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**POCKET HIPPO!!**

Here's taking a look at one of WWII's, most efficient foot soldiers



Edition 12 of a special CV series by  
**APOLLO TYRES**



**Specifications**  
**LEYLAND Hippo MK 2 GS**  
**Powerplant:**  
 one (100 bhp) Leyland type L6 cylinder diesel engine.  
**Dimensions:**  
 length 8.31m (27ft 3 inches)  
 width 2.46 m (8 ft 1 inch) height 3.33 m (10 ft 11 inches)  
**Weights:**  
 unladen 8941 kg (19,712 lb) and laden 19711 kg (43,456 lb)  
**Performance:**  
 radius 837 km (520 miles)



The 6x4 ton format became widely used in the British army after the war. Manufacturers included Albion, Foden and Leyland. Designed as a heavy load carrier, the Leyland Hippo 6x4 ton truck entered into military service in 1944. This humble truck was essential for the allies for winning the World War II. Lack of supplies was more often than not one of the reasons for lost battles. Ammunitions, fuel, reinforcement, food etc were all brought to the front line in vehicles like this. For every vehicle involved in the front line fighting, there would be tens of others providing it the means to keep going.

It proved its worth hauling supplies during the closing stages of the allied advance across north western Europe. The huge bodies on these trucks had a well-type floor incorporating wheel arches, this giving lower loading height, an important element in the war days as forklift trucks were few and much loading was accomplished by hand. Steel hoops and a canvas tilt gave weather protection to the stores carried. The hippo MK 1 initial version was based on the pre-war commercial type with an open cab with canvas tilt and a fixed windscreen, while the hippo MK 2 had an all steel cab. The hippo MK 2 had single rear wheels while the MK 2A had dual wheel fitted with 10-50-22 tyres. The difficulty with the MK 2A was that it had to carry two spares tyres, one for the front and another for the rear.

It is perhaps amazing to see these trucks in service during the 1980s. Besides the general service vehicles, many were fitted with van type bodies and several expandable body types were built,



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Never wary of progress, never skeptical about success,  
 Never scared of challenges, never tired of trying,  
 Every step of the way we travel with our customers,  
 On the "unstoppable" journey to success.

albeit of similar design. The side panels were split horizontally, the upper half being raised to form an extra roof area and the lower half forming extra roof space to provide additional freedom around machinery.

The vehicles could also be linked together to form a consolidated workshop area. Van bodies included an auto-processing type for developing photographs, an enlarging and rectifying type for exposing original film onto new film, a printing type with rotary offset printing machine and a photo-mechanical type equipped with rotary offset printer, work tables and plate racks. Entrance to all

these bodies was through a single door at the rear. Because of the length of the body, the spare wheel had to be transferred from behind the cab and placed under the rear of the chassis. A post-war fitting was the adoption of the 9092 litre AVTUR refueller body and with the rear body removed, of a Coles MK 7 or Neal type QMC crane.

The trucks could even transport radar systems. Each unit was mounted on the bed of its AEC Matador or Leyland Hippo lorry but needed a much more stable platform before it could rotate. This was achieved by swinging out and clamping four huge articulated legs each fitted with an 'elephant's foot'. Hydraulic power provided by the lorry's engine allowed each foot to be lowered independently until the chassis of the lorry was lifted from the ground and suspended beneath the levelled radar, with the huge tyres just off the ground. The lorry cab was then unbolted and hinged forward below the level of the radar cabin. In this ingenious manner the weight of the now superfluous lorry performed a useful function by giving the required stability.

The Leyland hippo introduced in 1944 was one of the later British examples of which over 1,000 were eventually built. To see the quantities in which the contract vehicles were produced, we must look to America where Fords, Chevrolets, GMC's, Dodges etc were produced in vast quantities. There were some 9,90,000 light vehicles, 8,00,000 medium, 5,80,000 heavy vehicles, and with specialist vehicles a grand total of something like 33,00,000 transport vehicles being produced during the war years.