

## Model of 15cwt Army Truck 1941

This model of a 15cwt army truck was made by two of my soldiers in the summer of 1941, as a second birthday present for my son William, when I was in command of the Auxiliary Units in Devon and Cornwall. By mid 1941 the threat, indeed the expectation, of the invasion of England by the Germans had eased, and though my units were still on full alert the tension was not so great.

The two soldiers, Sapper Durston RE and Driver Stephens R.A.S.C., were on the strength of my H.Q. party. Durston had been in my T.A. R.E. Company before the war and like the rest of the Unit knew that my son William had been born on 2 September 1939, the day before war was declared, and nearly two weeks after we had been mobilised. In civilian life he had been a Dockyard 'Matey' at Devonport Naval Dockyard.. Stephens who was a very cultured man had worked in his father's furniture and antique shop in Plympton.

We were then training and supplying the under cover resistance Cells with arms and explosives, and with timber and building material for the construction of their secret operational bases or 'Hide Outs'. These were below ground and camouflaged. As a result there was a certain amount of scrap round the H.Q. and Durston and Stephens used some of this to make the truck.

The toy truck is a very good replica of one of the Unit vehicles. The body is made from scrap timber, and the wheels are coils of booby trap trip wire. There is a hundred yards of very thin wire round each spool. The canopy is made from an old paliase, the canvas sacks filled with straw, on which the troops slept when in billets. This was heavily painted to stiffen it so that it would hold its shape. The numbers and flashes were taken from one of the trucks.

The yellow paint on the bonnet was to give warning of poison gas when it turned red. The figure '2' is the Bridge Classification. This showed that it was safe for the truck to cross any bridge Class 2 or above. The red and white '490' was the registered number and sign of Auxiliary Units and the 'Flash' on the other wing was that of G.H.Q. Home Forces. The number was that of Driver Stephen's truck.

The only details missing are the Head Light Masks and the white painted differential and spot light for the vehicles behind in convoy to follow in the dark.

The two holes in the bonnet are where I.B.E. knocked in a staple so that the truck could be pulled around on a string.

  
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