavy cruiser *Haguro*. After Ozawa left, *Taiho* was torn by a second explosion and sank stern first, carrying down 1,650 officers and men.

No one on board *Albacore* thought *Taiho* had sunk. Blanchard was angry for "missing a golden opportunity." After this action, *Albacore* was assigned lifeguard duty for planes striking Yap and Ulithi. On 2 July 1944, *Albacore* shifted over to intercept traffic between Yap and the Palaus. The submarine spotted a wooden, inter-island steamer loaded with Japanese civilians. Blanchard decided on a surface gun attack. After ensuring the ship was afire, *Albacore* dived to avoid an airplane. The submarine surfaced soon thereafter and picked up five survivors.

*Albacore* put into Majuro on 15 July 1944. She was praised for an aggressive patrol and received credit for damaging a *Shokaku*-class carrier. American codebreakers lost track of *Taiho* after the Battle of the Philippine Sea and, while puzzled, did not realize that she had gone down. After confirmation finally had been obtained, Blanchard was awarded a Navy Cross.

After a refit alongside *Bushnell* (AS-15), the submarine began her 10th patrol on 8 August 1944. Her assignment was the Bungo Suido-Kii Suido area; and, during this period, *Albacore* was credited with sinking two Japanese vessels, a cargo ship and a submarine chaser. The patrol ended at Pearl Harbor on 25 September, where, on 3 October 1944, Lt. Cmdr. Hugh R. Rimmer relieved Lt. Cmdr. Blanchard.

*Albacore* left Pearl Harbor on 24 October 1944, topped off her fuel tanks at Midway on 28 October, and was never heard from again. According to Japanese records captured after the war, a submarine assumed to be *Albacore* struck a mine very close to the shore off north-eastern Hokkaido on 7 November. A Japanese patrol boat witnessed the explosion of a submerged submarine and saw a great deal of heavy oil, cork, bedding, and food supplies rise to the surface. On 21 December 1944, *Albacore* was assumed to have been lost. Her name was stricken from the Navy list on 30 March 1945.

Over the course of her brief career, *Albacore* sank ten confirmed enemy vessels, and possibly another three not yet confirmed. *Albacore* received the Presidential Unit Citation for her second, third, eighth, and ninth patrols and nine battle stars for her service during World War II. Comprehensive History in Preparation, 21 February 2023



## FOR SALE LANDROVER CANVAS ROOF



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# The search for a WWII lost LRDG patrol in Tunisia

Searching for missing vehicles that had set out to spy on Rommel's Mareth Line defences in the Tunisian desert in WWII.





## The search for a WWII lost patrol in Tunisia

We called it the 'berm.' There wasn't really any other name for the slightly eerie and bizarre wall of sand that dominated our view to the west. This intimidating feature, standing over 100 m high, stretched as far as the eye could see north and south. According to our WWII era maps the berm hasn't moved in over 70 years. Beyond lies hundreds of miles of a vast sand sea, the Grand Erg Orientale. As we wandered about our base camp, eyes were often drawn to the mysterious.

We had come to Tunisia to search for the missing WWII vehicles of the 'lost patrol,' a joint Popski's Private Army (PPA) and Long Range Desert Group (LRDG) patrol that set out from Libya in the closing months of the North African campaign to scout for information on Rommel's Mareth Line defences. The patrol reached the berm on January 24, 1943, and set up a hide in a wadi at its base. Four Jeeps then set off to scout the area around Matmata to the north-east while seven LRDG and PPA trucks remained in the hideout. Unfortunately, the Germans got wind of the patrol and aircraft discovered the vehicles, destroying them with numerous strafing runs. The crews, who had hidden in the dunes, were forced to walk across the desert towards Tozeur, 200 miles away, and were rescued by the American First Army.

As far as our research could determine, there was no record suggesting the wrecks had been recovered. Led by our historian and Fellow of the Royal Geographic Society, Alan Hall, we searched the War Office records and other accounts of travellers to the region but could find no records indicating the fate of the vehicles. As far as we could tell, their remains might just be laying there, abandoned, in a wadi beneath the unmoving wall of sand that was the berm.

Our group set off from the UK on October 27, 2019, in four Land Rovers, including three ex-military 110s and a modified Lightweight. By ferry and road we reached Tunis on October 31. After a brief pause the expedition set off for the desert town of Douz, which sits as a gateway to the Grand Erg beyond. Parked up in the Camping Desert Club run by the well



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known Sophie and her partner Abdallah, the vehicle crews set about stripping down the trucks into desert trim. Softops, doors or door tops, windscreens, as well as extra kit, were all collected to go into storage while water jerries and fuel tanks were filled. Teams walked into the local souk to load up on fresh vegetables, bread and meat. Radios and satellite tracking systems were tested and maps studied.

The expedition had been organised by Popski's Private Expeditions, an informal group who share a love of open-top desert travel and whose name obviously pays homage to one of the most unique special forces units of WWII, Popski's Private Army. After years of Moroccan trips, we were looking for something new and in late 2018 it occurred to us that there might just be long-lost vehicles waiting to be discovered in Tunisia. Research started early in 2019 with the study of several WWII-era accounts from the PPA and LRDG as well as old War Office maps dated 1941. The PPA commanding officer, Major Vladamir Peniakoff, known to all as Popski, left detailed accounts of where the vehicles had been hidden. His 2iC, Captain Bob Yunnie, also described the location in his wartime account. Slowly, as the evidence began to accumulate, a plan was hatched to undertake an expedition in search of the lost patrol vehicles.

As the main PPE organiser, I set about recruiting a team that included not only our historian Alan, but other ex-military desert veterans, a paramedic, former search and rescue pilot and even a classic race car driver. The PPE already had three desert-equipped Land Rovers but unfortunately our 1990 Defender 90 needed a major rebuild, so had to sit this one out. Our main workhorse, Tembo the 110, was prepped for the venture and was joined by our latest addition to the fleet, Shimi the 1982 Dutch Army Lightweight. Shimi, named after the Lord Lovat, commander of the 1st Special Service Brigade, was a standard Lightweight that had been upgraded with a de-turbo'd 200Tdi engine and Discovery gearing. John Manning, our expedition 2iC decided to build his own desert expedition truck and sourced an ex-military 110 with standard 2.5 diesel. The final vehicle came from Andrew, our search expert who modified his 2.5 110 for desert as well. This mainly involved stripping out any unneeded weight. While none of the trucks were what would be considered fast during the trip down from the UK, once in the desert all four proved up to the challenge.

Since this was to be our first venture into Tunisia, we engaged a local expedition company, SaharanSky, to provide advice and support. Ilyes Sasi, our support team leader, spoke excellent English and became a key part of the adventure. We called on his team's services a number of times and they never let us down.

Departing Douz on November 2, we set off south-east, headed for the ancient Roman ruin, Fort Tisavar, that the PPA, LRDG and the SAS had used as a navigation point. We had read in the WWII accounts that the Tunisian sand was unlike the sands of Libya and Egypt, which was also backed up by more modern accounts. Soon we discovered why; the close-packed dunes, which followed no apparent pattern, were filled with often silty sand that quickly bogged down the trucks. Airing down to no more than 16psi we pushed on. While the agile Lightweight had a relatively easy time of it, the heavier, longer wheelbase 110s struggled to make the tight turns needed to negotiate from one dune to the next. At least it gave us all a chance to practice our shovel skills and recovery techniques. After a time, we worked out a system of the Lightweight scouting ahead for routes while the 110s brought up the rear. We reached the fort the next day and it was a great moment for us all. The ruins still sit much as they had back in 1943 and unlike many ancient sites in the world are unbothered by touts or touristy shops. In fact, other than the oasis of Ksar Ghilane which sits a few kilometres distant, all that can be seen from the fort is desert as far as the eye can see. We camped in the valley beneath the fort and in the morning headed into the oasis to resupply.

Ksar Ghilane had been mentioned in the wartime accounts and probably hasn't changed all that much in the decades since. It is, however, now home to a beautiful little swimming hole fed by a fresh-water spring and surrounded by simple Arab cafes. European tourists frequent the oasis and its hotel, spending their days on desert camel or quad bike excursions.

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The trucks at Fort Tisavar

While overlanders do often pass through, our group certainly raised a few eyebrows as we rolled slowly through the village centre. We parked up next to a concreted spring with fast-flowing fresh water to top up our jerry cans and ordered some bread from the local baker to take with us. Resupplied, we pushed on south for our objective at a feature called Qaret Ali. This small hill, at the head of the wadi, was mentioned in all accounts as the location of the vehicle hide.

With careful navigation by our search and rescue expert, comparing notes with our historian, we arrived later in the day at the area we believed to be Qaret Ali. Throughout our drive south from the oasis the mysterious berm dominated the western skyline. We set up a base camp a short distance from the feature and began to organise for our search.

The next day we conducted a carefully planned but somewhat less well executed search of the area. Despite Andrew's carefully planned search programme, the silty nature of the sand made it impossible to stay in regular lines. At first we were flummoxed as nothing made sense. So Andrew and I drove partway up the berm in Shimi to get a better perspective. From here we could see the lay of the land and immediately spotted some terrain that seemed to match the wartime accounts. Re-joining the others, we realigned our search bearing and set off again. I was the first to spot something unusual. Sitting half in the sand was an old embossed tobacco tin, made in Scotland, and certainly from the wartime period. Shortly after, Andy and Roger in Tembo reported over the radio that they had discovered some vehicle parts near a dry well. Rushing over, we found an assortment of old vehicle pieces including one piece that had a large calibre bullet hole, similar to what would have been fired by German fighter aircraft. Further searching turned up what appeared to be an old gun oil can and what may have been a bonnet section that had been hammered flat.

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Returning to base camp we were all pretty excited about our discoveries. While we had all been hoping to find the actual vehicle wrecks, it had always been a long shot. But if these artefacts turned out to be from the 1940s era and we could identify the vehicle sections, that would mean the local camel herders had dragged these parts to the well from somewhere close by. Alan was tasked to study the pieces and try to confirm or discount their value as evidence we were in the right place.

Our search never did turn up the actual wrecks but we marked the location on our maps and determined that we would return in the future to continue our search. After resupplying at Ksar Ghilane once more, we pushed west around the northern extent of the sand sea following the route that the walking party took after fleeing from the vehicle hide in 1943. Several more days in the sand sea tested all of us and our Land Rovers before we finally turned for Douz once more and home.

The trucks had proven their worth as ships of the desert. We had bent a steering track rod and shorn the bolts off an alternator mount, but both were quickly repaired and other than that our vehicles never let us down. We did decide that for the follow-up expedition we would look to have more short wheelbase trucks to undertake a crossing of the heart of the sand sea while the 110s served as support vehicles.



*Bonnet proved to be an exact match for one found on a 1941 Chevrolet truck used by LRDG*

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On our return to the UK our early research efforts turned up some very positive results. The bonnet piece is an exact match for the one found on a 1941 model Chevrolet truck of the type used by the LRDG. The tobacco tin turned out to also be an exact match for a type produced by G. Dobie and Sons of Paisley, Scotland between 1930 and 1940. There are still several other items we are researching but all of us are convinced we have found evidence of the last resting place for the doomed vehicles.

Tunisia turned out to be a safe, welcoming and open place with massive areas to explore and to challenge ourselves. PPE will definitely be returning in 2020 to continue our quest for the lost patrol.

## TRAVELLING TO TUNISIA

**Ferries:** Overnight ferries operate weekly from Marseille, Genoa and Civitavecchia. We paid £935 for the CTN ferry from Marseilles for a vehicle, (two person and a cabin).

**Visas:** Visas are not required for UK and most European citizens.

**Customs on arrival:** On landing the port process is simple and quick. Just bring your passport and V5. Have a destination hotel or campsite if asked and a printout of your vehicle registration, names of travellers and passport details.

**Desert Authorisation:** You do not need to register to travel in the southern desert but it is advisable for first time visitors. The sand seas here are vast and breaking down or getting stranded could be serious. Reputable guide services can handle this for you. We used Ilyes Sasi at SaharanSky.





# Vickers Light Tank Restoration

I would like to thank Colin Jones for his kind permission to publish the restoration of his two Vickers Light Tanks, including photographs for use in the WVCG Magazine too share with our club members.

Tony VAN RHODA. Editor/Publisher.

## *CONTINUED FROM OUR DECEMBER 2023 ISSUE:*

This has been quite a long time coming to marry these two parts together so while I am waiting for my carby to be refurbished I thought it is time.





I must use my best judgement how the bracketry was made back in the 30s. I have made the brackets so the stays are easily unbolted for turret removal with or without the basket. I know the original was also done like this.





It is good to have them now married together and working. I have taken the whole unit out to finish the welding and I will also complete the other one as well. The seats are on the list for manufacture too.





Thank you all for your comments and it is very nice to know that there is still a lot of interest in these little tanks. I'm sure they will still be around long after I'm gone if they are looked after. It does give me great pride to know I am saving these for future generations to see what great achievements were made by the designers all those years ago. I do have a look back every now and then and see the different challenges there has been along the way. Fortunately, I don't think there are any major ones ahead of me now. (Touch wood) But if there is then so be it. I have just completed the commanders foot rest and standing platform. I had to cut the original tube as it was impossible to get the old part off so I will internally sleeve the tube and reweld it back together. I will be doing the seats and turret hold down brackets next.







I got a bit ahead of myself!! The foot rest is made from aluminium and the original was cast. I had a look around my "Don't throw that away pile" and low and behold I find a piece of aluminium that just happened to be the correct thickness and to my total astonishment it "ALSO" just happened to be the same diameter . I don't know what the odds of that would be but it was the only piece of ally there. Anyway, just good luck to me. I used my horizontal mill to put the diamond lines in it for non-slip as per the original.





I just got my carburettor back after a full rebuild so the radiator needed to be installed with the Fan shroud and thermo fan. I will have plenty of room for an oil cooler if needed. I have decided to use the original radiator for the other Vickers as it is in great condition and another nice original part going back on.



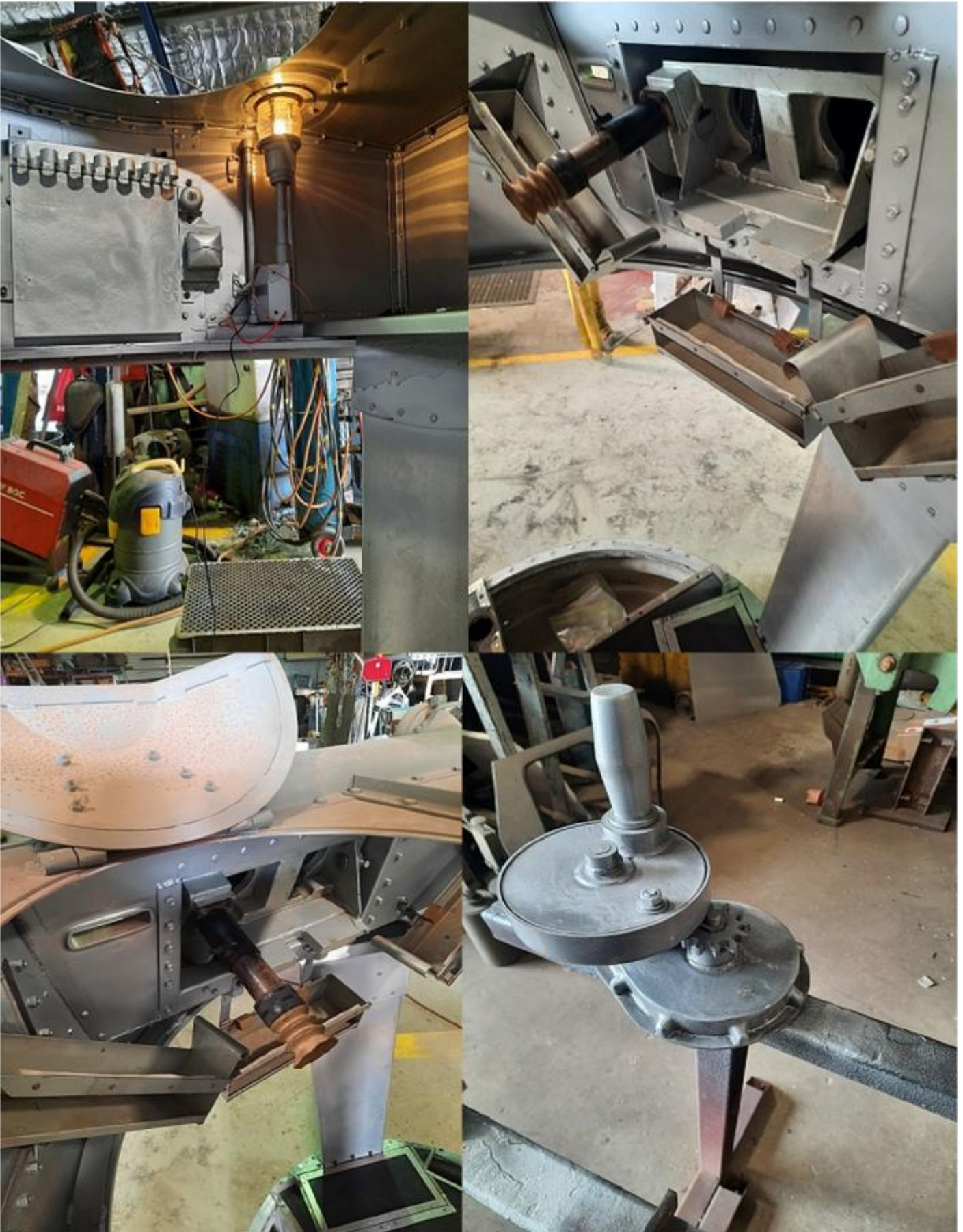


Radiator all fitted back in place apart from electrical and hoses. I am also doing the other turret basket fitment. I decided to fit the other basket outside of the tank by measurement as it will be a lot easier.





Getting turret number 2 up to speed. As I hadn't had a good look inside that one for a while, I forgot there was quite a bit to do in there. Fortunately I had most of the parts made previously but they all still needed to be installed. They are now except for the traversing box which I just painted prior to fitting. I still need to do a bit of rubbing back and repaint to get rid of some paint runs. Also testing the light, I made a couple of years back.





These are the turret stays, there are 4 of this style on each tank and two different ones which I am yet too far. Can't have my turret bouncing off while driving.





I just made an inline temp gauge sender unit holder. The gauge is a original type that was in the Vickers but there is nowhere that I can connect it to. I need this working so this is the only way that I could think of that was simple and hopefully effective



**FOLLOW COLIN JONES  
RESTORATION OF HIS  
VICKERS LIGHT TANK  
WHICH WILL BE CON-  
TINUED IN THE NEXT  
EDITION OF YOUR WVCG  
MAGAZINE.  
"BARTREAD" .**



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# North African Campaign: WWII's Ultimate War of Logistics

*Logistics-the practical art of moving arms and keeping them supplied-spelled the difference between victory and defeat in the sands of North Africa.*

By Allyn Vannoy

Bradley could have been referring to German General Erwin Rommel. While Rommel was winning the war of desert armour tactics during 1941-1942 in the North African Campaign, he was losing the war of logistics.

With the fall of France in June 1940, Britain was the last active enemy of Nazi Germany. British forces in the Mediterranean and the Middle East faced a bleak and uncertain future. With Italy's entry into the war a new front was opened that Britain hardly seemed able to defend.

Hitler, in a July 31, 1940, meeting with his generals, did not wholly oppose a possible Mediterranean strategy as Generals Walther von Brauchitsch, commander in chief of the Army, and Franz Halder, chief of staff in the Army high command (OKH) proposed sending panzer forces and aircraft to Libya to help the Italians, who were planning an offensive into Egypt. But Hitler wouldn't agree to commit a panzer corps. The only thing in the Mediterranean that interested him was the possibility of capturing Gibraltar and thereby closing its western access to the British. **To Nazi Germany, Winning the North African Campaign Was the Key to Defeating Britain.**

Kriegsmarine Grand Admiral Erich Raeder weighed in on the Mediterranean strategy during September 1940 as he showed Hitler, step by step, how Germany could defeat Britain without crossing the English Channel and maintained that doing so would put Germany in a commanding position against the Soviet Union as well.

Raeder argued that the Axis should capture the Suez Canal and then advance through Palestine and Syria as far as Turkey. "If we reach that point, Turkey will be in our power," Raeder emphasized. "The Russian problem will then appear in a different light. It is doubtful whether an advance against Russia from the north (Poland and Romania) will be necessary."

An advance on the southern frontier of Turkey would place the Turks in an impossible position. With Hungary, Romania, and Bulgaria already allied to Germany, Turkey would be forced to join the Axis or at least to provide passage for Axis forces and supplies.

Even Churchill recognized the situation in a message to President Roosevelt, asserting that if Egypt and the Middle East were lost, continuation of the war "would be a hard, long, and a bleak proposition," even if the United States was to enter the war. Many now cite this as the main significance of WWII's North African Campaign.

However, although OKH and OKW advised Hitler to send troops to North Africa, their proposals lacked Raeder's urgency. Hitler was fixed on destroying the Soviet Union and gaining Lebensraum (living space) in the east.

An Axis victory in the Middle East could place German forces in Iran, blocking supplies to the Soviet Union from Britain and the United States. Russia would be left with only Murmansk and Archangel in the north—ports exposed to Arctic weather, U-boats, and the Luftwaffe. Even more than that, the Soviet Union's major oil fields in the Caucasus and the Caspian Sea could be threatened. A German position in Iran would also pose a threat to British India.

But opening the road to the Middle East depended on achieving victory in North Africa.

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And the outcome in North Africa was dependent on logistics. In time Axis operations in Libya would expose several key issues.

### Deciding Whether to Support the Italians

Hitler's ambivalence about sending forces to the North African Campaign was based on faith that the Italian offensive into Egypt would achieve a quick success. It had commenced on September 13, 1940, as the six divisions of the Italian Tenth Army, which was about three times the size of the defending British force, crossed into Egypt. But German fears, and British optimism, began to increase almost at once. Fifty miles inside Egypt, the Italian Army came to a halt at Sidi Barrani and dug-in. For weeks the Italians did nothing while the British received reinforcements.

German military leaders had long harboured doubts about the ability of the Italian army given its obsolete equipment and few mechanized forces. However, the German General Staff felt the principal deficiency was its poor leadership—the Italian officer corps being ill trained.

Consequently, the Germans offered panzers and aircraft, but Mussolini didn't respond. He kept hoping that his army would show some drive, push the British back, and give him and Italy some measure of glory. But it failed to happen. Even so, Mussolini was reluctant to call upon the Germans because it would look like an admission of failure, but he also didn't want to lose Libya.

With the Italian Army at Sidi Barrani in October 1940, the German high command sent a panzer expert, General Wilhelm von Thoma, to find out whether German forces should help the Italians—and also, unofficially, to look over the Italian Army. Von Thoma was a veteran who had led German-created panzer forces for Franco during the Spanish Civil War, seeing action in 192 engagements while in Spain.

After returning from Libya, von Thoma was called to Hitler's headquarters. Von Thoma reported that only motorized forces were of any use in the desert. He believed that to ensure success, "nothing less than four panzer divisions would suffice," and that this was also "the maximum that could be effectively maintained with supplies in an advance across the desert to the Nile Valley." This small force would have to be of the highest quality (meaning not Italians). Hitler told von Thoma he could spare only one panzer division (the 15th Panzer), whereupon von Thoma replied that it would be better to give up the whole idea. Von Thoma's comment angered Hitler, saying that his concept of sending German forces to Africa was political, designed to keep Mussolini from changing sides. Hitler remained fixed on Russia, hoarding his panzer forces to use there.

The German Army had developed a single-minded concentration on the operational aspects of war to the detriment, if not outright neglect, of everything else. The Army's doctrine, training, and organization were geared to fighting and little else. Before 1939, no preparations had been made in the German Army for desert warfare. Operations, organization, and training had been limited to fighting a war on the European continent.

### The Budding Axis Logistical Crisis

During December 1940, British General Richard O'Connor's Western Desert Force attacked the Italian forces at Sidi Barrani. By mid-February, the British overran eastern Libya, destroying the Italian Army, capturing 130,000 prisoners. Rather than pushing on to Tripoli the British dispatched forces to Greece and others to finish off Italian forces in East Africa.

The British success forced Hitler to come to Mussolini's aid. In January 1941, Luftwaffe units arrived in Sicily and began air attacks on British bases on Malta. In the middle of the Mediterranean, Malta provided a vital strategic base for Allied operations as it lay astride the direct route between Italy and Libya. The air assault allowed General Erwin Rommel's Afrika Korps to reach Libya with few losses.

When the first German units were shipped to Africa, they had no information on the nature of operations and circumstances in the desert. Information furnished by the Italians was extremely meagre. One of the key features of Libya was a lone, all-weather (hard surfaced) road, the Via Balbia, which ran from the provincial capital, Tripoli, to the Egyptian frontier, where it met a British military road leading to Alexandria, the Suez Canal, and on to Palestine.





Italian Carro Armato M 14/41 medium tanks move toward the front. Unreliable and easily knocked out, they proved to be no match for the Allies.

The logistics problems facing the Germans in North Africa were to be extremely challenging. The primary Italian ports for shipping and embarkation to Libya were Naples, Bari, Brindisi, and Taranto. The main port in Libya was Tripoli, capable of handling five cargo ships or four troop transports at a time, or approximately 45,000 tons of cargo a month across its docks.

Although the Italians tried to improve their Libyan ports, they did so only after wasting considerable effort on repairing harbors in Albania. The small capacity of the ports also limited the size of convoys. Instead of running a relatively few large convoys, which would have been more efficient in terms of convoy defence, the Italians had to send many small ones, wasting fuel and escorts.

The Italians initially used massive escorts, including cruisers, but they were eventually forced to curtail this due to fuel shortages. Initial convoys averaged just four merchant ships with nearly as many destroyers or torpedo boats acting as escorts and at least one aircraft patrolling ahead of a convoy during daylight. Later, air cover for the convoys was greatly increased as the Italian air force made a major commitment. In time the Italian convoys were reduced in size, averaging just two ships, and becoming smaller in size as the British gradually eliminated the larger ones.

Routing and scheduling of convoys for Libya was often complex. Initially the Italians tried to sail on moonless nights. Later, the threat of attack at night was far greater than during the day, so running during daylight became preferable. The Italians were forced to make costly efforts to stay as far away as possible from Malta. As a result convoys had to either sail to the west along the Tunisian coast or far to the east, not far off the Balkan coast. Such routing doubled the travel distance across the Mediterranean, making it expensive in terms of time and fuel as well as the wear on ships.

Italian shipping resources were further taxed as ships were also needed to support troops in the Balkans and the Aegean.

In terms of logistics, a German motorized division required 350 tons of supplies a day or 10,500 tons a month. To transport this quantity over 300 miles of desert, OKH calculated that, apart from the troops' organic vehicles and excluding any reserves, would require 39 columns or ground convoys each of 30 two-ton trucks, running four or five round trips a month.

The assignment of the 15th Panzer Division to the Deutsch's Afrika Korps (DAK) raised the motor-transport capacity needed to maintain the DAK by 6,600 tons. This was 10 times

as much, proportionally, as that allocated to the armies preparing to invade Russia. Whether Rommel received more reinforcements or went beyond the 300-mile supply range, a shortage of support vehicles was bound to ensue. Nor was there sufficient coastal shipping to help alleviate the problem. Hitler relented, however. While granting Rommel the trucks he needed, Hitler coupled them with an explicit order forbidding him from taking any large-scale offensive action that would further raise his requirements.

The force of seven Axis divisions in Libya, along with the supporting air force and naval units, required a supply level of 70,000 tons per month. This was significantly more than Tripoli could handle, so a crisis was sure to develop

#### **Rommel's First Offensive: A Logistical Nightmare**

Rommel then defied Hitler's orders and launched an offensive at the beginning of April. Limited initially, it found weaknesses in the Commonwealth forces and as Rommel exploited those weaknesses it gained momentum. The drive ended at Sollum, just over the Egyptian border, creating a logistical nightmare for the Axis, as it added 700 miles to an already extended line of supply.

While the British Army was having problems, the Royal Navy responded. After sinking 10 Axis ships during the first three months of 1941, they sank 26 in April and May. In one incident on April 16, four destroyers, operating from Malta, destroyed a convoy of five transports and two escorts at the cost of a single destroyer.

Despite problems, May 1941 was a peak month for shipments, no more than nine percent of the supplies embarked were lost en route to Africa. Somehow the Axis managed to put more supplies through Tripoli than its capacity. From February to May, the Axis received 325,000 tons of supplies, 45,000 more than the Army's consumption. But the problem became one of moving supplies from Tripoli to the front. As a result, supplies piled up on the wharves while shortages arose on the front line. At the same time the Italian ground forces were experiencing difficulties because its 225,000 man force had only 7,000 trucks to support it.

On April 4, the Axis reoccupied the port of Benghazi, in Cyrenaica, only 300 miles from the Egyptian border. Though designed to handle 2,700 tons a day, the port's actual unloading capacity was 700 to 800 tons a day, or 24,000 tons a month. There was also only enough coastal shipping available to carry 15,000 tons a month from Tripoli. As a result, supplies continued to pile up at Tripoli.





Trying to supply their troops along a long and ever-changing battlefield proved to be an insurmountable problem for German and Italian logistics specialists, and contributed to the eventual Axis defeat.

By his daring, yet tempestuous offensive, Rommel had placed his forces in an impossible position. With Benghazi's capacity limited, to stay where he was in eastern Libya spelled a pending disaster. Yet, retreat was also not a consideration. The only option was to try to take the port of Tobruk. However, Rommel had to concede that the force needed for such an operation would be no less than four panzer or motorized divisions—the same number originally suggested by von Thoma. But Germany's forces were already fully committed against Russia. Also, to grant Rommel's request meant that DAK would need another 20,000 tons of supplies a month, for which unloading facilities were not available. Rommel would have to do with the forces and supplies on hand. As consolation, on July 31, all Axis forces in Libya, renamed Panzerarmee Afrika, were placed under Rommel's command.

Closer examination of Tobruk revealed that it could provide little help in terms of logistics relief. The port was reported as capable of handling 1,500 tons a day, but in practice it rarely exceeded 600. The German Kriegsmarine had dismissed it as a port of disembarkation for large ships, advising OKH to rely exclusively on Tripoli and Benghazi to keep Rommel's forces supplied. Thus, any plans Rommel had for solving his supply difficulties by capturing Tobruk seemed highly impracticable.

#### Losses in the Mediterranean

In the meantime, the situation on the central Mediterranean was deteriorating. Early in June most of the German 10th Air Corps, which had been protecting Libyan-bound convoys from bases on Sicily, was transferred to Greece. This allowed British naval and air units on Malta a respite to make a gradual recovery. Axis losses at sea, which had previously been negligible, began to rise alarmingly. In July, 19 percent of all supplies, by weight, sent to Libya were lost; this fell to nine percent in August, rose to 25 percent in September, and 23 percent in October. In addition, Benghazi suffered heavy bombing by the RAF in September, causing ships to be diverted to Tripoli.

At the same time Allied submarines achieved some spectacular successes, sinking three of Italy's largest troop transports—the liners *Esperia*, *Neptunia*, and *Oceania* in August and September 1941. From mid-October 1941, the Italians began carrying troops almost exclusively in destroyers. Submarines remained the chief killer of Axis shipping during 1941, causing 44 percent of Axis losses.

But Rommel's logistics woes lay not just with British aggressive efforts, but also with the organization responsible for transporting his supplies. The leadership of the Italian Navy, responsible for coordinating and overseeing Mediterranean convoy protection, was staffed by many officers who were not supporters of Mussolini, while the senior Fascist authorities in the government and military were so corrupt as to be ineffective, or at least disastrously bureaucratic.

Rommel accused the Comando Supremo of inefficiency, demanding that the entire supply organization be taken over by the Wehrmacht. The Kriegsmarine agreed, voicing the suspicion that the Italian preference for the use of Tripoli was based primarily on their desire to protect their merchant fleet. But these opinions were disputed by OKH in a study showing that the Luftwaffe had neglected the protection of the convoys in favor of attacking targets in the eastern Mediterranean.

Other logistic options were weighed. The possibility of sending supplies from Greece direct to Cyrenaica was considered, but this would have placed dependence on a single-track railway from Belgrade to Nish in Yugoslavia, which was constantly being broken, i.e., blown up by partisans. On their side, the Italians argued that continued use of Tripoli was needed, claiming that they had no fuel to enable their navy to deal with the Malta-based British "Force K's" destroyers and submarines, and demanded that the Luftwaffe tackle the job. However, when OKW offered them Kriegsmarine personnel to help operate the Libyan ports, the offer was rejected.



*A British reconnaissance photo shows ships of an Italian convoy in the harbor at Palermo, Sicily. Two of the vessels were sunk and others damaged during a bombing raid two nights later.*

#### The Cost of Rommel's Supply Lines

Despite shipping losses the Italians succeeded in putting an average of 72,000 tons, slightly more than Rommel's current consumption, across the Mediterranean each month during July through October. Rommel's difficulties, for the moment, stemmed less from the threat posed by Malta and problems with Mediterranean convoys than from the impossible length of his supply lines.

If the Panzerarmee needed 70,000 tons of supplies a month and 70,000 tons were received at ports, at least one-third of the tonnage or 23,000 tons, had to be fuel to facilitate ground operations. Since one-third to one-half of the fuel received at port was used to transport these supplies, approximately 11,500 tons would be consumed delivering the goods. That would leave 47,000 tons of other supplies (food and ammunition) but result in a shortage of 11,500 tons of operating fuel. The alternative was to offset the fuel shortfall and cut other supplies to just 35,500 tons. Whatever way you cut it, the numbers were eventually going to come up short.

Also, obligated to cover 1,000 miles each way, 35 percent of transport vehicles would be undergoing repair at any given time.

On the night of November 9, a five-ship convoy carrying 20,000 tons of cargo was sunk off the Libyan coast by British warships. Supplies disembarked in Libya during the month dropped to 30,000 tons while shipping losses rose to 30 percent. However, though Rommel's main fighting force consisted of two German divisions, which together consumed about 20,000 tons a month, they still had some supply surplus available from the previous months. But this was of less immediate significance than the fact that the British offensive that opened on November 18 (Operation Crusader) made the overland routes unsafe. British aircraft and armoured cars, operating in raiding parties, inflicted heavy losses on truck columns, also reducing hauling capacity by half while also limiting the movement of truck convoys to night time hours.



As Rommel retreated across eastern Libya during November-December, the Italians made an all-out effort to provide relief. Having materially assisted his retreat by using warships and submarines to bring fuel to the ports of Derna and Benghazi, they next made a major effort by sending four battleships, three light cruisers, and 20 destroyers to escort a convoy to Libya on December 16-17. The operation was a success, the Italian fleet suffering only one battleship damaged.

Meanwhile, the German quartermaster believed that the situation was improving. Since only 39,000 tons managed to get across the Mediterranean during December, it was clear that the improvement had little to do with increased safety of the sea-routes. Rather, it resulted from the discovery of 13,000 tons of Italian fuel reserves near Tripoli. Even more important, Rommel's retreat to El Agheila had reduced his lines of supply to a manageable 460 miles. The arrival on January 6, 1942, of a second "battleship convoy" with six vessels carrying supplies eased the situation further.

#### **Hitler's Options in the North African Campaign**

As the winter of 1941-1942 approached, much of the German Luftflotte 2 had been transferred from the Ost front to the Mediterranean. Luftflotte 2 began attacking Malta, reducing Axis shipping losses. As a result, new panzer units and replacement tanks were able to reach Rommel.



*Italian supply vessel Pietro Querini, part of a convoy headed to Tripoli, sinks off of Tunisia after being torpedoed by the British submarine HMS Union.*

While reinforcements raised Rommel's strength to 10 divisions—three German and seven Italian—and accordingly increased his supply requirements to 100,000 tons, he was in fact receiving an average of only 60,000 tons during February to May 1942. This was less than received during the difficult days of June-October 1941, and yet it enabled Rommel, first to take the offensive and then to prepare another and even more spectacular advance.

The demand for 100,000 tons a month was somewhat exaggerated; while it corresponded to the needs of 10 full-strength German divisions, the actual forces under Rommel were much smaller, given that his units were understrength and mostly Italian. Panzerarmee was also able to maintain itself at 900 miles from Tripoli because Benghazi, which had contributed little during the previous offensive, was now operating at full capacity. As a result, the distance to be covered by some one-third of his supplies was reduced to just 280 miles.

Logistics now dictated battlefield options. One course of action was for Rommel to stay where he was while preparations were made to capture Malta. Assuming that fuel could be found for the Italian Navy, and given the continued maintenance of the capacity of the port of Benghazi, this would have enabled Rommel to hold out for some time and to prepare a large-scale attack on Egypt.

By the first week of February 1942, the British had dug in on a line at Gazala, west of Tobruk, so Rommel halted Axis operations as well and took personal leave. Back in Berlin, he tried to persuade Hitler to let him have three more panzer divisions, but Hitler was focused on the Ostfront and agreed only to Operation Herakles (Hercules), the invasion of Malta. However, Hitler did not truly favour the operation, given the airborne losses suffered on Crete in 1941 and concerns about the quality of Italian naval support. But Malta was being sufficiently suppressed for the moment so that Axis forces in Libya were now well supplied. During the first half of 1942, only six percent of the supplies dispatched were lost en route to Libya, thus supply problems were greatly eased in April and May. However, Rommel, fearing a British offensive before Malta was taken, decided to return to Africa and push forward with his own plans. If he succeeded in taking Tobruk, he would then wait until Malta was subdued before advancing into Egypt.

It is questionable whether an advance on Alexandria would have been practicable. Even if Hitler had the additional panzer forces available, bringing them to Africa would have increased Panzerarmee's support requirements to a point beyond the combined capacity of Benghazi and Tripoli to support operations. This in turn would have made the accumulation of stores for an attack a hopeless task, while the number of vehicles required to transport stores was beyond the limited resources of the Wehrmacht. Perhaps the only way to solve the problem would have been to rid Panzerarmee of its hapless Italian ground forces as von Thoma had recommended in October 1940, but this was not a politically viable option.



*German military vehicles are off loaded from cargo ships at the port of Tripoli,*

Libya, April 1, 1941. By disrupting the Axis supply line, the Allies gained a matériel advantage over the Germans and Italians in the North African Campaign.

As an alternative to the Axis logistics system, the nature of desert operations required the establishment of large supply dumps close behind the front, and a penetrating attack had a chance of capturing the supplies necessary to continue an advance. Thus Rommel would be able to pursue the British using captured fuel transported in captured trucks. But planning for this was a gamble.



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### Little Gained From Tobruk

On May 26, Rommel opened his offensive. On June 22, he captured Tobruk with its port facilities intact. But the Axis was, in reality, in a doubtful condition to exploit this success. Though shipping losses in June had risen little, as compared with May, the lack of fuel for the Navy caused the tonnage plying the route to Africa to fall by two-thirds, supplies disembarked dropping to 32,000 tons. The fuel shortage, moreover, forced the unloading of even this small amount not at Benghazi, but at Tripoli. This made the Axis situation desperate. Unable to stay in place, they could either fall back or "flee forward" in the hope of living off the enemy.

Rommel thought it was best to strike into Egypt immediately while the British were disorganized. On the other hand, Rommel's superior, Field Marshal Albert Kesselring, commander in chief of all German forces in the south, favoured an attack on Malta first, but Rommel went over Kesselring's head and appealed directly to Hitler. Claiming that the supplies captured at Tobruk would carry him to the Nile, Rommel was determined to go on, and Hitler, who had never been keen on the Malta operation, supported him. At the same time, he was promised adequate supplies by the Italians.

So Axis hopes hung on 2,000 vehicles, 5,000 tons of supplies, and 1,000 tons of fuel captured at Tobruk. After an advance of another 400 miles the Panzerarmee came to a halt on July 4 at El Alamein. Also, only six percent of the Axis supplies had been lost en route to Africa in July, giving Rommel enough to keep his forces sufficiently supplied. A renewed air offensive against Malta in July failed, however, and British subs returned to the island.

The distance from El Alamein to Axis ports made itself felt. Of the 100,000 tons of supplies needed each month, Tobruk, hundreds of miles behind the front, could barely handle 20,000. Trucks were in short supply and attempts to use the British railway from Sollum, eastward, only provided 300 tons per day instead of the 1,500 tons that had been planned. The port and the sea routes were also open to air attack. Sending ships to Tobruk or the smaller ports of Bardia and Mersa Matruh was impossibly difficult. Unloading at Benghazi or Tripoli, 800 and 1,300 miles behind the front, respectively, involved a huge expenditure of fuel and extended delays. In July, the Italians continued to opt for unloading at Benghazi and Tripoli, with the result that, although only five percent of their shipping was lost and 91,000 tons were put across the Mediterranean, it took weeks for the supplies to reach the front line. When Rommel insisted that ships be sent directly to Tobruk in August, 1942, losses rose fourfold and the quantity of supplies put across dropped to 51,000 tons.

Allied bombing of Libyan ports was increasingly effective, nullifying any advantages the Axis had gained from taking Tobruk. British Wellingtons and American B-24s bombed Benghazi and Tobruk nightly. The RAF destroyed the fuel storage depot at Tobruk in July. On August 6, a particularly effective attack reduced the port capacity at Tobruk from 2,000 to 600 tons; the port never handled more than 1,000 tons of cargo afterward. On the night of September 22-23, having learned of the arrival of the freighter *Apnania* at Benghazi with tanks and ammunition, the Allies mounted a particularly effective air attack that destroyed the freighter and seriously damaging the port.

### Sinking Rommel's Fuel

With or without Malta in Axis control, during midsummer many ships going to Tripoli and Benghazi got through, while those sent to Tobruk came under heavy bombing. Although he had only 8,000 out of the 30,000 tons of fuel he claimed he needed for August, Rommel decided to stake everything on a final attempt to break through British lines. He was supported by Kesselring, who promised more tankers for Tobruk. When these were sunk he said he would fly in 500 tons of fuel a day, but the planes failed to arrive.

The British only managed to sink a dozen ships from late June through July. In the first half of August, they only sank three ships—all by submarine attacks. But on August 21, things began to change as British Beaufort's hit the large tanker *Pozarica*, carrying fuel for the Italian Army, forcing her to beach on the island of Corfu. On August 26, Ultra interceptions disclosed a plan to sail no less than 20 ships between August 25 and September 5. At least 16 of these ships were either tankers or were carrying barrels of fuel. Thanks British efforts, only seven reached Libya with very little fuel. As a result, in August, a third of all Rommel's supplies and 41 percent of his fuel had been lost on route to Libya.



Although a brilliant tactician, General Erwin Rommel (shown here helping to push his command car out of deep desert sand in February 1942) was unable to overcome his dwindling resources.

The August attacks on Rommel's fuel supplies left the Panzerarmee with a mere 10 percent of the minimum requirement for effective operations. Ten thousand tons were stuck in Tobruk, unable to be brought forward. The supply of ammunition, spares, and food was also disrupted, demoralizing the Italians. But German reinforcements began to arrive, formations that had been earmarked for the aborted attack on Malta—Ramcke's Parachute Brigade and the 164th Light. However, these had no transport and proved more of a burden than a help in the desert. The Allied air force was concentrating on disrupting Rommel's fragile and elongated supply routes while British mobile forces were causing havoc in the Axis rear areas. Rommel could hardly afford these losses.

He would later blame the failure to break through to the Nile on how the sources of supply to his army had dried up. He complained bitterly about the failure of important Italian convoys to deliver desperately needed tanks and supplies—always blaming the Italian Supreme Command.

There was a question of whether the reverses inflicted on Rommel during the summer and autumn of 1942 were due to the nonarrival of fuel from Italy or to the fortuitous sinking of a disproportionately large number of vitally important tankers.

No fuel reached Libya in the first week of October. The cargo ship *Francesco Barbaro*, on route to Benghazi via Greece, was torpedoed. The *Unione*, carrying fuel in the same convoy, was also torpedoed. Four days later, the fuel-carrying *Nino Bixio* was sunk by a torpedo-bomber.

In the Second Battle of El Alamein, October 23–November 4, 1942, the British Eighth Army broke the back of Rommel's Panzerarmee and began a long advance that would eventually take them all the way to Tunisia.

The Axis political situation necessitated supporting what was considered a less than useful force—the Italians. In terms of the larger picture, it seemed that, for all Rommel's tactical brilliance, the problem of supplying an Axis ground force for an advance to the Middle East was virtually insoluble.

### Rommel's Great Mistake in North Africa

Rommel's supply difficulties were in part due to the limited capacity of the Libyan ports, which not only determined the largest possible number of troops that could be maintained and the force mix, but also restricted the size of convoys, making escorting them expensive in terms of fuel and the warships employed. Once ashore the logisticians were faced with distances that were out of proportion to those the Wehrmacht encountered in Europe, including Russia, along with an insufficient number of trucks. While coastal shipping was employed, given the RAF's domination of the skies, its effect was limited. Given this, only a railway might have helped to solve the overland problem. The Italians, however, never mobilized resources for this purpose. Finally, the Axis decision in the summer of 1942 not to occupy Malta had far less to do with the outcome of the struggle in North Africa than the fact that the port of Tobruk was too small and exposed to attacks by the RAF.





*A convoy of German supply vehicles climbs a mountain road to Derna, passing a wrecked tank, May 1941. As the campaign wore on, Axis vehicles fell victim to growing Allied air superiority.*

Under such circumstances, Hitler's original decision to send a force to defend a limited area in North Africa seemed correct. Rommel's repeated defiance of his orders and attempts to advance beyond a reasonable distance from his base, however, were mistakes and should never have been allowed to happen.

Rommel was not unaware of the logistics situation he faced. The Rommel Papers state, "The first essential condition for an army to be able to stand the stress of battle is an adequate stock of weapons, petrol and ammunition. In fact, the battle is fought and decided by the quartermasters before the shooting begins." But he was forced to rely on either the Italian Commando Supremo or Kesselring to transport his supplies across the Mediterranean.

There seemed little that the Axis could do to rectify the problem. The few options available included expansion of the port facilities at Tripoli and Benghazi, the capture of Malta, or the building of a railway from Tripoli east 600 to 900 miles.

The situation in the Libyan desert was best summed up by German General Johann von Ravenstein, commander of the 21st Panzer Division, who described it as a tactician's paradise but a quartermaster's hell.



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# World War II mystery solved as German vehicle rises from river after severe drought.

By ANTONY ASHKENAZ

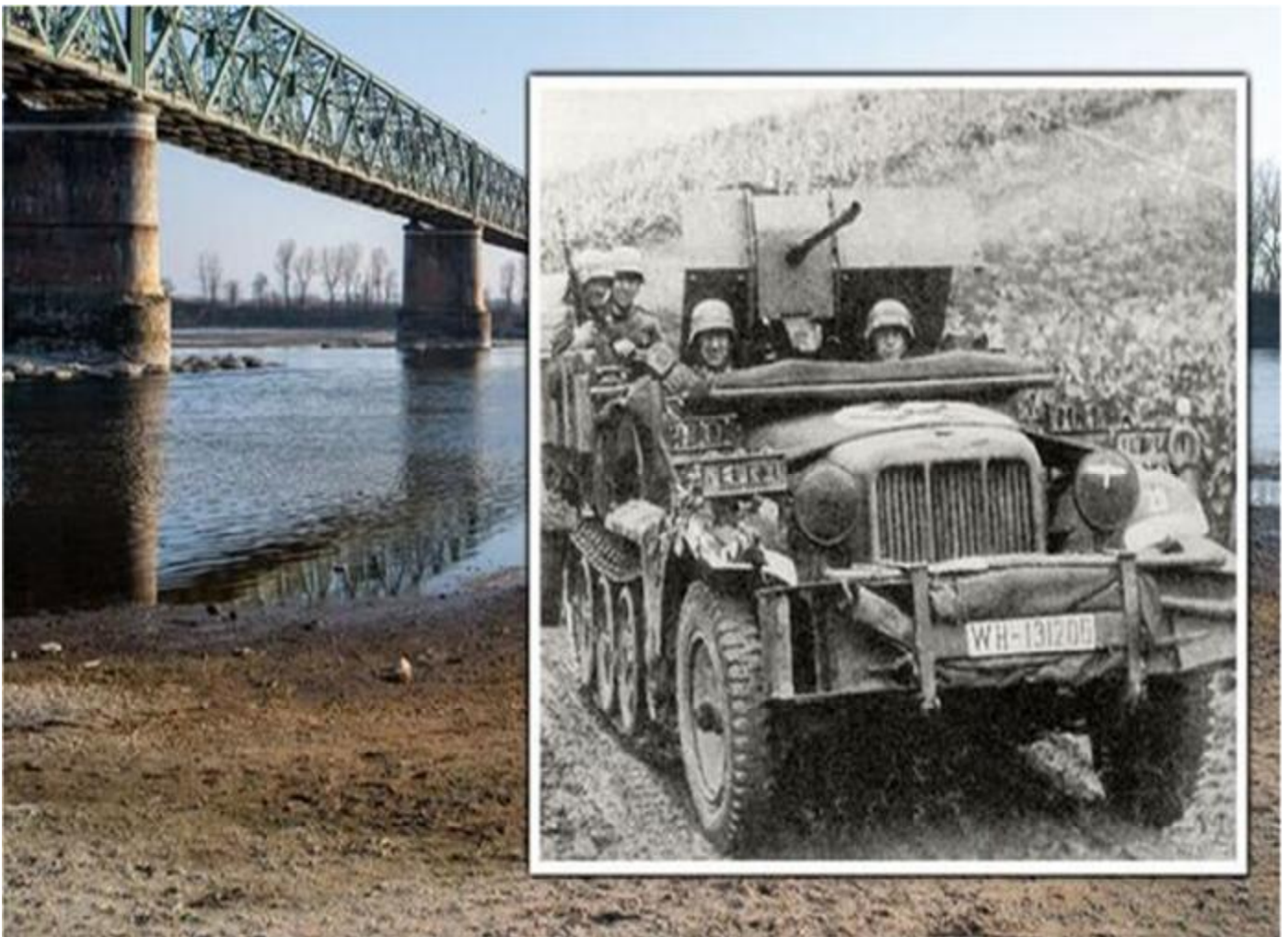
ARCHAEOLOGISTS have ended a decades-long hunt for a World War 2-era German vehicle as severe drought causes it to re-emerge.

The exceptional drought in Italy caused a German military half-track vehicle re-surface from the River Po in Northern Italy. The decades-long search for this vehicle finally ended after it was found and recovered in Sermide, in the province of Mantua. The vehicle was pushed into the river by retreating German troops in April 1945 to prevent it from falling into the hands of US soldiers.

At the time, a British reconnaissance plane spotted the vehicle, however, the tank remained elusive despite repeated attempts to find it.

Samuele Bernini, a volunteer of the Second World War Museum in Sermide and Felonica, discovered the vehicle on March 25 after he spotted metal sheets sticking out of the sand. Simone Guidorzi, the museum's director said: "The half-track is an Sd.Kfz.11 model and weighs about seven tonnes.

"The Germans had abandoned several vehicles in this area, many were immediately recovered, but this one had ended up in deep water.



*WWII mystery solved as German vehicle rises from river after severe drought,*

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*This discovery ended a decades long search. Now we're going to display it in our museum.*

Meanwhile, the researchers also discovered a wreck of a large boat that was sunk by Nazi bombing after it resurfaced from the bottom of the Po River.

The Sd.Kfz. 11m which stood for Sonderkraftfahrzeug, meaning special motorized vehicle, was a German half-track that was widely used in World War II. The heavy vehicle was primarily used in transporting medium towed guns ranging from the 3.7 cm FlaK 43 anti-aircraft gun up to the 10.5 cm leFH 18 field howitzer. The vehicle could carry up to eight soldiers, in addition to towing a gun or trailer. The Sd.Kfz. 11 used a conventional ladder frame chassis design and was powered by a front-mounted Maybach six-cylinder, water-cooled, 4.17 litres (254 cu in) HL 42 TRKM gasoline engine of 100 horsepower (100 PS).

The vehicle could reach speeds of up to 52.5 km/h (32.6 mph) and could ford water half a metre (1.6 ft) deep. It was around this time that the Allied forces advanced into Northern Italy, after capturing Rome on 4th June 1944. Codename Operation Grapeshot was the final Allied attack that took place during the final stages of WWII.

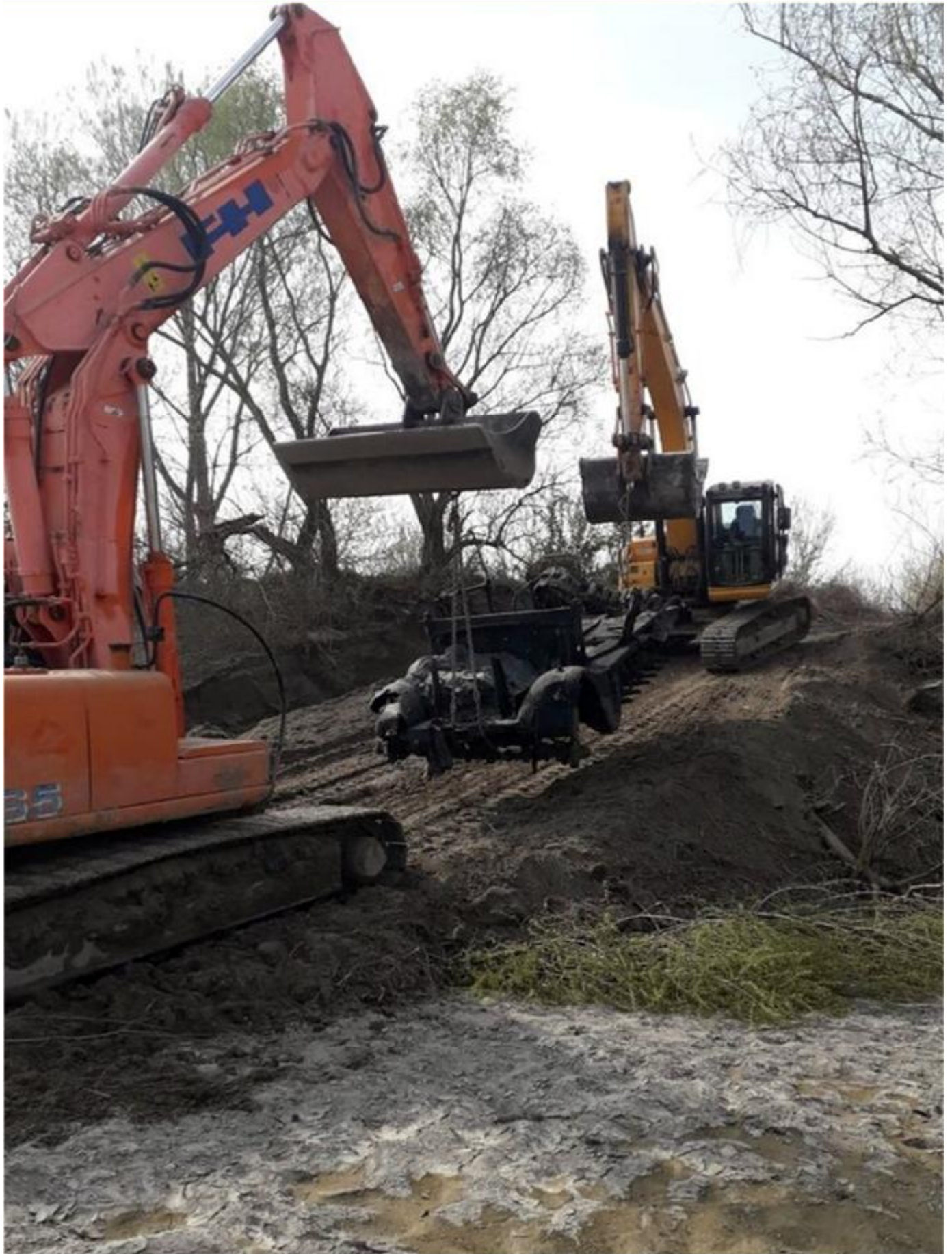


The 15th Allied Army Group attacked the Lombard Plain on 6 April 1945, with the battle ending on 2 May after German troops in Italy surrendered.

Before this, the Allie forces had launched their last major offensive on the Gothic Line in August 1944.

During this campaign, the British Eighth Army led by Lieutenant-General Oliver Leese attacked up the coastal plain of the Adriatic. Meanwhile, the U.S. Fifth Army, led by Lieutenant General Mark Clark charged through the central Apennine Mountains.





*The vehicle was pushed into the river by retreating German troops. The heavy vehicle was primarily used in transporting medium towed guns*





**Jim Gibson**



**Allan Whiting**

### **HISTORIC VEHICLES**

***Is presented by Trucks, Cars and Motorbikes***

Allan and Jim are a couple of septuagenarian automotive industry – trucks, cars and motor-cycles – journalists/photographers, who have a passion for old vehicles, having written many stories about these pioneering makes and models of automotive history over several decades.

So, having watched print magazines slowly disappear from newsagent's shelves, Jim and Allan thought of another way to preserve our motoring past.

They researched heavily, rewrote older material and digitized old photographs. They also interviewed enthusiasts who were still actively involved in the hobby or business of breathing life back into old vehicles, with the Australian pre-30-year rolling historic plate rule being the criteria.

Jim and Allan trust that the Historic Vehicles website offers you, the reader, an in-depth look at not only the vehicles, but also the pioneers – Henry Ford, Walter P Chrysler, the Graham Brothers, the Riley Brothers, W O Bentley, William Lyons, August Fruehauf, C A Tilt, Thomas White and one that you possibly won't know of, Frank Smith – whose vehicles progressively came Down Under during the last 100 years or so. There is a plethora of informative reading, accompanied by quality photography for you to enjoy in the world of Historic Vehicles. There is a plethora of informative reading, accompanied by quality photography for you to enjoy in the world of Historic Vehicles.

Jim Gibson and I are two old journos and we've built an Historic Vehicles website, dedicated to 'Keeping Our Automotive History Alive'. The site currently includes old Cars, Trucks and Restorations, and we're about to make a start on Motor Bikes. We invite you and your members to sign up for our monthly newsletter through the website and we'll keep you updated on new additions. It's all free of charge, with no strings attached.

***"Keeping Our Automotive History Alive".***

Cheers, Allan Whiting and Jim Gibson. The Historic Vehicles Team

email us on: [www.historicvehicles.com.au](http://www.historicvehicles.com.au)  
or visit us on: [www.historicvehicles.com.au](http://www.historicvehicles.com.au)



## THE LATEST NEWS

Our aged, but much loved, LandCruiser 75 Series, *Harry*, is back from the engine doctor's place and feels better than ever. He should be good for another half-million kilometers - now as a vintage vehicle (30 years old).

In our [News](#) section we've reported on a comprehensive global history of RVs; LDV's ridiculously expensive, impractical electric ute; blind voice-over specialist Alistair Lee driving at 80km/h; SsangYong being finally out of the financial mire; a range solution for EVs that tow; Jucy Rental expansion and a Dengue Fever warning for bush travelers;

The Starlink satellite internet service continues to expand, so we've updated our [Starlink](#) report yet again. Also in Comms is an [Apple](#) addition to our Sat phone story.

In our Modifications section we've updated the [Performance Improvements](#) story; the [Re-furbishing the Older Diesel](#) story - reflecting our recent *Harry* rebuild experience - and added a new one on [Air Cleaner hygiene](#).

In Camping there are new swag and tent products from [OzTent](#) and a new way of carrying wine from [Off Track Wines](#), and in the Buyers Guide we've covered a new, movable [rack system](#) for some Ranger models.

On the safety front, we've added some advice on preventing and dealing with [4WD fires](#).

Kumho has released the [AT52](#) tyre replacement for the outgoing AT51 and we're planning a long-term test.

As regular OTA website visitors know, we've canned our OTA Supporters program in favour of a simpler [donation system](#). Current Supporters and anyone who donates \$50 or more to the website go into the regular prize draws that we make throughout the year following that donation.

A Donors prize draw took place in November - a Stedi light bar won by David T - and the next is due before Xmas, so make sure you're 12-month financial and in the running for a gift. Also, if your interests run to old cars, bikes or trucks, check out our sister website: [www.historicvehicles.com.au](http://www.historicvehicles.com.au)

Allan Whiting and the OTA Team



# Welcome to Edition 163 of Goldsmith & The Goldsmith Gazette

Rally 119 is nearly with us, and with the MADE in AMERICA theme it promises a wide variety of exhibits.

The current editions of Goldsmith is attached as is a flyer for the Rally. Currently the regulations require all attendees to be Double Vaccination as a condition of entry to the rally. As these conditions seem to be subject to review from time to time this could change.



The Pyrenees Heritage Preservation Magazine

## Goldsmith

No 163 April 2022



*The theme for the 119<sup>th</sup> Lake Goldsmith Rally on April 30 & May 1 is "Made in America".*

*This magazine can be downloaded from:-*

*[www.lakegoldsmithsteamrally.org.au/magazine.html](http://www.lakegoldsmithsteamrally.org.au/magazine.html)*

*And for those who would like to receive the e-magazine cost and obligation free:- email-*

*[goldsmithgazet@optusnet.com.au](mailto:goldsmithgazet@optusnet.com.au)*

*With your name, email address, phone contact or alternative email, and your post code or Country*

*Over the years that there have been Rallies at Lake Goldsmith there have been many exhibits that were "Made in America". For this edition of Goldsmith some pictures have been taken from the file for an impromptu gallery.*

*I hope that you find something of interest in this edition and at the 119<sup>th</sup> Rally On April 30 & May 1 2022*





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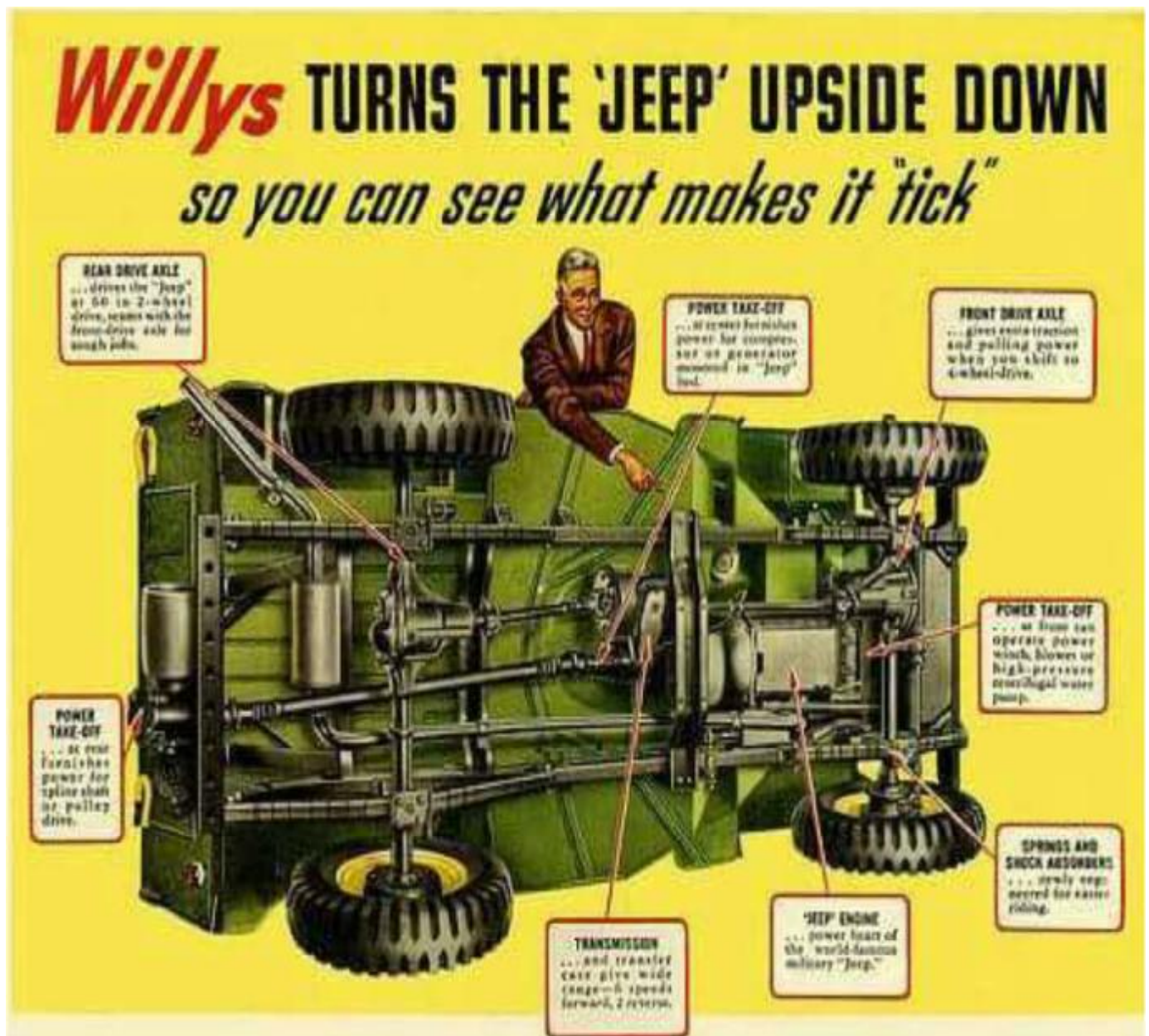
WVCG President Kevin TIPLER is wishing to purchase;

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## ITEMS REQUIRES FOR JEEP PROJECT

We have been asked by Doug, a fellow Jeep restorer in Broken Hill for assistance in locating a number of parts to complete his Jeep restoration project. Listed below are the items he is looking for. If you are able to assist the Doug, please contact him by email (see below) with photos of your parts you may have to sell as well as your price.

breakers.  
Tail lights.  
Head light shells and retainer rims.  
Split rims.  
Blackout Light aFord chassis in rea-  
sonable condition.  
Circuit nd Guard.  
Blackout Marker Lights.  
Main Light Switch Push - Pull type.  
Black Out Light Switch.  
Panel Lamps Switch.

Curved Body Handles.  
Radio Terminal Box (goes under  
RHS body cut out) and conduit.  
Dash Lamp Covers and bulb  
holders.  
Speedo cable.  
Glove box and tool box locks or  
keyless push buttons version.  
Front and Rear springs.  
Panel Lamps Switch.  
Ford Rear Tool Box lids.

Please Reply to Doug: with your photos and your prices on email:  
[dgrev@iinet.net.au](mailto:dgrev@iinet.net.au)

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