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TRACKED FIGHTING VEHICLES

CHIEFTAIN VS. FV423

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BY JASON GONDERMAN ■ PHOTOS: JASON GONDERMAN, DINA COOPER, AND COURTESY OF BULLET PROOF DIESEL

BIG BOY TOYS

A PAIR OF TRACKED BRITISH FIGHTING VEHICLES

If you've never been enlisted, then odds are good you really have no idea just how impressive a modern battle tank really is. From early on, young boys are drawn to them, and grown men yearn to someday sit in the driver seat. The raw power and sheer destructive force they wield is what draws us in, like flies to honey. There are not many diesel-powered vehicles on the planet that reach the same level of awesome.

Nothing portrays the image of being bulletproof better than a tank, and it was for this reason that brothers Ken and Gene Neal decided to purchase a decommissioned British Chieftain tank that would adequately represent their company, Bullet Proof Diesel. Built in 1966 at the Royal Ordinance Factory in Leeds, UK, Chieftain 02 EB 87 spent the majority of its life stationed in Germany before being retired from active service in 1993. In 1997, the Chieftain was transitioned to civilian life in the United States and joined the Bullet Proof Diesel fleet in late 2011.

The Chieftain alone didn't satisfy the Neal brothers' addiction to tracked British fighting vehicles, so in 2013 they added an FV423 Armored Personnel Carrier to the collection. While not quite as large, the APC still attracts plenty of attention. Even more impressive is both the APC and Chieftain run and are driven regularly, with the occasional car crushing thrown in just for fun.

Tanks really are the ultimate toys for big boys. And while there may not be enough of them in the world for everyone to own one, we're certain when the zombie apocalypse hits, the Neal brothers are going to be just fine.

Chieftain Battle Tank

Armored Personnel Carrier (APC)

BIG BOY TOYS

When your toy is a 65-ton tank, transporting it to and from the sandbox can prove to be a challenge. That is, of course, unless you have a semitruck at your disposal.

SPECIFICATIONS
FV4201 CHIEFTAIN

- **MANUFACTURER:** Leyland
- **CREW:** 4
- **COMBAT WEIGHT:** 65 tons (U.S.)
- **OVERALL LENGTH:** 35.5 feet (gun forward)
- **HULL LENGTH:** 9.5 feet
- **WIDTH:** 11.5 feet
- **POWERPLANT:** Leyland L60 19.0L six-cylinder (multifuel compression ignition)
- **POWER:** 750 hp at 2,100 rpm
- **RANGE:** 310 miles
- **FUEL CAPACITY:** 195 gallons
- **TRANSMISSION:** TN 12
- **SUSPENSION:** Horstmann

DESIGN OF THE British Chieftain battle tank first began in 1956 as a replacement for the Centurion line of tanks. It featured a more sloped hull, which greatly increased the effectiveness of its armor, and was outfitted with a new L11A5 120mm rifled cannon and two L7 machine guns. In battle dress, the Chieftain weighs more than 65 tons.

Providing motivation for the Chieftain is a two-stroke Leyland L60 six-cylinder, 12-piston engine. This opposed-piston design allowed for the use of multiple fuels, although the primary fuel was diesel. The engine made 750 hp in its most powerful trim and was able to propel the tank to 19 mph when traveling cross-country, and 30 mph on pavement. To prevent them from tearing up highways, they were outfitted with rubberized track pads.

The Chieftain proved itself to be capable in combat, having found a large market in the Middle East, and remained in service until the early '90s. Operation Desert Storm was the last large-scale conflict Chieftains were a part of before being replaced by the Challenger series of tanks.

Behind the engine is where the gearbox is located. Steering is handled by hydraulically actuating the brake discs, which are mounted to the gearbox.

Mounted mid-ship is the Chieftain's Leyland L60 two-stroke, opposed-piston, multifuel engine. This six-cylinder, 12-piston engine produced 750 hp in its most powerful iteration.

A crew of four would live in a Cheiftain tank, with a driver taking the forward position located ahead of the turret ring, while the commander, gunner, and loader all sat behind. After climbing inside, it's hard to imagine how four people even fit in such tight and dangerous quarters, let alone spent days on end bunkered down inside.

BIG BOY TOYS

SPECIFICATIONS

FV432 ARMORED PERSONNEL CARRIER

- **MANUFACTURER:** GKN Sankey
- **CREW:** 2 + 10 troops
- **COMBAT WEIGHT:** 15 tons (U.S.)
- **LENGTH:** 17 feet
- **WIDTH:** 9 feet
- **POWERPLANT:** Rolls-Royce K60 (multifuel compression ignition)
- **POWER:** 240 hp
- **RANGE:** 360 miles
- **TOP SPEED:** 32 mph
- **SUSPENSION:** Torsion bar

SINCE ITS INTRODUCTION in the 1960s, the FV432 has been the most common variant of the British Army's FV430 series of armored fighting vehicles. Between 1962 and 1971, GKN Sankey built 3,000 of these units, and around 1,500 remain in active service today. The chassis is a conventional tracked design, with the engine at the front and driving position to the right. In the passenger compartment there are five seats on either side of the vehicle, and they fold flat to provide additional cargo space when needed.

BIG BOY TOYS

Propelling the FV432 is a Rolls-Royce K60 six-cylinder 6.5L multifuel compression-ignition engine. Similar to the Chieftain, the K60 is an opposed-piston design. The engine is capable of producing 240 hp, which allows for a top speed of 32 mph. And although they were originally designed to be amphibious, most FV432s had this capability removed at one point in their lifespan.

"Between 1962 and 1971, GKN Sankey built 3,000 of these units, and around 1,500 remain in active service today."

During battle, 12 soldiers would cram into the APC's cramped quarters. The driver and commander were seated up front, and the rest took up positions on seats that fold down from each side.

A Rolls-Royce K60 multifuel engine powers the FV432 APC. This 6.5L six-cylinder uses an opposed-piston design, similar to the Chieftain, and produces 240 hp.

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