



OTTER LIGHT RECONNAISSANCE CAR

The Otter was intended as a Canadian-built replacement for the British Army's Humber Scout Car. The Otter was designed in 1942 and experiments began on a prototype immediately. Although of simple and rugged design, it did not compare as favourably as was hoped. It was considered under-powered, and the driver's visibility was poor, with the visors open or closed. Despite these shortcomings, General Motors pressed ahead with production. The pilot model had pistol ports, extended turret armour and a different vision port for the driver. After testing, the spare tire mount was repositioned to a less obtrusive location, the pistol ports were omitted and vision ports were changed for production vehicles.

Production commenced and 1761 vehicles were made by General Motors in Oshawa between mid 1942 and 1943 under the official designation, "Car 4x4 Light Reconnaissance, Canadian Mark I". Despite its problems, it was a popular vehicle with the troops, mainly because of its reliable mechanical components and its ease of maintenance. It saw service with the British Army in the latter stages of the North African campaign, and with both the British and Canadian armies all through the Italian campaign and in limited numbers in North-West Europe after D-Day in June 1944. In the Canadian Army, it was used



by divisional reconnaissance regiments (e.g. the Princess Louise Dragoon Guards in Italy) as well as by Royal Canadian Engineer Field Squadrons and Royal Canadian Army Service Corps Transport Companies. It remained in Canadian service in the early post-war years.

The Canadian War Museum's example has a varied history. In the 1950's Mr. John Horesko, a Niagara Falls area scrap dealer, purchased two Otters and two Fox armoured cars from Crown Assets Disposal Corporation. He removed and sold their GMC 270 engines and abandoned the remains to rust. In 1980, Dr. William Gregg, a well known military vehicle enthusiast, learned that these four vehicles were lying dormant. After an extensive search, which took a year, all the necessary parts were recovered and restoration efforts got underway. Dr. Gregg restored all four vehicles and donated one Fox and one Otter to the Canadian War Museum. These vehicles are suitable for display only as they never did receive replacement drive-trains.

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An OTTER of the Princess Louise Dragoon Guards in Italy

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

DIMENSIONS:	Height	244 cm	96 in
	Length	450 cm	177 in
	Width	216 cm	85 in
LADEN WEIGHT:	Front axle	2385 kg	5260 lbs.
	Rear axle	2604 kg	5740 lbs.
ARMAMENT:	1 x .303 Bren gun on anti-aircraft mount.		
	1 x .45 Thompson machine gun.		
	2 x .303 Lee-Enfield rifles.		
	1 x 4 inch Smoke discharger.		
COMMUNICATIONS:	1 x No. 19 Wireless Radio Set		
	1 x Signal pistol		
POWERPLANT:	GMC 270 cu. in, 6 cylinder in-line, 4 cycle petrol.		
	106 h.p. at 3000 rpm		
	12 volt battery ignition		
FUEL CAPACITY:	Petrol	136 liters	30 gallons
	Water	17 liters	15 quarts
	Oil	8 liters	7 quarts
TIRES AND BRAKES:	Hand brakes - mechanical (on transmission)		
	Foot brakes - hydraulic (on wheels)		
	Tires - 9.00 x 16 in. run-flat*		
	Wheelbase - 256,54 cm 101 in.		

TURNING CIRCLE:	15 m	49 ft.	
CLEARANCE:	20 cm	8 in.	
PERFORMANCE:	Max. speed -	72 kmh	45 mph
	Fuel consumption -	2.85 kml	8 mpg
	Fording depth -	61 cm	24 in.
	Max. gradability -	45%	
	Operating Range -	402 km	250 miles
ARMOUR:	Turret cone -	8 mm	
	Hull,	front -	12 mm
		sides -	8 mm
		rear -	10 mm
	Roof -	12 mm	

*Run-flat, tires were designed to run for up to 80-160 km (50 - 100 miles) at speeds not exceeding 48 kmh (30 mph) with a full load when the tire had been deflated completely.

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