

Three's a Crowd

Diamond T Dump Trucks – Three Model 972A Tipper



Upwards of 30,000 chassis of this type were manufactured from 1940-1945, but were fitted with several different body types

When World War Two began, economically depressed northern European democracies had been too weak and were loath to deal with the rising threat of fascism while America was doggedly pursuing isolationist policies.

When Germany invaded Poland, war was declared but then came the rapid defeat of France, there were co-ordinated Luftwaffe aerial attacks, massed armour assaults and the narrow escape of the British Expeditionary Force from Dunkirk. All of this speedily proved the superiority of the Wehrmacht both technically and tactically and the American government, whose population did not want to get involved, could only observe as Europe seemed on the verge of collapse and Japanese aggression built.

From the start of the war, despite isolationism, President Franklin Roosevelt worked hard

to prepare Americans for a conflict that he regarded as inevitable – he saw it as a threat to national security. In 1939, he persuaded Congress to repeal the arms embargo provisions of the neutrality law so that weapons could be sold to France and Britain.

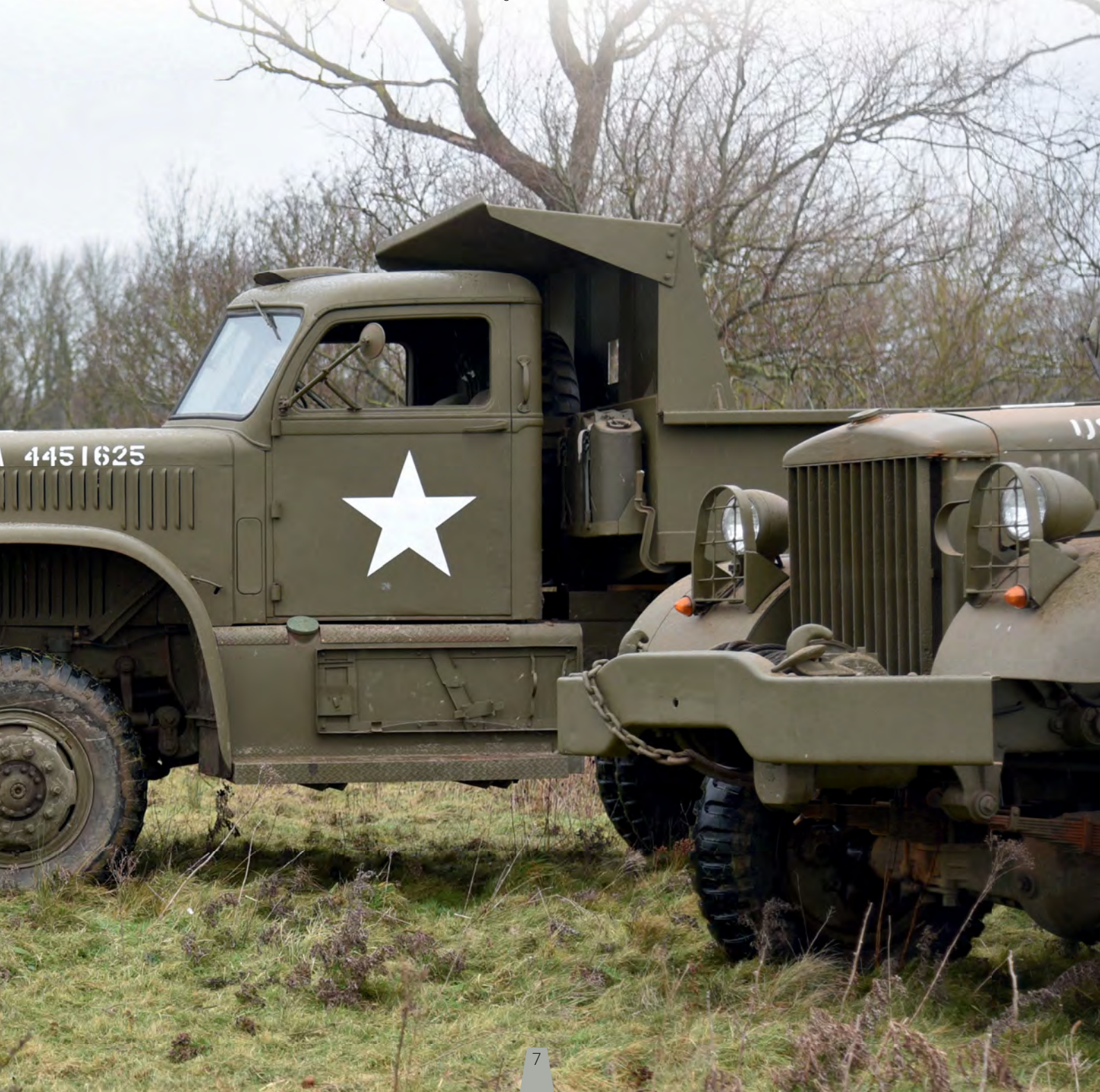
Then, following the fall of France in 1940, he began pushing for a military build-up and started providing aid, in the form of Lend-Lease, to Britain standing alone against the Axis powers. America, declared Franklin, must become “the great arsenal of democracy.”

By spring 1941, American Special Observer Group (SPOBS) members had landed on the quiet in the UK. They were there to prepare for eventual American involvement in the conflict, although at the time, this was a political secret. SPOBS, with engineers, were construction planning for potential US Bomber Command bases, provision was being made for defensive Naval

bases in Northern Ireland and Scotland and preparations for the mass transportation and accommodation of US forces were underway in the UK as was the American relief of British troops in Iceland.

The American observers concluded that, although cement and crushed stone needed for such construction was mostly available locally, their reports identify that lumber and quarrying equipment was in short supply – the message was sent that engineering supplies, including earth-moving equipment would have to come from the USA.

US neutrality was officially abandoned, abruptly, by the Japanese invasion of Pearl Harbor in December 1941, but plenty of plans had been made before that and many had already been actioned. Now the American economy, emerging from the Great Depression, was mobilised for the war effort in





Three variants in reverse order; open cab with winch, open cab, closed cab



The dump had a 12ft (3.7m) long 4 cubic yards (3 m3) steel body

SPECIFICATIONS

Make **Diamond T**
 Model **972A Dump**
 Nationality **American**
 Years Made from **1940-1945**
 Production Run **More than 30,000** of all variants, dump, cargo, wrecker, ponton and specials
 Engine **Hercules RXC**
 Type **Six-cylinder**
 Fuel **Petrol**
 Displacement **529 cubic inches**
 Power **106 @ 2300rpm**
 Torque **342 lbs-ft @ 900rpm**
 Transmission **Five-speed**
 Type **Manual**
 Gears **Three forward one reverse**
 Transfer Box **Two-speed**
 Suspension
 Brakes **Bendix-Westinghouse air brake**
 Wheels **20in steel**
 Tyres **9.00x20in 10-ply**
 Crew/seats **Two**

Dimensions(overall)

Length **24ft 1in (7.3m)**
 Width **8ft (2.4m)**
 Height **8ft 7in (2.9m)**
 Weight **18,050lbs (8,300 kg) empty, less 850lbs for models without winch**

Modifications

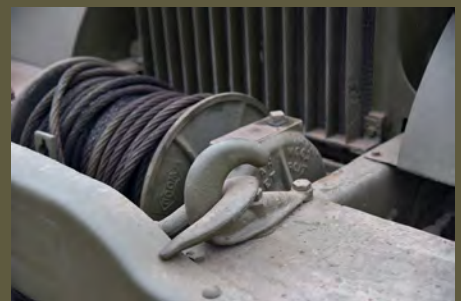
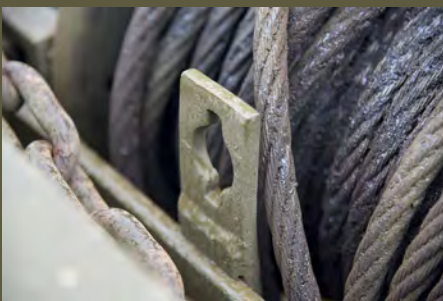
In use the tailgate was sometimes hinged at the top, sometimes at the bottom. Early models were made with a closed cab, but later versions came with an open cab

Hercles RXC engine





CLOCKWISE(FROM TOP LEFT): leaf springs; rear axle; cab interior; Door – elegance and beauty; The spare tyre is mounted between the cab and body, along with either water or spare fuel cans; In early production, an effort to reduce front axle loading meant the dump truck wasn't fitted with a winch, but from 1944 onwards they were fitted as standard on the request of the Corps of Engineers; A 15,000lb Garwood winch is mounted behind the front bumper; Tow hitch detail, with their high torque these trucks had a highway towing rating of 12 and half tons; Headlight; Dump truck tailgate can be hinged from either the top or bottom. When hinged at the top the bottom could be opened while dumping with a lever on the left front corner of the body, just behind the driver's window. If hinged at the bottom it was designed for spreading





ABOVE: Some time during 1943 production swapped from the hard cab to the military style open cab allowing greater visibility

TOP: The tipper back came over the open cab

TOP RIGHT: Early models were built with a closed cab, based on the Diamond T commercial truck cab

a way which had not been seen before and is unlikely ever to be seen again. Roosevelt established the War Production Board in January 1942 to regulate industrial production and manage the rationing and allocation of materials such as metal, rubber and fuel as well as to establish labour rates and price controls.

The Automotive Council for War Production was formed later in 1942, its aim to share resources and expertise and maximise the industry's contribution to defence production contracting. The auto industry retooled

P-47 Thunderbolts from the 318th Fighter Group taking off from East Field on Saipan, Marianas Islands in October, 1944.

Lead ship: 'Big Squaw' Republic-Evansville P-47D-20-RA Thunderbolt s/n 43-25327 19th FS, 318th FG, 7th AF Assigned to John "Jack" H. Payne

ARCHIVE

"it is not enough to turn out a few more planes, a few more tanks, a few more guns, a few more ships than can be turned out by our enemies. We must out-produce them overwhelmingly, so that there can be no question of our ability to provide crushing superiority of equipment in any theatre of war"

President Franklin Roosevelt



not just to produce trucks and Jeeps but also tanks, aeroplanes, torpedoes, bombs, helmets and ammunition for the government. What was achieved by the industrialists in America was phenomenal; not only did it contribute to allied success, it transformed America into the leading power it is today; thousands of new jobs had been created and mass production techniques honed.

Diamond T Trucks

In 1939 Diamond T, along with White and Autocar, had been building prototype four-ton rated trucks in response to the American Army Ordnance Corps identifying a need for a range of tactical trucks with the capability to be driven off-road in all weathers. Four-ton (3,600 kg) load rated six-wheel drive trucks had been successful towing artillery since the 1930s so that size was to be standardised to tow the new M114 155 mm howitzer. Diamond T, like the other manufacturers, turned their production facilities from commercial truck building, to building trucks for the government.

From 1940-1945, Diamond T built upwards of 30,000 four-ton, 6x6 chassis. There were a number of body options; the Cargo model 968, the Wrecker 969, the Ponton 970, built with the transport of bridge pontoons in mind, an extra long Cargo model 975 and some special specification trucks including one for the Chemical Warfare Service

which came with a crane. Diamond T also built the Dump 972 model. These collective chassis, although developed with artillery in mind, were utilised largely by the US Corps of Engineering; American military engineering was much in demand during the war not just in the UK but in the Pacific theatre against Japan and in the campaigns in North Africa, Italy, and western and central Europe.

With huge simultaneous construction projects under





A few statistics

► Statistics relating to the production capacity of America and its exponential growth during the war years are simply staggering

► In 1939 the US Army still pulled its artillery with horses
The US automotive industry produced 20% (\$29b of goods) of all the items manufactured by the US for the war effort



► Not one single commercial part, truck or car was manufactured in the USA from February 1942 to October 1945 – anything made, was all destined for the military

► A new national speed limit of 35mph was set to preserve gasoline and tyres as fuel and rubber were both rationed

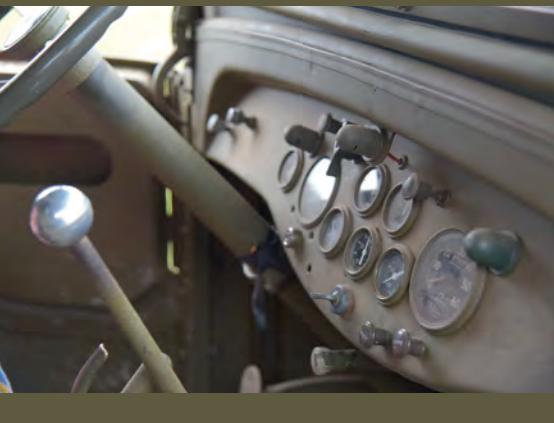
► America produced 5.9m weapons, 2.8m trucks and tanks and 27,000 aircraft from 1942-1945



► Chrysler, just one manufacturer, built 22,000 tanks. Compare that to the 24,000 tanks that Germany built during the war

► General Motors supplied \$12b dollars of military equipment, two thirds of which was either a new design or newly manufactured by them or both

► In four years, American industrial production, already the world's largest, doubled in size



The three Diamond T variants

ABOVE: open cab

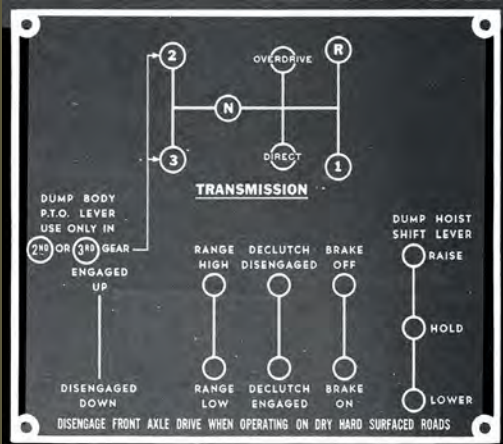
MIDDLE: open cab with winch

TOP: closed cab



way from airfields to training camps, hospitals to army bases, roads and stores, bridges to harbours, earth moving equipment, including dump trucks could barely roll off the production lines quickly enough and a new organisational

approach was needed for a new type of war. The concept of the 'engineer group' began which saw five or six engineer units, including regiments, dump truck companies, welding detachments and engineer maintenance com-



THIS IMAGE & OPPOSITE: The body is raised and lowered by a hydraulic cylinder and lever arrangement under the body



panies working together on specific tasks. That there were dump truck companies within the US Army, indicates the importance of the role that these machines, and the men who drove them, played.

Nothing is known of these particular dump trucks' war history. The collector, who kindly allowed *Classic Military Vehicle* magazine to photograph these magnificent specimens, acquired them separately over a number of years. They were each in pretty bad shape when he bought them but have been brought back to life with a great deal of care and attention to detail.

Together they look and sound incredible and truly give the sense that there was no mountain big enough to stop the US Army; dump trucks and other trucks like them, were an integral part of the US war effort and symbolise the success of the mammoth logistical effort behind the Allies. These machines and the production and supply lines which brought them to the front to supporting each and every arm of the military in all of the battlefields of the war, eventually swung the pendulum in favour of the Allies. If the axis powers began the war with better tactics and equipment, then the Allies won the war though the scale of their response in industrial mobilisation, largely in the USA, which kept their armies supplied - something that the axis powers were increasingly unable to do. ■

