



The little Aktiv Snocat was purchased in relatively small numbers for use by the Royal Marines for winter warfare in Norway. At least one of these vehicles is known to have been used in The Falklands War and was seen in Port Stanley towing a ¾-ton trailer. You can also see a Bv202 that was used with the Snocat, both in Norway and The Falklands.

The MAFVA column

News and views from the Miniature Armoured Fighting Vehicle Association



Paul Gandy describes a visit to the REME Historic Vehicle Collection at Bordon in Hampshire.

On a cold dark morning before dawn back in early March, four members of the South Wales MAFVA Branch set off on a trip to the REME Reserve Collection at the School of Mechanical Engineering (SME) Bordon in Hampshire. One of our members had previously been a Warrant Officer in the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers and had attended his Artificer

course at Bordon many years before, so for him this was a trip down memory lane. But it was more than just that as Dai is making a model of a Conqueror ARV and wanted to see the example they had at Bordon of this extremely rare vehicle.

We all met up with other members of the MAFVA at a nearby car park and made our way to the camp. Once there we were greeted by Roger Jones, the



ABOVE LEFT: This is the final version of the Chieftain, a Mk.11 with its Stillbrew armour around the front of the turret and TOGS gunnery system in place of the searchlight. The front part of the Chieftain turret was made from cast steel with some large tolerances, so the Stillbrew package had to be custom made for each vehicle. ABOVE RIGHT: A Scammell Pioneer tank transporter and an Austin gantry breakdown vehicle beautifully restored to show them as used in the Western Desert of Africa during WW2.



ABOVE LEFT: In need of a good dusting and a bit of TLC, the Austin Loadstar was designed as replacement for the Austin K9 that is behind it, but only a handful came into service. ABOVE RIGHT: The Scammell Contractor was trialled by the British Army, but it never came into service as the Thornycroft Antars fulfilled that role (although it was used by several other countries including Jordan). The Scammell Crusader 35-ton behind it though was used as a Light Equipment Transporter. Both of these vehicles are used by the REME Reserve Collection to take some of their exhibits to various shows.

RIGHT: Some of the MAFVA members photographing the Conqueror ARV that was being driven towards them inside the hanger.



curator of the reserve collection, who gave us a brief talk about the collection, and then we were let loose to climb over, under, or inside any of the exhibits that we wanted to. This is something that you very rarely get the chance to do, especially with such a unique collection of vehicles. For most of the time, people look down on a model, but most times at vehicle displays or rallies where you take your reference photos to make the model, you can usually only photograph the real thing from the ground up, which means that you are very likely to miss some important detail on the roof. It was particularly useful to be able to stand on one vehicle to photograph down onto another one next to it, such as me on the platform of a Foden Recovery Vehicle photographing a Humber 1-ton truck.

It was fascinating to hear how they had modified the engine in the Conqueror ARV to enable electronic ignition, and even more so when the huge beast was started up and driven towards the entrance of the hanger, enabling us to photograph it from all sides. Equally impressive was the sight of a Mk.2 Antar tank transporter completely stripped down to its constituent parts which were being restored. This is about the ultimate in kit building, 1:1 scale!

After spending some time looking, photographing, measuring or just chatting to friends about the vehicles in the collection, we were then given the opportunity to see a line up of vehicles outside on a vehicle park. These were all damaged in one way or another and were being used as both recovery hulks and for trainee artificers to carry out damage assessments to see if a vehicle is worth repairing, or cast aside as scrap.

The whole site at Bordon is due to close shortly, with everything moved from Bordon and Arborfield, including the REME Museum, to form part of a new training academy at what was RAF Lyneham. This will mean that the museum and the reserve collection will both be at the same location, which for us in South Wales will be about an hour's less travelling each way.

This was a thoroughly enjoyable day out with a fascinating collection of vehicles and in the company of some good friends from other MAFVA branches.

ABOVE: An incredibly impressive sight of one of a very small number of Conqueror ARVs that is being restored into working order with electronic ignition. There was a deafening roar and the ground shook beneath as it came towards us.



RIGHT: This is a very rare beast indeed. It's an FV3561 Dummy Axle 10-30 tonne Recovery Trailer. It could be attached to a Thornycroft Antar tractor unit to enable it recover a disabled one by lifting up the front axle to have a suspended tow. It is similar to a smaller 1-3 tonne version.



Members of South Wales MAFVA at a previous Open Afternoon. We're having another one on Sunday 4th October 2015.

A MAFVA invitation

Our South Wales branch of the MAFVA will be having another Open Afternoon on Sunday 4th October at St. Johns Church Hall, Rachel Close, Danescourt, Cardiff CF5 2SH from 2.30pm to 5pm. You are most welcome to come along and have a look at our models or ask us how we made them. For more information about this or about South Wales MAFVA please contact Paul Gandy at paul.gandy@btinternet.com or phone 01443-208447. If you'd like to know more about the MAFVA, have a look at our website www.mafva.net