



Restoration of Priest M7B1 'Kohen'



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Maarheeze
The Netherlands



Priest M7B1 'Kohen'

Technical Specifications

Manufacturer: Pressed Steel Car Company
(Chicago / Hegewisch Station)

Production figures: 826 in period from March 1944 till February 1945

Hull ID: 4381

Date of Delivery: December 1944

USA registration: USA 40152844-S

Weight: 22.700 kg (50,045 lbs)

Crew: 7 (Commander, Driver, gun crew)

Engine: Ford GAA, 8 cylinder, DOHC 60°V8 gasoline,
Displacement: 1,100 cu in (18 L)
Power output: 525HP at 2.600 RPM
Torque: 1,100 Nm

Transmission: 5 forward, 1 reverse

Speed: 25 miles/h (40 km/h) on the hard ground,
15 miles/h (25 km/h) on the soft ground

Range: 110 miles on hard ground
(fuel capacity 175 US gallons)

Dimensions: Length: 6,02m (237")
Width: 2,87m (113")
Height: 2,95m (116")

Armament Main: 105mm howitzer M2A1
ID: M2A1 15944 1944

Secondary: Cal.50 M2 HMG

Ammunition Stowage: 33x rounds stockpiled into the floor plates,
105mm: 69 rounds,
Cal .50: 300 rounds

Armour: 108 mm max

Priest M7B1 - USA-40152844-S 1944 - 'Kohen'

The latest addition to the WW2 Armor collection is the M7B1 Howitzer Motor Carriage (HMC) Priest – 'KOHEN'. This Priest M7B1 was built in 1944 and received the US Army registration USA 40152844-S. The hull number is 4381. In total only 826 M7B1's were produced till February 1945.

This Priest was fully restored by BAIV.NL. This book gives the reader an indication of all work and hours spent during its nine months restoration period.

WW2 Armor is a group of staff and volunteers dedicated to the preservation of, and education about, WW2 US Army armored vehicles and crews. They represent various units ranging from the 2nd Armored Division's 82nd Reconnaissance Battalion, the 2nd Armored Division's 66th Armor Regiment, the 2nd Armored Division's 78th Armored Field Artillery Battalion and the 702nd and 704th Tank Destroyer Battalions. All these units fought against the Axis forces in the European Theater of Operations (ETO).

All WW2 Armor members dress in WW2 era uniforms, use American weapons and equipment and operate American WW2 vehicles. Vehicles range from Jeeps, Scout Cars, Armored Cars, and tanks! WW2 Armor is devoted to maintain the memory of WW2 US Army armor and armor crews. For this purpose they obtain and maintain WW2 US Army armored vehicles and restore them to fully working order. They take them to events where they can display their capabilities as well as the armor tactics of WW2.



General information

The 105mm Howitzer Motor Carriage (HMC) M7, named the 'Priest' by the British, was an US self-propelled artillery platform. The name Priest is given by the British. Reason; the .50 machine gun pulpit looks unmistakably like a pulpit in a church. It accompanied US armored divisions, such as the US 2nd Armored Division, providing artillery support on a platform that could keep pace with the armor. The M7 Priest had the 105mm M2A1/L22 Howitzer, as well as a Ma Deuce (M2HB) .50 machine gun. The 105mm Howitzer was a powerful indirect fire weapon, though it could be used for direct fire if required. At times the Priest batteries found themselves confronted directly, they used direct fire at the approaching enemy. The 105mm could deliver punishment from as far as 12,205 yards. The Priest carried at least 69 rounds of 105mm ammo. With the addition of an ammunition trailer, the crews would carry a great deal more ammunition.

The M7B1 'Priest'

M7B1 Priest came later in production than the M7 and was based on the M4A3 Sherman. It was produced from March 1944 until February 1945 by the Pressed Steel Car Company from Chicago. Major improvement was the implementation of its powerful Ford GAA V8 tank engine with a displacement of 1,100 cu in (18 L), a power output of 525 HP and a torque of 1,100 lbs. (1.400 Nm). This engine was without any doubt the best tank engine built in the US during WW2.

The Priest in action

The M7 and M7B1 Priests were used by the American and British armor divisions as Self Propelled Artillery. The advantage was flexibility, maneuverability and they could give the tanks of the armored divisions artillery support on every desired moment.

The Priest was in action in North-Africa, Sicily, Italy, France, the entire Western front up to Berlin and in The Pacific Theatre (PTO) and proved to be very reliable and successful.

The Priest M7B1 saw first action in the Battle of the Bulge. There the M7B1 proved to be very effective. Same for the campaign up to Berlin.

For this reason, it was also frequently used in the post war period.

In the '50s, when the M7B1 was widely used in the Korean War, the elevation of the gun was inadequate to be used in the mountain area. To improve this many Priests have been modified in this period by raising the Howitzer and add an extra segment in the pulpit. This modification was standardized as the M7B2.

This Priest

This Priest was active in Europe during WW2. Unfortunately, details of its active service in this period are unknown. After the war it was stored in a USA warehouse in France. In the early 60's it was modified to M7B2 by ABS France (Atelier de construction de Bourges) and saw post war active duty in the German army (Augustdorf) till the early 70's.

After active service this Priest was transported to a German proving ground where in early 2010 it was salvaged for restoration by Ivo Rigter Sr. and Jr., the founders of BAIV. However, it took till 2017 before the restoration, initiated by WW2 Armor, really started. Restoration was completed in January 2018.

For BAIV it was a great pleasure to work for WW2 Armor. With monthly updates the BAIV Team informed the Team of WW2 Armor in Florida, USA about its progress. During this period a very good relation was established.

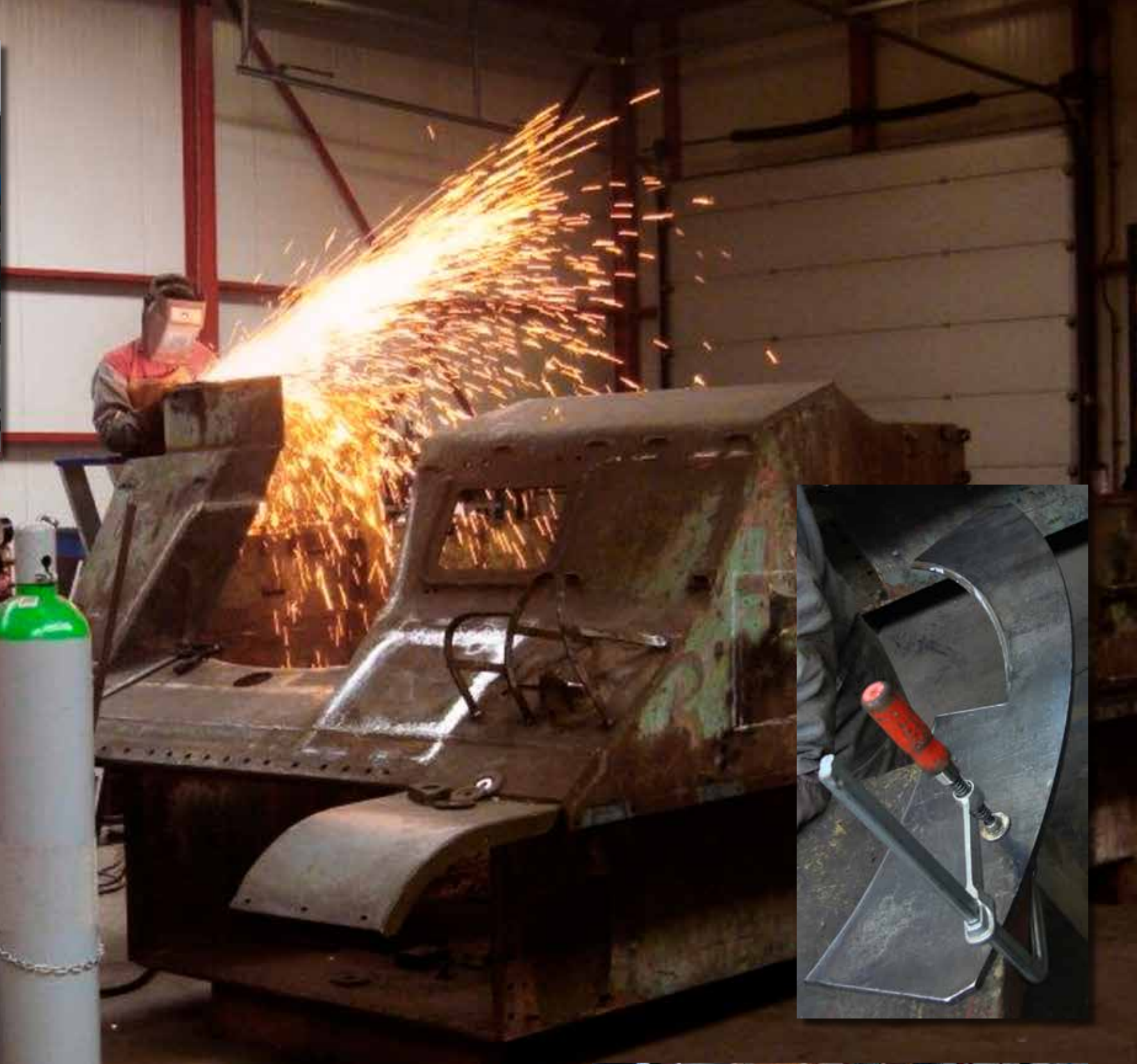
Hopefully our cooperation will grow further in the upcoming decades, considering WW2 Armor's bucket list containing replicas of the WW2 German Panther and King Tiger Tanks, the M26 Pershing, the Sherman M4A3E2 Jumbo, a M10 Tank Destroyer etc. on one hand and a couple of very nice overseas events in Europe on the other hand; D-Day Normandy 2019, Operation Market Garden 2019, Battle of the Bulge 2019 and of course the liberation of The Netherlands in 2020. Both parties are very excited to work together and support and help each other after completion of this unique project.

Arrival of the Priest M7B1 at BAIV in The Netherlands

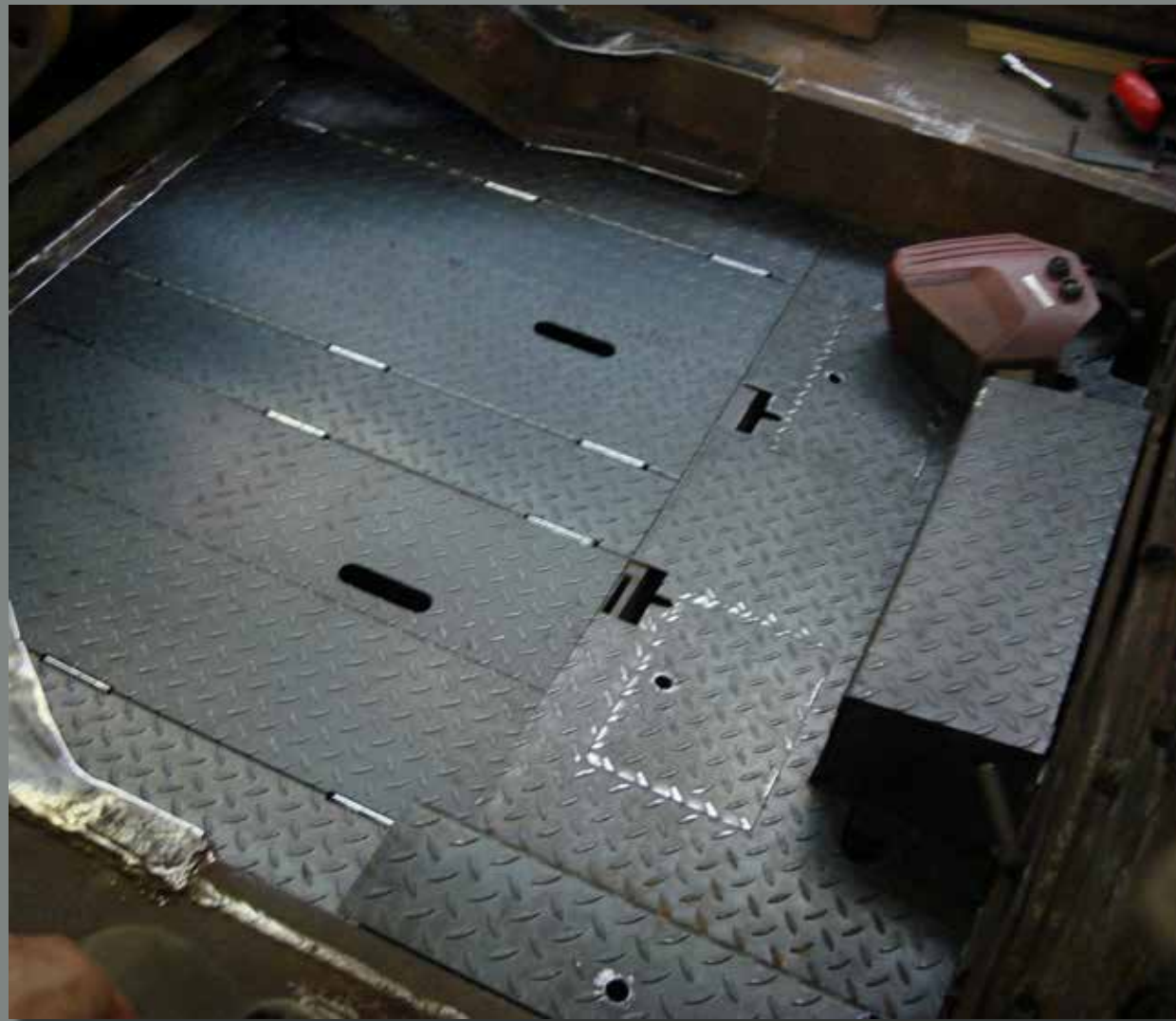










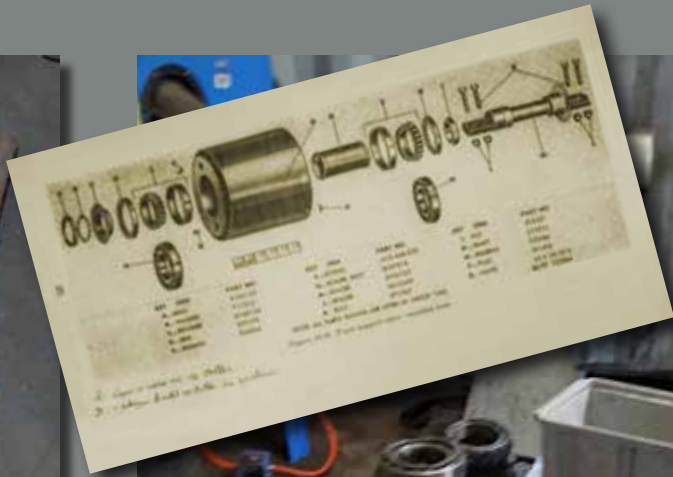


























105MM HOWITZER MOTOR CARRIAGE, M701	
ORD. DEPT. U.S. ARMY	
W.P. 21 PASSENGER STEEL CAR CO. INC. SERIAL NO. [REDACTED]	
CREW 11 MEN	GROSS WEIGHT [REDACTED] LBS
ENGINE CRUISING SPEED-2500 R.P.M.	
MAX. FAN SHOOT PERIODS-2500 R.P.M.	
VEHICLE CRUISING SPEEDS-	
1 [REDACTED] M.P.H.	2 [REDACTED] M.P.H.
3 [REDACTED] M.P.H.	4 [REDACTED] M.P.H.
5 [REDACTED] M.P.H.	REVERSE [REDACTED] M.P.H.
PUBLICATIONS	
PARTS LIST-SML-G199	
OPERATORS MANUAL TM9-749	
MAINTENANCE MANUALS	
TWO [REDACTED]	









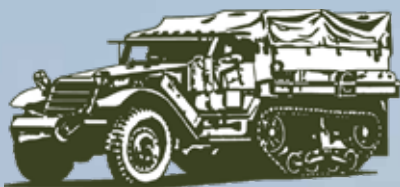
First appearance at the International Army Show



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