

CMP Ford F30

The Long Range Desert Group

A short history by
Charlie Down (LRDGPS)



**"Only men who do not mind
a hard life, with scanty
food, little water and lots of
discomfort, men who possess
stamina and initiative,
need apply"**



R7 'ROTOAIRO': Armed with 37mm Bofors anti-tank gun, with R8 'ROTOEHU' behind.
Courtesy of Brendan O'Carroll



Overview

➤ The Long Range Desert Group (LRDG) was the first and 'arguably the most dashing and successful irregular formation on either side in the entire war'. Their role was deep penetration reconnaissance, road-watching (observing Axis forces movements along the coastal roads to establish logistics and military unit movements to and from the front line hundreds of miles away), and raiding (they attacked airfields long before the British Special Air Service thought of it). They also transported allied agents and the SAS on their initial raids behind enemy lines, recovered downed aircrew and lost soldiers, and were the first to accurately map the North African desert. They were often referred to as the 'Libyan Taxi service' by those who benefitted from their skills, and were highly respected for their ability to get to any point in the desert at a given time.

"There were 3 main variants, the standard Patrol truck, the 37mm Bofors anti-tank gun truck with a special gun mount in the rear body, and the wireless/navigator truck"

➤ The LRDG were masters of the Libyan Desert during the War in North Africa. Experts in desert navigation, driving, signals and survival. Their operational

requirements were unique in the British Army and initially they chose the civilian 2 wheel drive Chevrolet WA trucks, robust and simple, and with the right driving techniques and equipment capable of passing over the majority of desert terrain encountered. After a year of operations these trucks desperately needed replacing, but as there were no more Chevrolets, the best option in North Africa was the CMP Ford F30 with the Noll cab.

➤ Like the Chevrolet truck before and after their operational period, the Ford F30's were modified specifically for LRDG desert operations. The cab was removed for a lower profile, the bonnet panels were usually discarded to allow greater cooling for the engine

and transmission, power take off air compressor fitted to the transmission and sand tyres, a condenser tank added that condensed steam from the radiator to save water, racks for sand mats and channels to help extricate the trucks from soft sand, Vickers MKI (no water can and hose connected, and water jacket filled with oil) and Lewis guns, as well as Boys Anti-Tank Rifle mounts for self-protection and raids. Another feature is that these early Ford trucks were fitted with Chevrolet 'Banjo' type axles due to Ford having initial production issues with their axles. The different makes of axles were designed to be interchangeable on these trucks. Contrary to myth, the LRDG did not use German weapons, and only a few Italian ones.

➤ There were 3 main variants, the standard Patrol truck, the 37mm Bofors anti-tank gun truck with a special gun mount in the rear body, and the wireless/navigator truck

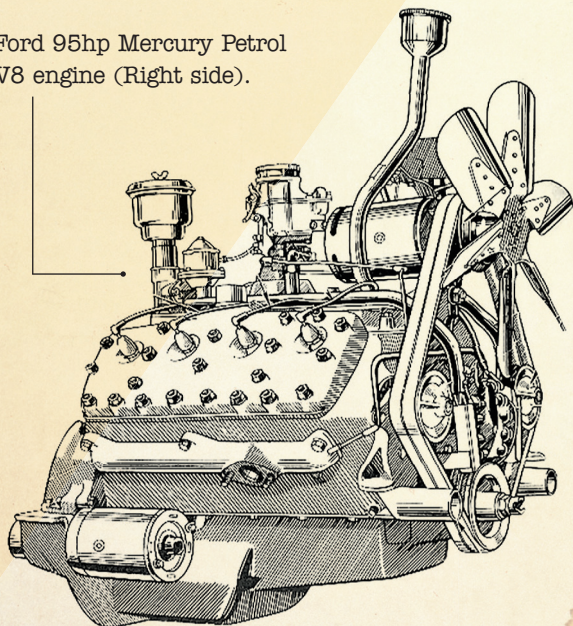
fitted with a Bagnold Sun Compass, a civilian Philips 635 radio receiver for the time signal required for accurate navigation by the stars, and the standard No 11 Wireless set for sending intelligence back to base. When used with the Windom dipole aerial mounted on 16' /4.6m poles they could often 'skip' a signal over a 1,000 miles directly back to Cairo.

➤ The Ford F30's had the advantage of 4 wheel drive, a more powerful 95HP V8 engine, and a bigger load area compared to the Chevrolet trucks. However they were harder to camouflage due to their height, louder with the 4x4 transmission and V8 engine, heavier, had a shorter range due to their poorer MPG (Miles per Gallon) and were less reliable. Some of the trucks had their bodies moved back 12"/300mm on the chassis for better centralisation of the load over the rear axle. These can be identified by 2 spare wheels fitted between the body and the cab. ➤

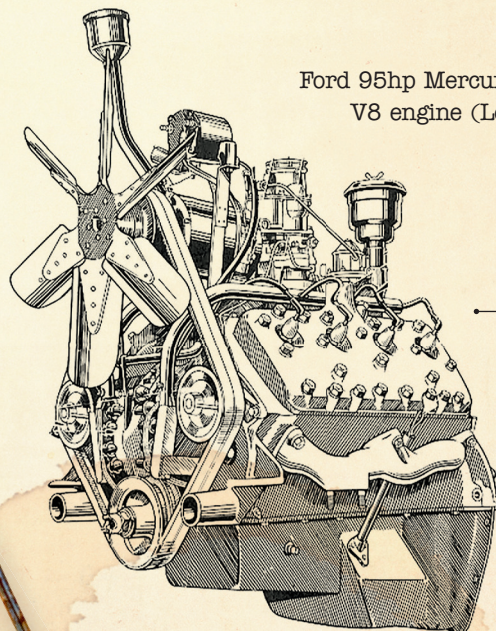
SPECIFICATION: CANADIAN MILITARY PATTERN FORD F30 WITH SEMI FORWARD CONTROL NO11 CAB AND G.S. (GENERAL Service) steel body.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Length 202"/5.13m • Width 87"/2.2m • Right hand drive • Height with no cab or rear canvas hoops 78"/1.99m • Wheel base 134 1/4"/3.42m | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ford 95hp Mercury Petrol V8 engine • 4 speed and 1 reverse gearbox • 4x4 transmission with Chevrolet manufactured 'Banjo' axles fitted • 10.5-16 sand tyres, Good Year, Dunlop or Firestone patterns | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6.00x16 War department split wheels • Fuel tank capacity 24.5 gallons/111 litres • Range 195 miles/314 km • Fuel efficiency 8 Miles Per Gallon/2.8 kilometres per litre petrol |
|---|---|---|

Ford 95hp Mercury Petrol V8 engine (Right side).



Ford 95hp Mercury Petrol V8 engine (Left side).



Camouflage colours

➤ The LRDG were experts at camouflaging their vehicles using nets, tarpaulins and local vegetation when static on operations. When driving to and from their targets the vehicles were painted to blend in with a variety of different desert landscapes that changed considerably across their area of operations. There are no colour photographs to confirm what colour scheme any individual truck or Patrol was painted though. We do know that they used a variety of paints from Army stocks, and it is very unlikely that they sourced paints from anywhere else. The main colours available to them were Light Stone No 61, Portland Stone No64, Middle Stone No 62, Silver Grey No28, Light Purple Brown No 49 and Slate No34.

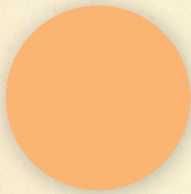
➤ Research suggests that the main base colour was Light Stone No 61, or sometimes Portland Stone No 64, with dark tones added using Silver Grey No 28 or Slate No34. Alternative dark tones could include Light Purple Brown No 49 and Middle Stone No62.

➤ The camouflage schemes listed in these instructions are based on period photos, but there are no clear views of any truck from all angles, so the patterns are based on what information there is for any individual truck, and any missing details have been added based on other trucks from the same Patrol. Trucks were frequently repainted between Patrols making the schemes even harder to identify. The tactical

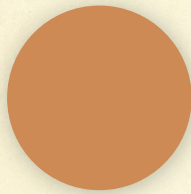
SPECIFICATION: CAMOUFLAGE PAINTS



Light Stone
No.61



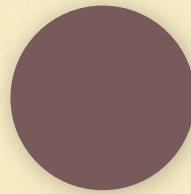
Portland Stone
No.64



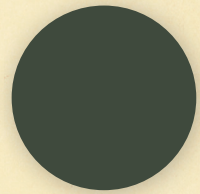
Middle Stone
No.62



Silver Grey
No.28

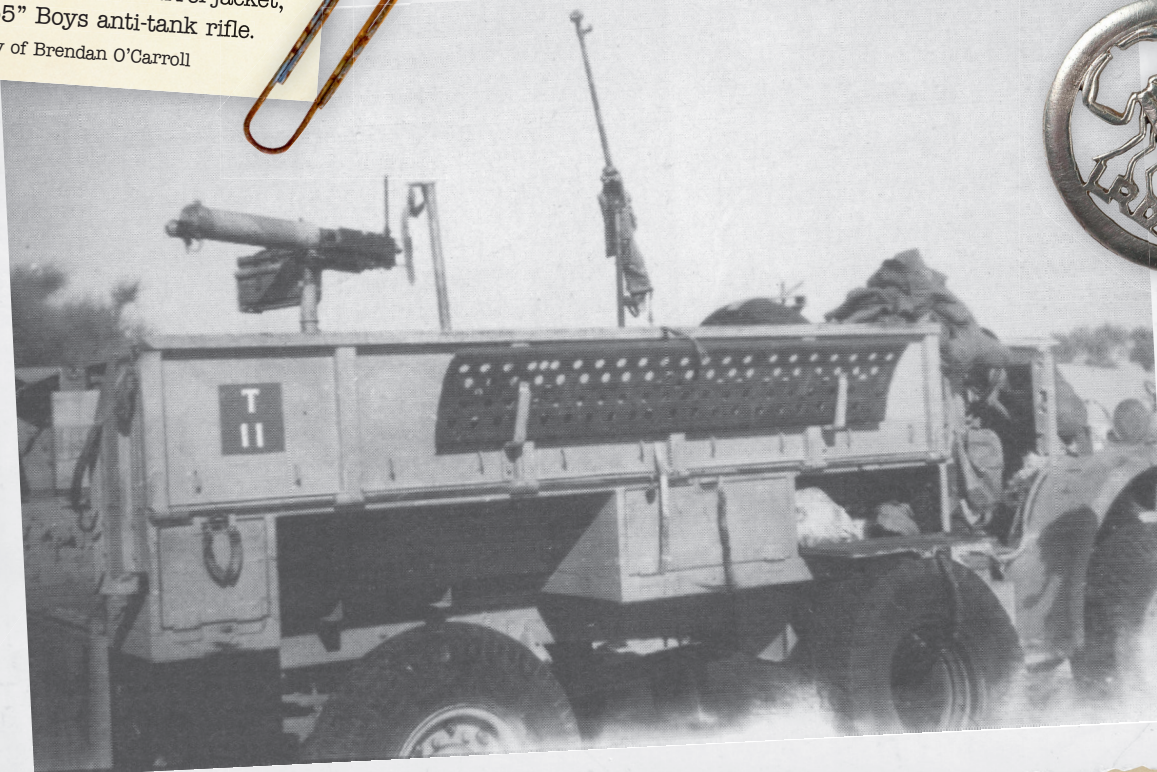


Light Purple
Brown No.49



Slate
No.34

T11 'ANAU': Mounting a Vickers
.303 with painted barrel jacket,
and .55" Boys anti-tank rifle.
Courtesy of Brendan O'Carroll



S11 'SIPOLILO': Side view illustrating the effects of the scouring of the blown sand, and discolouration caused by the sun.
Courtesy of Jonathan Pittaway



marks, registration numbers and truck names are all confirmed through extensive research.

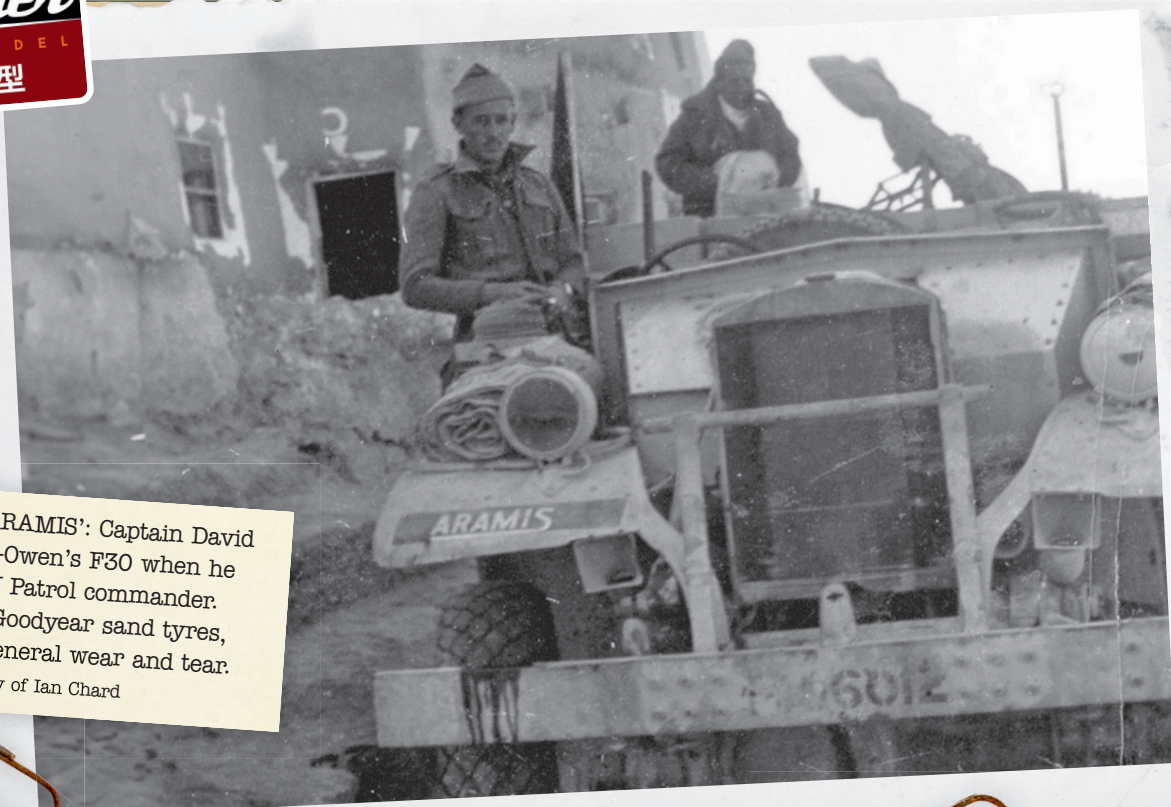
➤ It should be noted that the trucks were very well maintained, and rust is highly unlikely to have developed on any vehicles. The sun and winds of the desert quickly faded

any paint, so toning down any colours is advised. Photographs do not show strong contrasts between the base and dark tones, so colours like Slate No34 and Light Purple Brown No 49 faded considerably if they were used. The trucks did not generally get dirty, and there is not much dust in the deep desert.

Markings

➤ The LRDG operated Patrols of 12 trucks up to early 1942. The main reason for this is that each truck was heavily loaded in order to carry enough supplies for an operation, with only a spare capacity of about 250 pounds/100kg. The added factors of fuel wastage due to use of flimsy cans and generally low Miles per Gallon/litres per kilometre of the V8 engines meant that a large patrol was required to carry any additional load such as SAS raiding teams, agents or extra weapons and ammunition for raids. As such the trucks were numbered 1-12 with the initial of its Patrol before it. The Patrols were T, R, G, S, and Y, with T and R Patrol made up mostly with New Zealanders, S Patrol from Rhodesia, and G and Y Patrols consisting of Guardsmen and recruits from Yeomanry (Territorial) units. Specialists such as signallers and fitters were mostly British. Each truck displayed its Patrol number on the sides and rear. Most Patrols

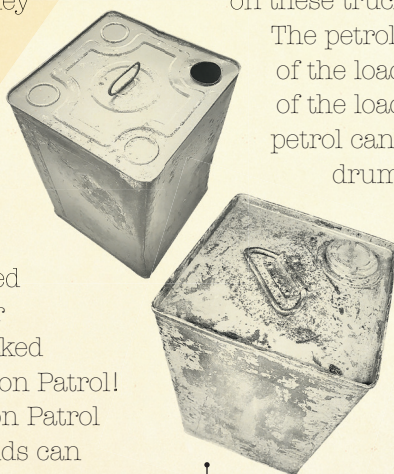
named their trucks, which were painted white on a black rectangle on the front right wing/fender. T, R, and S Patrols mostly named their trucks after locations in their home country beginning with the same initial as their Patrol initial (Salisbury, Rotowhero or Te Paki). G Patrol don't seem to have named many of their trucks and Y patrol named them generally after race horses (Cock of the North), girlfriends/wives (Peggy) or classical names (Nemesis and Aramis). Each truck had their registration number painted in Black on the front bumper and the tailgate, sometimes obscured by additional layers of camouflage paint. 1941 saw the New Zealand T and R Patrols starting to add a Patrol symbol to some trucks, based on images from New Zealand coins. T Patrol adopted the Kiwi and R Patrol the Hei Tiki, a traditional Maori symbol representing luck and fertility, the first being required more on desert operations. ➤



Y6 'ARAMIS': Captain David Lloyd-Owen's F30 when he was Y Patrol commander. Note Goodyear sand tyres, and general wear and tear.
Courtesy of Ian Chard

On-board stowage

➤ The trucks on Patrol were heavily loaded, mostly with petrol and water, as well as other supplies. At the time that the Ford F30's were operational the main means of transporting petrol was in 4 Gallon 'Flimsies' cans, so called because they were poorly made, and tended to leak. They were also designed for single use with a push in cap that was not re-sealable without specialist equipment. This design of can could result in a 1/3 of the petrol being lost on a Patrol. They were normally delivered in a wooden box, 2 cans per box for extra protection, and the petrol soaked wood made excellent cooking fires on Patrol! This meant they were disposed of on Patrol once they were empty and thousands can still be found in the deserts of Libya and Tunisia. Later models of the 4 Gallon cans, Improved Flimsy cans, were made of thicker metal and had a screw cap that allowed them to be reused. These did not need a protective wooden case. The other method of transporting petrol was 50 Gallon drums, 1 or 2 per truck. Water was carried in 2 Gallon POW cans and 4



Original 'Flimsy' (left), renowned for leaking and improved version (right).

Gallon improved 'Flimsy' can, cleaned out and either painted white or had 'WATER' painted in white on the can. Jerry cans, a much superior design, at this time were not readily available from captured German stocks so are rarely seen on these trucks, and then only in small numbers.

The petrol and water being the heaviest part of the load were carried stacked at the front of the load bed, normally about 40-50 4 gallon petrol cans at the start of a Patrol. If 50 gallon drums were used they were stowed at the front of the load bed on the outer ledge, and were equivalent to about 10-12x 4 Gallon cans, but had the advantage of not leaking!

➤ The bulk rations were broken down into cardboard boxes containing 3 days of food for the crew in each box. These were lighter than the petrol and water and were therefore stowed at the back of the load bed with cooking equipment. A tea making kit would be stowed in one of the lockers for regular access by the crew who would 'brew up' a mug of tea at every stop. Normally the Patrol would have communal meals with a designated cook

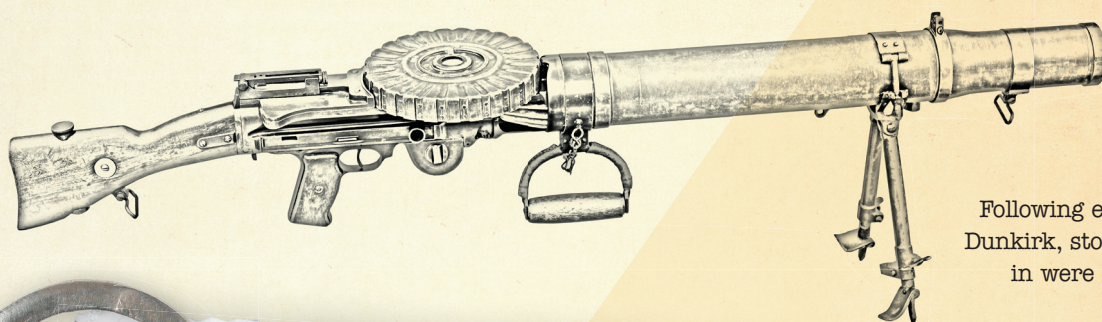
preparing the food with combined rations from each truck, allowing more troops to carry out their other duties such as vehicle maintenance, weapon cleaning, wireless signals etc. The cooks would use either a standard petrol cooker or a 'Benghazi' stove, a cut down 4 gallon can filled with sand and a splash of petrol. Once lit it worked very well. Sometimes they would put the petrol soaked wood from the flimsy can protective boxes in the cooker can for fuel, which lit very readily! Each truck was also capable of cooking its own food if needed.

➤ Spare parts were stowed in various places depending on frequency of need or size. For example, spare suspension springs could be stowed on the front bumper or on the sides of the load bed. A spare wheel was mounted in the Field workshop made bracket at the front of the load bed, and others are sometimes seen stacked horizontally one on top of another at the

rear of the load bed, (usually in the Fitters truck). Tyre repair tools would be stowed in one of the lockers for quick access, with the airline that connected to the valve of the engine powered air compressor in the centre of the cab floor.

➤ Ammunition for mounted guns would be stowed nearby for quick access. Guns would often have a canvas cover to stop sand getting into the mechanisms. However, these covers would be removed when they got close to their area of operation or there was any indication of enemy activity in their vicinity.

➤ Personal items, warm clothing for night time, and bedding would be stowed anywhere convenient, and each crew member would have a 'Bail out Bag', normally a Pattern 37 small pack, containing emergency rations, sometimes a pistol, water, map and compass, hung near their seat for emergencies. ➤



Following equipment losses at Dunkirk, stocks of Lewis guns in were hurriedly pressed back into service.



R8 'ROTOEHU': Note the 'Tiki' symbol on near wing. These later became a standard marking, but were rare on the F30. Courtesy of Brendan O'Carroll



S11 'SIPOLILO': Note the Matabele war shield spear and Knobkerrie on the radiator, and crude heat deflector cowl over the engine
Courtesy of Jonathan Pittaway

On-board stowage (continued)

➤ The stowage plan was carefully thought out on each vehicle. Ready access to essentials and items regularly used was key. Crews would ensure gun mounts were not obstructed by any stowage for obvious reasons, and that the men could man them quickly and use them effectively against any targets. Camouflage nets and soft stowage would be jammed between heavy items to stop them rattling and moving when crossing rough terrain. Items would be tied on and the main load was usually under a painted tarpaulin to secure it and camouflage it. Often photos don't show this arrangement because at every stop the patrol

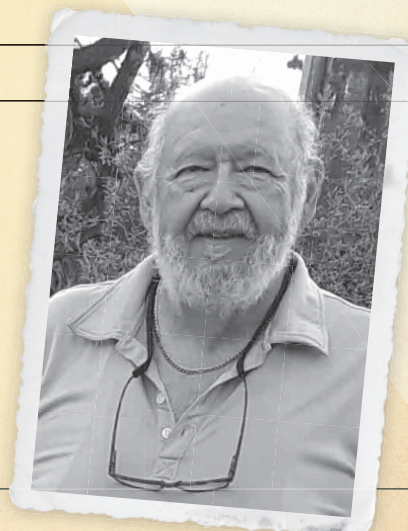
would refuel, do essential checks, and put a 'brew on' (more tea). Only then would activities like taking photos be done and by then any tarpaulin would be removed to get access to supplies and equipment.

➤ Photos show what looks like a very disorganised loading process, but the reality was the opposite with great care and thought being used to place each item in an appropriate place. Each crew could organise their own load to suit their needs, but because they all had similar requirements and routines, the load pattern was essentially the same.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

• Thank you to the following for help and encouragement with this project; Long Range Desert Group Preservation Society, Brendan O'Carroll, Jonathan Pittaway, Nigel Hanson, David Harrison, Hanno Spoelstra, Julian Dace, Gerald Benneworth, Dave Sommers, Bob Amos-Jones, Kuno Gross, Erik Ahlstrom, and Chris Mrosko.

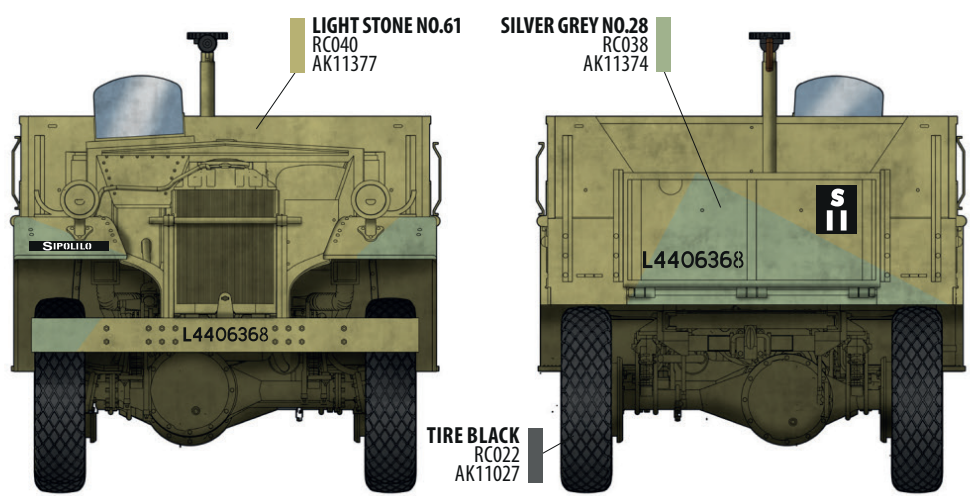
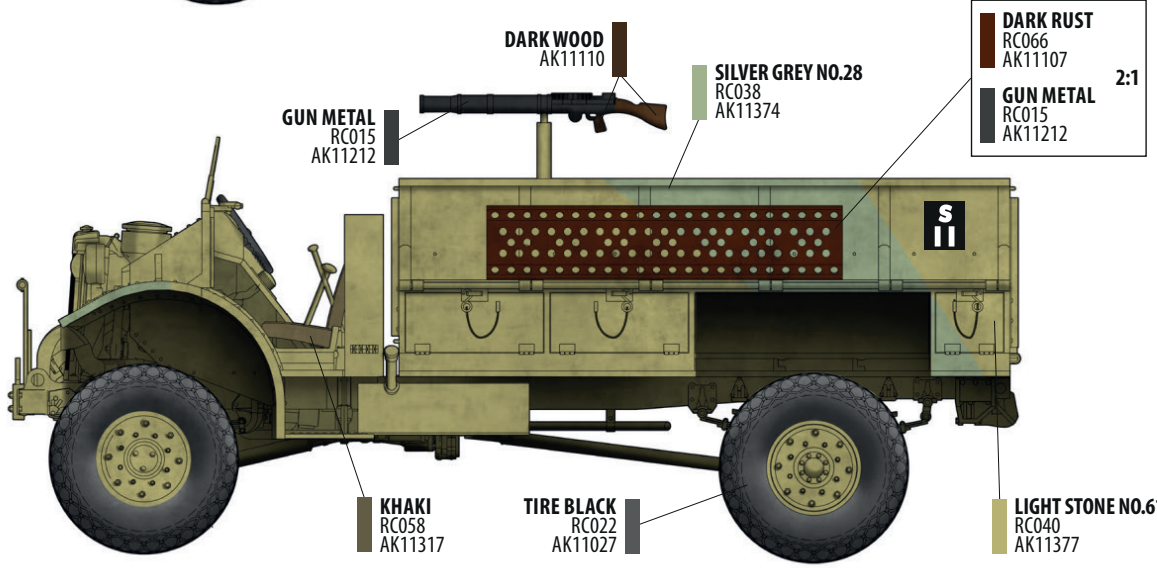
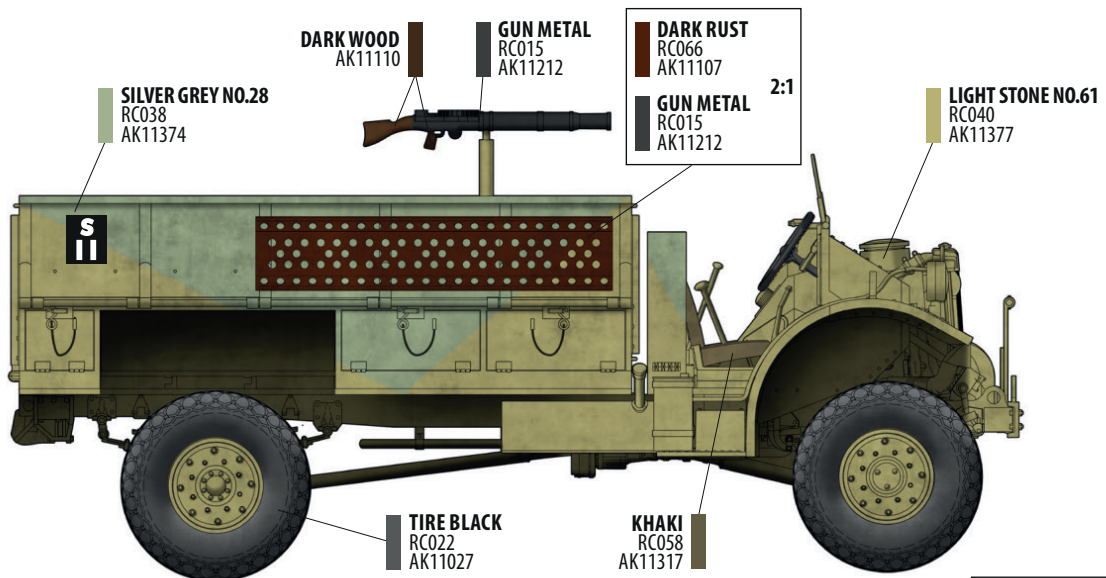
• This model is dedicated to the memory of John. J. Valenti who passed away in 2022. He founded the Long Range Desert Group Preservation Society, and was world renowned for his LRDG knowledge. Those that knew him remember John as a friend to all and a true Gentleman. Rest in Peace Jack.



LRDG F30 Patrol truck



COLOR INFO AND PROFILES BY



- LIGHT STONE NO.61**
RC040
AK11377
OR
PORTLAND STONE NO.64
RC041
AK11378
- SILVER GREY NO.28**
RC038
AK11374
OR
SLATE NO.34
RC039
AK11375
- GUN METAL**
RC015
AK11212
- DARK WOOD**
AK11110
- TIRE BLACK**
RC022
AK11027
- KHAKI**
RC058
AK11317
- DARK RUST**
RC066
AK11107

AK Recommended finishing products

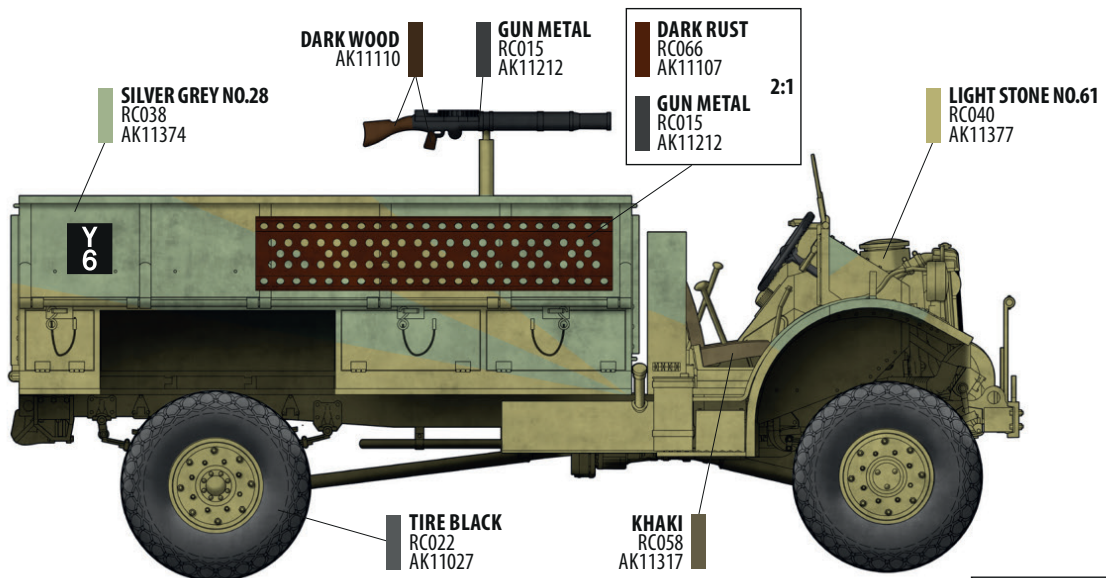
- Overall wash**
AK066 Wash for DAK vehicles
- Dust**
AK022 Africa Dust Effects
- Streaking effects**
AK067 Streaking Grime for DAK vehicles
- Oil**
AK084 Engine Oil
- Fuel**
AK025 Fuel Stains
- Rust**
AK14001 Standard Rust

LRDG F30 Patrol truck



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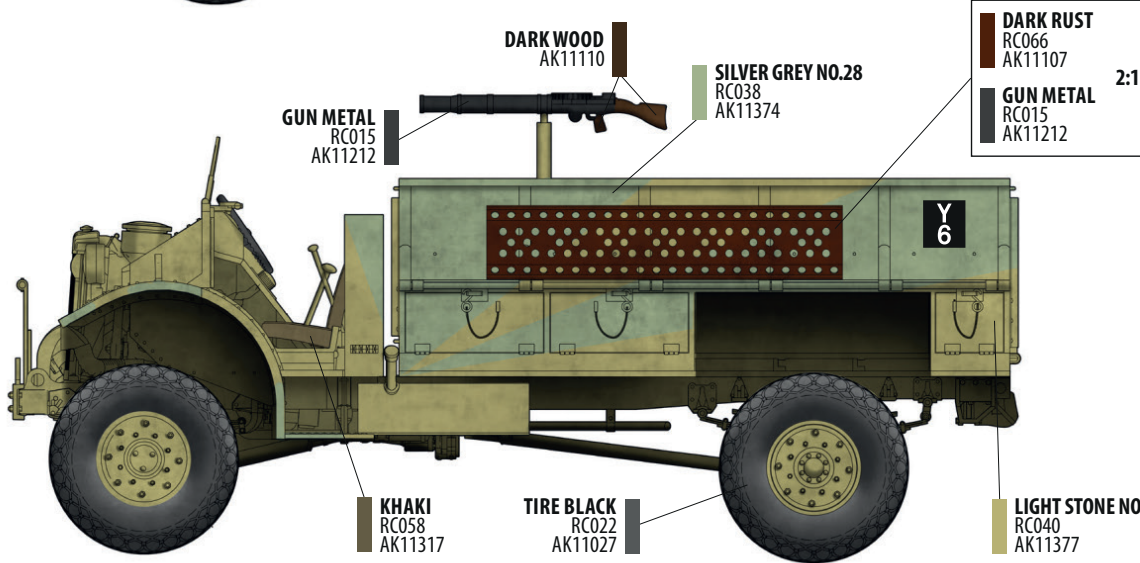
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Streaking effects

AK067 Streaking Grime for DAK vehicles

Oil

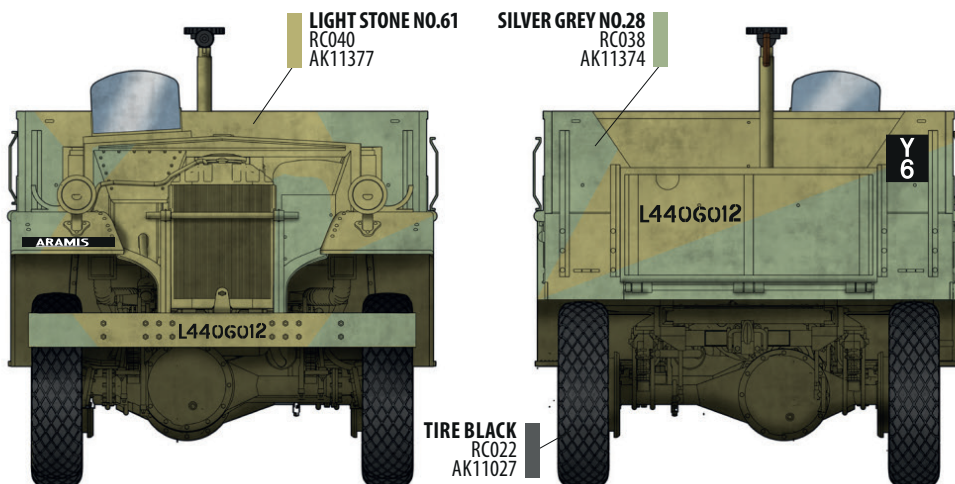
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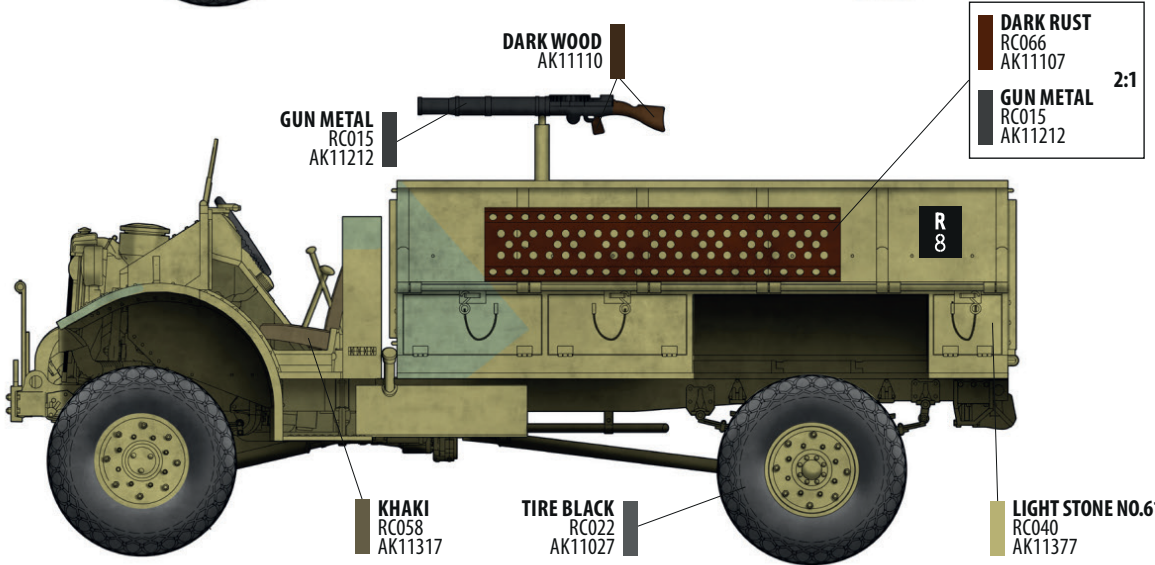
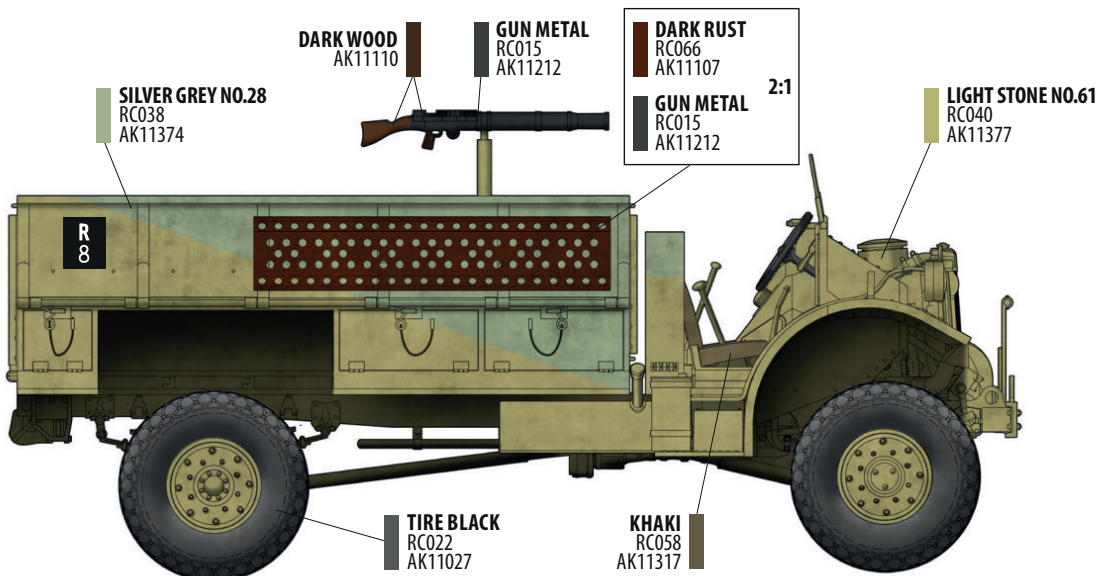
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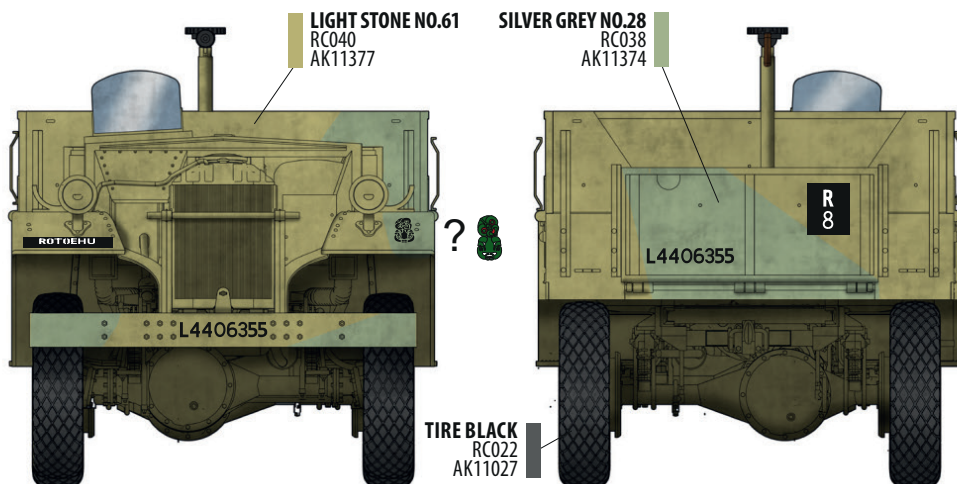
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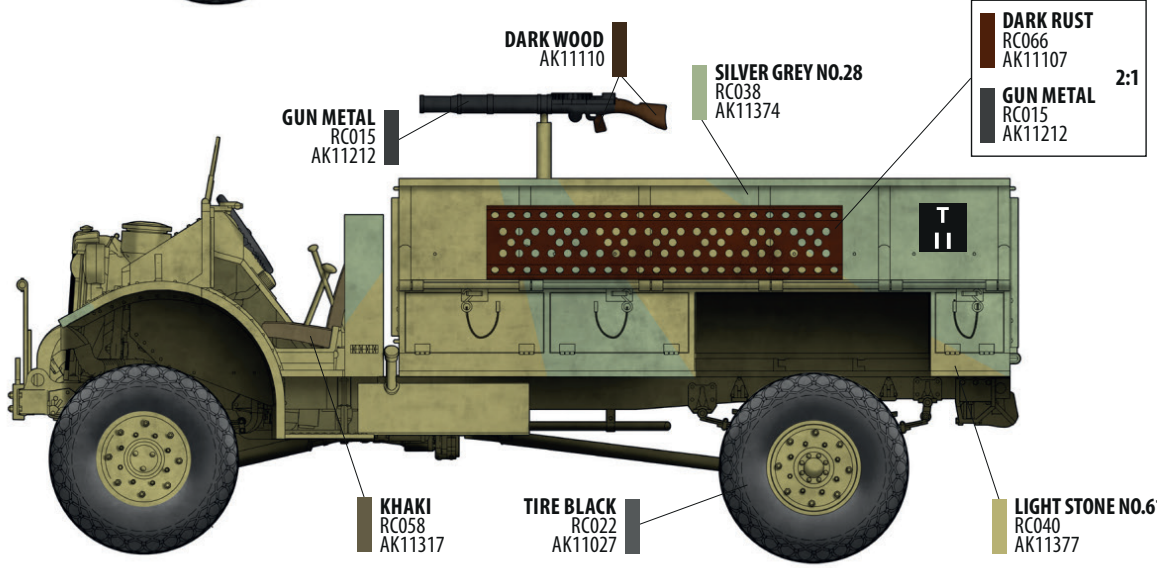
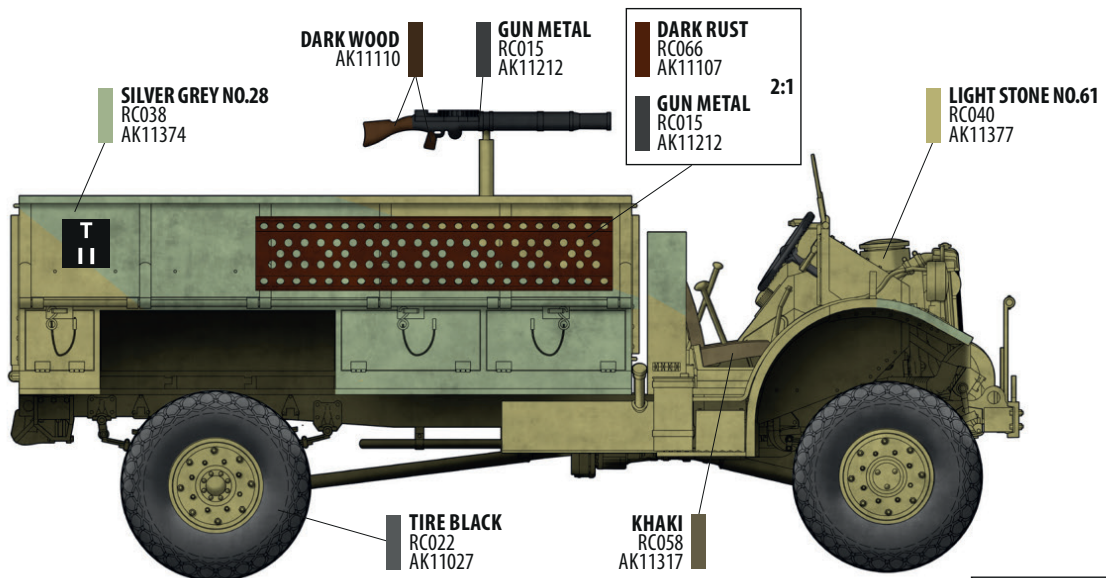
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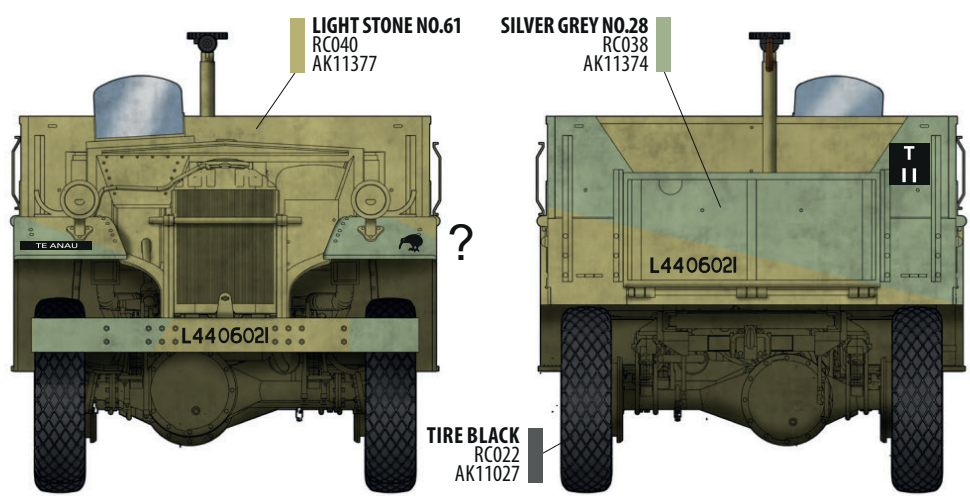
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