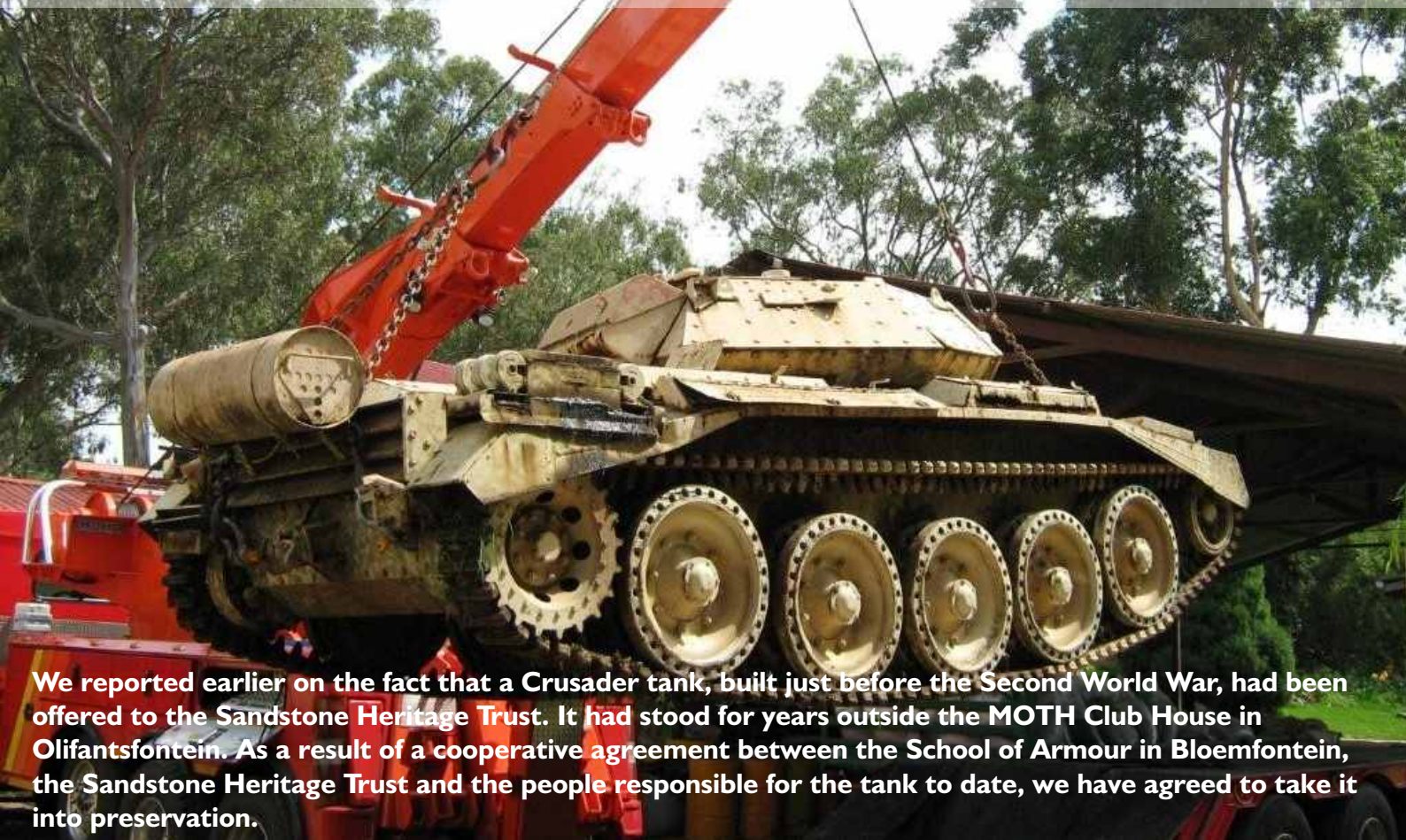


OLD SOLDIERS CAN COME BACK TO FIGHT AGAIN CRUSADER TANK SUCCESSFULLY RELOCATED



We reported earlier on the fact that a Crusader tank, built just before the Second World War, had been offered to the Sandstone Heritage Trust. It had stood for years outside the MOTH Club House in Olifantsfontein. As a result of a cooperative agreement between the School of Armour in Bloemfontein, the Sandstone Heritage Trust and the people responsible for the tank to date, we have agreed to take it into preservation.

Here is the story ...



Sitting quietly outside the old MOTH Hall in Olifantsfontein was this Crusader tank.

We have not been able to ascertain exactly how long it has been there but 50-years is probably a reasonable guess.



With the tank already securely attached to the Rieks Towing crane it only remains for Charles Viljoen to remove the gate.

When we were offered the tank we asked if we could have the gate as well because it is very much part of its history.



This is where the Rieks guys sort out the men from the boys by gently lifting the crane out through the trees onto open ground ready to be loaded.



The next phase of the operation is to lift the tank onto the low bed. Rieks make the job look easy with their magnificent equipment and skilled operators.



Arriving at its temporary destination at Hogsville.

It will be staged at Hogsville until it is moved to our military refurbishment facility.



Rieks Towing are given the job of moving it. We had made an unsuccessful attempt to move it ourselves but we did not have the winching power to do what Rieks Towing were able to do with ease. These pictures show the tank being lifted by the heavy recovery vehicle off the low bed.



She is lifted clear off the low bed, which then drives out from underneath the Crusader.



On the ground at its new home after approximately 50-years



The magnificent heavy recovery vehicle is able to manoeuvre the tank under the roof without moving. Such is the power of hydraulics. Safely under cover in its temporary home.



David Shepherd, a surprise visitor to the site on his first day in South Africa. He instantly recognised the Crusader for what it was.



The Rieks Towing team with Charles Viljoen (right). It is great to see professionals at work.



For those that have been to Hogsville it is well known for its preserved old service station which in the 1930's served vehicles driving between Krugersdorp and Pretoria on what was nothing more than a farm road in those days.



Photographs Courtesy of Van of Rieks Towing and Wilfred Mole

The Sandstone Heritage Trust is focused on preserving South Africa's transportation, military and agricultural history and it is therefore satisfying that this old tank, whose detailed history we will probably never get to the bottom of, has been saved for future generations to enjoy.



Sandstone Estates (Pty) Ltd

27 November 2008

Our reference: Rieks/LR/mm/11/08

Rieks Towing
P.O. Box 52165
Fouriesrus
Pretoria
0024

Attention: Mr. Louwrens Riekert - Managing Director
Re: Exceptional Service

Dear Louwrens,

Further to our telephonic discussion of today's date we would like to take this opportunity to formally thank you for the superb service provided by your company.

Many companies include on their websites and in their advertising material clichés about how good their companies are. Your website states "Exceptional performance when you need it most" and "Reliable efficient service" and in your case not only do you live up to what you claim but the reliable and effective service came with smile and nothing was too much trouble for the people we dealt with.

While all your staff are all very professional we would like to single out Mr. Hennie Pieterse whose organisational and communication skills ensured a successful outcome. Having arranged to recover a Crusader tank we were advised on the very same morning that it was being recovered that an Oshkosh horse we had acquired was also ready for collection and needed to be moved. Knowing that we were going to be asking a lot at such short notice we called Mr. Pieterse and asked if he could collect the Oshkosh immediately after recovering the tank. With little hesitation he said that he would see what he could do and called me back within 30 minutes to advise that all the arrangements had been made.

Directors: W. E. Mole • C. D. Ham • M. C. Myers • R. Capper • C. A. B. Stahl

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Company Registration No. 8710181201

We would also like to thank your staff for taking pictures of the recoveries and providing these to us on CD. The Sandstone Heritage Trust records all it's undertakings and activities and the photographs are valuable for our archives. You make like to visit our website www.sandstone-estates.com which will give you a better idea of what we do.

It is refreshing to deal with a company that delivers on its promises and it is easy to see why you are successful.

Lastly, thank you for the information on the organisation that maintains your vehicles, they are immaculate.

We wish you continued success.

Yours sincerely


Michael Myers

Our appreciation for the outstanding service received from Rieks Towing.

CRUSADER FACTS

A-Z OF WORLD WAR TANKS

A15 Cruiser Tank Mark VI Crusader



The Crusader was built by Nuffields utilizing a large number of components from the A13 series, including both the Christie suspension and Liberty engine of the original design, as always to keep down costs, production time and vehicle weight. It too had a riveted hull, welded turret and an extra outer layer of armour bolted on.

Ready by March 1940, production was then increased and a consortium produced 5,300 Crusaders by 1943 as it became the principal British tank from spring 1941 until the arrival of the American Sherman.

However, the Crusader always suffered from poor reliability, which reflected the urgency with which it had been rushed into production. It first saw action near Fort Capuzzo, Libya, in June 1941 and did well against Italian armour, but although the Germans respected its speed, it was no match for the PzKpfw III

or indeed the 5.5cm/2.17in, 7.5cm/2.95in and 8.8cm/3.46in anti-tank guns.

After withdrawal from front-line use in May 1943, it was mainly used for training, but also converted for special purposes, including:

- Crusader OP (Observation Post) and Crusader Command: vehicles modified with dummy gun and extra radio and communications equipment.
- Crusader III, AA (Anti-Aircraft) Marks I/II/III: Mark I – the turret was removed and replaced by single Bofors 40mm/1.57in Anti-Aircraft mount; Mark II – a new enclosed turret with twin 20mm/0.79in Oerlikon AA cannon; Mark III – similar to the AA Mark II but with radio equipment removed from turret and installed in hull.
- Crusader II, Gun Tractor Mk 1: open-topped box superstructure converted as a fast tractor for 17pdr anti-tank gun and its crew.



LEFT: Tanks in line! This mixed 8th Army tank column, photographed in the Western Desert, is being led by two Crusaders, the front one being a Crusader IICS (mounting the close-support 76.2mm/3in howitzer instead of a 2pdr). The Crusader was the best of the early cruisers.

ABOVE LEFT: This is the Tank Museum's Crusader III, the final production model, armed with a 6pdr instead of the original 2pdr gun. ABOVE: Tank crewmen hard at work. The crew of a Crusader III, belonging to the 16th/5th Royal Lancers cleaning their 6pdr gun in Tunisia, April 1943.

- Crusader ARV (Armoured Recovery Vehicle): removal of turret and addition of recovery equipment.
- Crusader Dozer: turret removed, winch and jib fitted for working dozer blade.
- Crusader with AMRA (Anti-Mine Roller Attachment): mine-clearer.

A15 Cruiser Tank Mk VI Crusader



Entered service: 1940

Crew: Mk VI – 5; Mk III – 3

Weight: Mk I/II – 19,255kg/18.95 tons

Mk III – 20,067kg/19.75 tons

Dimensions: Length – Mk I/II – 5.99m/19ft 8in

Mk III – 6.3m/20ft 8in

Height (over turret hatch) – 2.24m/7ft 4in

Width – 2.64m/8ft 8in

Mk III – 2.79m/9ft 2in

Armament: Main – Mk I/II – 2pdr OQF (ordnance quick-firing) L/52 gun

Mk III – 6pdr OQF gun

Secondary – 1 or 2 x 7.92mm/0.312in Besa machine-guns

Armour: Maximum – 51mm/2.01in

Powerplant: Nuffield Liberty Mk III/IV V12 petrol, 253.64kW/340bhp

Performance: Speed – 44kph/27mph

Range – 161km/100 miles