HISTORY OF SIGNALLING IN 100 OBJECTS
"MONTY'S COMMAND VEHICLE"

The Associated Equipment Company (AEC) was a familiar truck manufacturer in the UK for many years with its company's headquarters in Southall, Middlesex. AEC manufactured the Dorchester Armoured Command Vehicle (ACV) that you see in the pictures above. 415 of these vehicles were built. They weighed 12.2 tons and the armour plate was 10-12 mm to provide personal protection from small arms fire. It had a speed of approximately 45 mph.

Monty's actual ACV is the one shown on the left above, which now sits in the Royal Signals Museum, Blandford. This vehicle, L4436192, covered 11072 miles without once being "off the road" owing to repairs. It travelled throughout the Western Desert, went to Sicily and then up through Italy as part of the

8th Army. It finally ended WW2 in Austria. The radio fit in the rear of the vehicle varied, but on the whole it was HF radio, such as the Wireless Set No. 19, which went through several Marks and was manufactured by the Pye Radio Company. The second picture above shows L4426428 being used as a British ACV, with the radio operators in the rear of the vehicle with their radio sets. This particular picture shows Brigadier AC Wilson outside the ACV near Tobruk in November 1941. Telephone lines were also remoted into the ACV and Dispatch Riders would report into the rear message centre, as shown above. Tobruk fell to the German attack in June 1942 and was not recaptured until well after the Battle of El Alamein, October—November 1942.

What is less well known is that during the campaign in the Western Desert, several of these vehicles were captured by the Germans and then used by them. The picture on the left shows Field Marshal Rommel using one of these vehicles. The story goes that when he was in one of these ACV vehicles, he was attacked from the air by his own aircraft. He had part of his shoe shot off during this incident. The German General is shown sitting on top of the vehicle with his boots just visible in the picture.