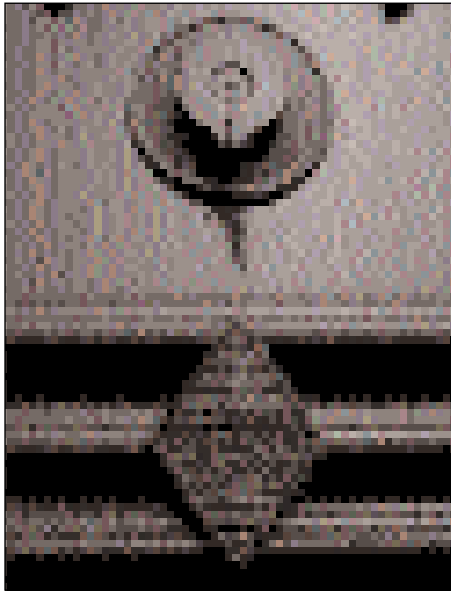


French Mustard!



The editor attempts to shed some light on the little Renault 4x4 and 4x2 military trucks derived from the company's commercial R2060/R2080 models

It's almost inevitable isn't it how any British magazine article on the 'traditional' products of the French motor industry, and particularly of the Citroën factory, can't help but refer to their 'quirky design' and 'Gallic charm'. Alright, this is not a piece on Citroën's military vehicles, which certainly earn the title of being both 'quirky' and 'charming', but rather on the military Renault trucks derived from the Goélette models. Nevertheless, compared to the British trucks of the period, they still seem to possess oodles of the afore-mentioned 'Gallic charm'.

THE Renault R2060/R2080 series was a natural development of the company's Model 206E1, an attractive forward-control, all-steel panel van with rear-wheel drive and a capacity of 1000kg, which had been launched immediately after the War in 1945. Although the vehicle was an immediate success, within two years of its launch, it had been replaced by the much-improved R2060. Known as the Goélette, the R2060 was powered by the somewhat old-fashioned Renault type 603 side-valve,

four-cylinder 2.4-litre petrol engine which was also known as the '85'. Engine aside, it was a competent and modern vehicle with a capacious body and, from the outset, was offered as a van, five-patient ambulance, mobile market stall - effectively a van with opening side panels - and as a chassis-cab for mounting specialised bodywork.

The vehicle used what was subsequently to become the conventional layout for light-truck and van design, at least until front-wheel drive was adopted universally, by using a front-mounted engine fitted inside the forward-control cab, with drive via a four-speed gearbox to the rear wheels. This configuration provided the maximum space for payload within the overall length of the vehicle.

On the original R2060, access to the two-seat cab was via wide, rear-hinged 'suicide' doors, but these were soon replaced by more conventional front-hinged units as the design was developed. Although the windscreen was flat, it was also deep and, combined with the large windows in the doors and narrow door/windscreen pillars, the driver was provided with an excellent view of the road, from a light and airy cab. Instrumentation was very simple, including a speedometer, petrol gauge, and ammeter, housed in a single binnacle behind the almost-flat mounted steering wheel; there were also warning lights for low oil pressure, and low



R2087 4x4 ambulance in late three-colour 'Central European' camouflage.

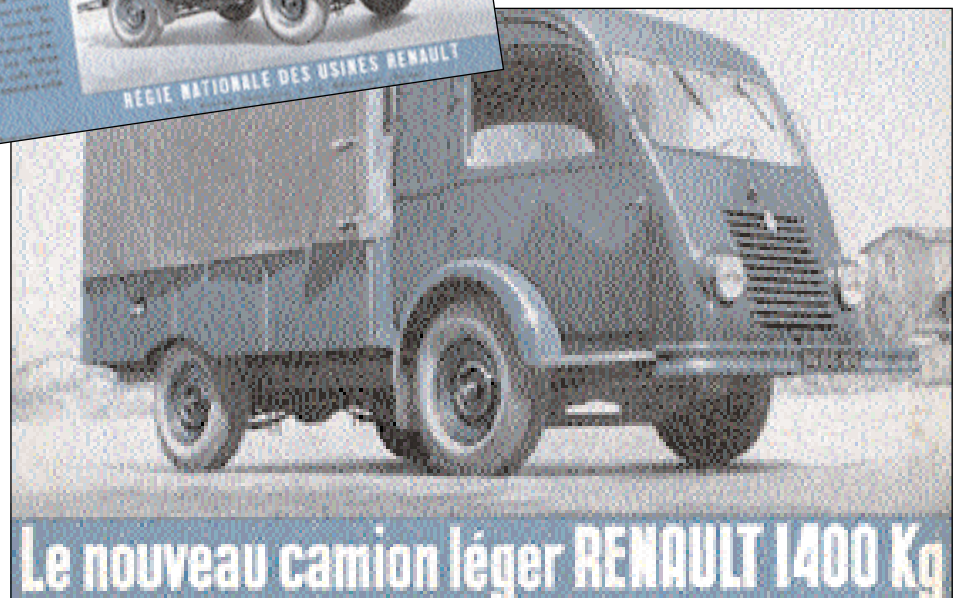
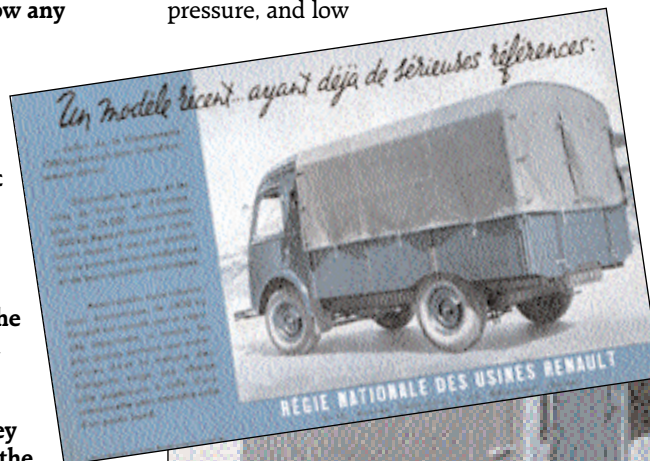


R2065 1000kg 4x2 cargo truck.

brake fluid. The boxy, all-steel body was fitted with a pair of side-hinged doors opening onto a flat floor, which provided easy access to the interior of the van, and there was minimal intrusion from the wheel arches; a side-loading door option was also available. The rear section of the roof had distinctive pressed lateral ridges designed to minimise drumming of the panel, and there were deeply-pressed signwriter's panels in the body sides.

Like its predecessor, the R2060 proved popular with French businesses, providing

Renault's leaflet for the original 1400kg 4x2 commercial R2066.



much-needed transport capacity as the country attempted to haul itself back to normality in the years immediately following the War. The French Army was soon numbered among the users, employing the vehicle as a road-going ambulance and as a general-purpose load carrier.

The standard chassis offered only rear-wheel drive, but Renault believed that there was scope for an all-wheel drive variant. In an effort to increase the versatility of the vehicle, in May 1950, Renault delivered a standard R2060 to the independent specialists, Herwaythorn, for conversion to a 4x4. The chassis was fitted with a Herwaythorn driven front axle incorporating enclosed constant-velocity joints, and a two-speed transfer case to provide an off-road capability; the ratio of the original rear axle was reduced to 8x43 rather than 9x43 by fitting a different pinion gear. At the same time, the

suspension was reinforced to withstand the greater loads and deflections experienced in off-road work and the heavy-duty one-piece wheels were fitted with 21x400 tyres offering a larger cross-section than the originals. As part of the conversion, the cab, the engine and the transmission were raised to provide clearance for the additional drive-shafts and the transfer box. The front wings were left in their original positions, and the resulting spaces above the wheel arches were filled-in with distinctive crescent-shaped panels, which, combined with the oversized tyres, contrived to give the vehicle its slight 'hot-rod' appearance.

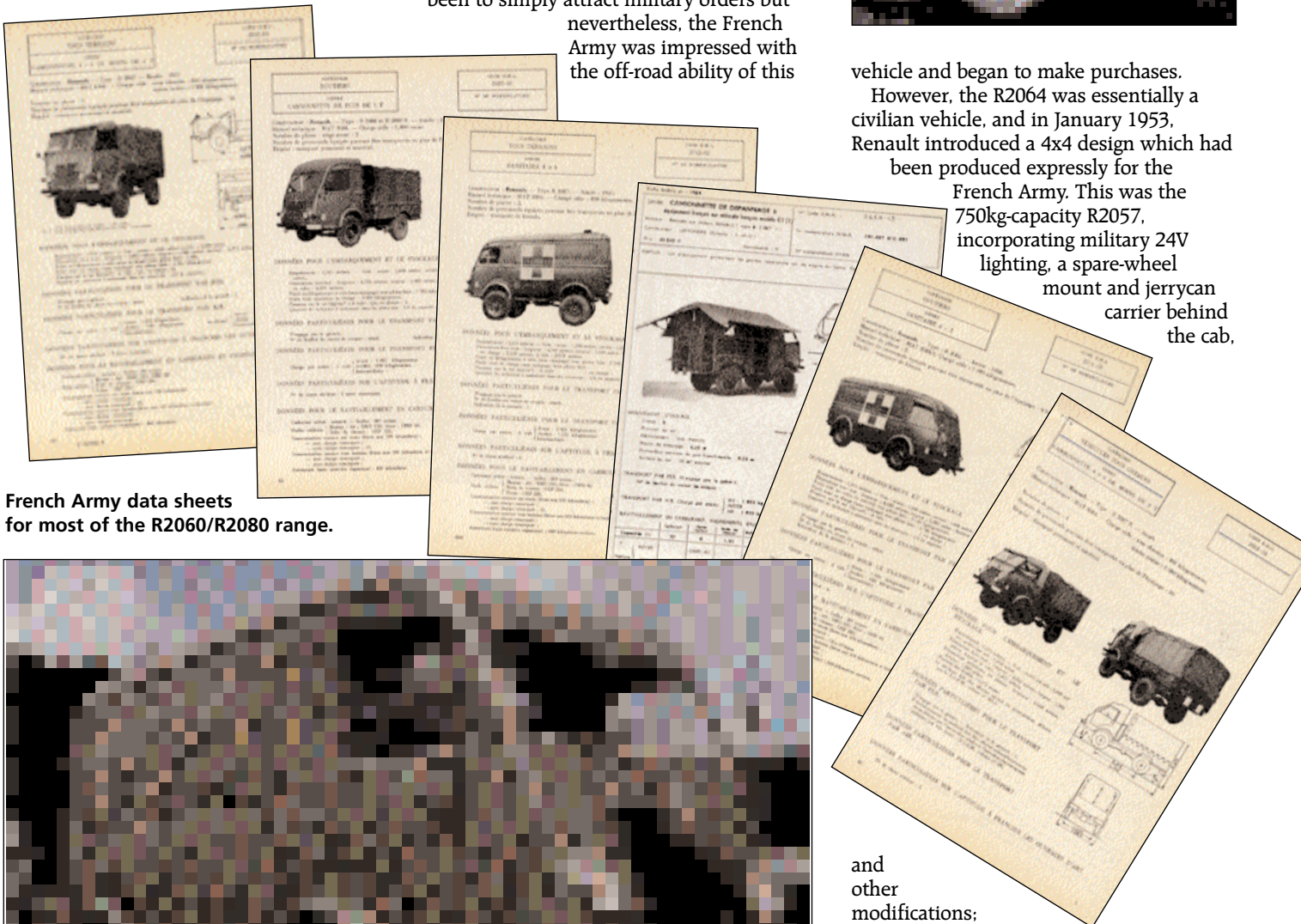
The four-wheel drive prototype, now down-rated to 750kg and designated R2064, was delivered on 16 November 1950. The model was immediately assigned to production with a couple of thousand examples manufactured between 1950 and early 1954. The intention may not have been to simply attract military orders but

nevertheless, the French Army was impressed with the off-road ability of this



vehicle and began to make purchases.

However, the R2064 was essentially a civilian vehicle, and in January 1953, Renault introduced a 4x4 design which had been produced expressly for the French Army. This was the 750kg-capacity R2057, incorporating military 24V lighting, a spare-wheel mount and jerrycan carrier behind the cab,



French Army data sheets for most of the R2060/R2080 range.



and other modifications; some models also being fitted with a rear-mounted horizontal-spindle winch, rated at 1500kg, and mechanically-driven from the transmission. The R2064 was produced as a wooden-bodied pick-up and as a chassis-cab for specialised bodywork, and examples were produced both with the standard all-

R2064 750kg 4x4 van.



steel closed cab and with the so-called 'torpédo' air-portable open cab with a bottom-hinged divided windscreen designed to fold down onto the radiator grille. The doors were reduced to waist level, and a 'pram-hood' type canvas top was provided. In November 1953 the R2057 was replaced by the improved R2068 and, at the same time, the civilian 4x4 R2064 was replaced by the R2069 which was derived from the military variant.

Meanwhile, development of the civilian vehicle continued, with improvements being introduced with each model year. In 1949, the 1000kg R2060 had been joined by the 1400kg R2061, which was also offered as a pick-up truck, but this was replaced by the R2062 within little more than a year. The model names were now Goélette and Voltigeur. The pick-up used the same cab design as the van, but naturally it was closed off behind the seats, and was fitted with a timber body having fixed sides and a bottom-hinged tailgate; a canvas cover

R2067 Belgian Army 750/800kg cargo vehicle; note the tiny indicator lights on the front corners.

Technical specification

Nomenclature: see list of variants.

Engine: Renault type 603 '85'; four cylinders; 2383cc; side valves; power output 46bhp at 2800rpm; Renault type 668; four cylinders; 1996cc; overhead valves; power output 49bhp at 3000rpm; or Renault type 671; four cylinders; 2141cc; overhead valves; power output 64bhp at 3300rpm.

Transmission: 4F1R, 4x2; or 4F1Rx2, part-time 4x4.

Suspension: live axles suspended on semi-elliptical springs.

Brakes: hydraulic.

Construction: steel structure with steel fully-enclosed or soft-top cab; composite wood and steel rear body on pick-up models.

Electrical system: 6V, 12V or 24V according to date of production and model.

Dimensions: ambulance/van variants

Length, (for 4x2 chassis) 174in, (for 4x4) 182in; width, 76in; height, (for 4x2) 87in, (for 4x4) 105in.

Wheelbase, 91in.

Weight, typical (for 4x2) 3806 lb, (for 4x4) 5478 lb.

Dimensions: pick-up variants

Length, (for 4x2 chassis, closed cab) 186in, (for 4x4, open cab) 191in; width, 78in; height, (for closed cab) 98in, (for open cab, minimum) 64in.

Wheelbase, 91in.

Weight, typical (for 4x2, closed cab) 3861 lb, (for 4x4, open cab) 4620 lb.

Variants

'La Regie Renault' adopted the four-figure 'R' series numbers to indicate its various models in 1947 and these numbers were used to identify the models to the French Government vehicle-testing department ('Department des Mines'). The numbers R2060-R2087 were assigned to this particular family of vehicles, of which there were many variants; at the same time, the names Goélette and Voltigeur were also applied to the vehicles according to capacity. Note that only those designations used for military models are listed here.

Ambulance, medium, four stretcher, 4x2, Renault R2065, R2066

Ambulance, medium, four stretcher, 4x4, Renault R2069, R2087, R2087N

Truck, 750/800kg, 4x4, cargo; Renault R2057, R2064

Truck, 750/800kg, 4x4, cargo/radio; Renault R2067, R2068, R2087

Truck, 750/800kg, 4x4, fire tender; Renault R2067, R2087

Truck, 750/800kg, 4x4, water tanker, 750 litres; Renault R2067

Truck, 750/800kg, 4x4, breakdown; Renault R2087

Truck, 750/800kg, 4x4, command car; Renault R2069

Truck, 1000kg, 4x2, cargo; Renault R2065

Truck, 1400kg, 4x2, air traffic control 'starter'; Renault R2086, R2086S

Truck, 1400kg, 4x2, cargo; Renault R2066

Truck, 1400kg, 4x2, cargo; Renault R2086, R2086S

Van, 750kg, 4x4; Renault R2064

Van, 1400kg, 4x2; Renault R2086, R2086S





Renault's leaflet for the R2064 'commercial' 4x4 chassis, which was also supplied to the military.

During its life, the vehicle was fitted with three different engines. The original R2060-R2064 models used the antique Renault type 603 '85' four-cylinder side-valve petrol engine producing 46bhp from a capacity of 2383cc. In 1952 this unit was replaced by the 668 overhead-valve motor, turning out 49bhp from 1996cc and this was fitted to the R2065-R2069, although the Belgian Army R2067 used a more-powerful version of this unit, the so-called 668.5, producing 50bhp. From 1956, the R2086-R2088 models were fitted with the type 671 engine, this time producing 64bhp from 2141cc. All versions used a four-speed gearbox (either the Renault 259, 269 or 280 unit) and the all-wheel drive variants were fitted with a Renault 274 two-speed transfer box using a single control lever to select both the four-wheel drive and the low ratios.

The basic design remained in production from 1947, when the R2060 was introduced, to 1965 when it was superseded by the SG-2 Super Goélette and the Super Galion. During its 18-year

production run, the range became extremely complex, and there were no less than 14 basic models, with chassis ratings of 750/800kg, 1000kg and 1400kg, each designated with its own 'R' number. To make things more complicated, each chassis was generally available as a van ('fourgon'), ambulance ('sanitaire'), market stall ('marchande'), pick-up ('plateau'), or chassis-cab ('chassis-cabine') under the same basic number code.

The French Army employed the vehicle in a variety of logistical roles, typically using all of the standard body styles - except the market stall! - as well as fitting the factory chassis-cab with a variety of bodywork to suit more-specialised roles. Some examples remained in service well into the 'eighties.

On the road, the vehicle is capable of a steady 60mph and although acceleration is lacking, it is light and pleasant to drive - the high cab giving a commanding view of the road. Good examples can easily be picked up in France for £1000-2000 with restoration candidates priced as low as £500...

...and there's no doubt about it, these little trucks are 'mustard' and deserve to be more popular on this side of the 'ditch'. If you've already got a Hotchkiss M201, what could be better company for it than a definitive R2087? And as for the 'Gallic charm', well, maybe it just means that they look a bit different.

could be fitted, supported on four hoops.

Further changes to the basic model range meant that in 1952 the 4x2 R2060 was replaced by the R2065, and the R2061 and R2062 were replaced by the R2066 which itself was superseded, in turn, by the R2086 in 1956. In 1956, two new 4x4 dual-purpose military/civilian models, the R2087 and R2087N were introduced with capacities of 750kg and 1000kg respectively, and these were also supplied to the French Army with 24V electrical equipment and other modifications. The last model to be introduced was the R2088, dating from 1960, rated at 1800kg and intended only for the Benelux markets.

The body on the R2065/R2066 4x2 ambulance sits much lower and the crescent-shaped spacers above the wheel-arches are not required.

Another R2067 or R2087 4x4 ambulance, still sporting most of its original military markings.



Steve Crampton



Simon Thomson

Further information

Les utilitaires Renault 1945-1952: Charge Utile Hors-Séries, no 15. Colombet, Jean-Francois. Paris, Histoire et Collections, 1999.

Les utilitaires Renault 1953-1965: Charge Utile Hors-Séries, no 19. Colombet, Jean-Francois. Paris, Histoire et Collections, 2000.

Véhicules militaires Français de 1945 à nos jours. Jeudy, J-G and J-M Boniface. Paris, Editions EPA, 1994. ISBN 2-85120-428-9.

All three of these books are in French. They are available from Histoire et Collections; tel 00 33 1 49 23 72 22; fax 00 33 1 47 00 51 11; e-mail 'vpc@histecoll.com.

Take a look also at the website www.r2087.free.fr

