



NORTH AMERICAN EXPORT UNITS – EXU MODELS

Feedback from the important American market led MG to develop a special model for sale to the United States. Beginning with car number 7380 in December 1948 and produced, "as needed," throughout 1949, only 494 such units (less than 5% of all TC production) were produced. Such cars were recognized under the coding of "EXU" (for Export Unit) stamped with the chassis number on the guarantee plate. In addition, they included the following improvements:

- Full-width bumpers front and rear with the MG medallion on rear bumper.
- Two map reading lamps but no "Thirtilite". (Thirtilite warning light came on when speed exceeded the British limit at the time, 30 MPH.)
- Two Lucas windtone horns mounted -Rear view mirror above under bonnet. (hood) dashboard.
- Steering wheel in gold pearl finish instead of black.
- Rear number-plate mounted centrally in place above rear bumper with number plate lamp above it.
- High beam warning lamp -Lucas type 5.700 headlamps.
- Turn signals.
- Instrument panel re- arranged.
- Laminated instead of "toughened" windshield.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q. Why is the "T" series so popular?

A. The MG T series was largely responsible for introducing the low-cost open two-seater sports car to a worldwide audience.

Q. If there was a model "TC" was there a TA, TB, TD, etc?

A. Yes. The TA was introduced in 1936 and 3,003 units were manufactured between then and 1939 when the TB (with minor changes, most notably the new XPAG engine) was introduced. World War II, however, interrupted TB production in 1939 after only four months of production and with only 379 units being manufactured. The TC followed immediately after World War II. The TD model was introduced in 1950. There was no TE (some suggest for fear the initials could be ridiculed). The final T series was the TF, introduced in September 1953.

Q. When and how many "T" series units were manufactured?

A. Between 1936 (beginning with the TA) and 1955 (ending with the TF), only 52,646 units were produced.

Q. How many survive?

A. This is anyone's guess, but the consensus is that less than one-half survive and less, of course, of the older models such as the TC.

Q. How many TCs were manufactured?

A. 10,000 or less than 20% of the total "T" Series production.

Q. When did they start production of TCs?

A. MG decided on a speedy return to sports car production after its detour to tank production during World War II. They accomplished this by using the existing pre-war TB design and incorporating only modest changes and improvements to make the car more attractive to post-war buyers. This strategy permitted MG to return to production in September of 1945, only four months after the end of hostilities in Europe. By this time, however, the classic "T" design was already eleven years old and with the TC the series would be maintained another four years.

Q. What were the changes incorporated into the TC?

A. Again, the TC looks almost exactly like a 1939 TB from which it was developed. The most significant change was that the body was widened by almost four inches (to 44 inches) across the seats. This was done without changing the basic chassis, wings or running boards --with the exception of a slightly narrower running board design that only permitted two tread strips versus the three on pre-war TA and TBs. Other modifications included putting a single 12-volt battery and box under the bonnet in place of twin 6-volt batteries which had been carried on a tray on the chassis by the rear axle. There were also selected suspension changes and increased use of rubber, given its greater testing and utilization because of World War II.

Q. What did the car cost new in, for instance 1945 and 1949?

YEAR	POUNDS	DOLLARS
1945	375.	2200
1949	412	2395

Q. If 10,000 TCs were produced how many were exported and to where?

CHART I

TC	1945	1946	1947	1948	1949	TOTAL
Production	81	1675	2346	3085	2813	10000
Total Exports						
- Number	23	610	1162	2815	1983	6593
- Percent	28%	36%	49%	91%	75%	66%
U.S. Exports						
- Number	0	20	234	1143	423	1820
- Percent	-	1.2%	10%	37%	15%	18%

Note: Factory production control records differ from the 2001 TCs customarily referenced as being exported to the United States.

A. As noted in the table above, 6593 were exported of which 1820 (2001 by some accounts) were shipped to the United States. Therefore, approximately 67% of all TC production was exported from Britain to other countries of which about 28% went to the United States. The top five countries for export were

The United States at 28%, Australia at 27%, South Africa* at 9%, Switzerland at 6% and Belgium at 4% accounted for three fourths of all exports.

* Includes Rhodesia

Q. Why are so few left?

A. The MGs were never real expensive cars to start with. In addition, in the U.S., they were frequently a second car for dad's weekend fun and left for the wife and kids during the week for all those chores and "running around." Hard use and a cost frequently

greater to repair or recondition the car than it may have cost in the first place tempted many to merely let it sit until it disintegrated or send it directly to the junk yard.

Q. What complaints did people have about the TC?

A. The usual complaints were:

- No bumpers (corrected on EXU units)
- No heater
- Hard ride
- Not enough space, especially for the driver's clutch foot
- Steering (extra sensitive and large turning cycle of 37')

Q. If there were only 10,000 TCs built why do the chassis numbers go all the way to 10,251?

A. Because they started with chassis number 0251 vs 001.

Q. Why did they start with 0251 vs 001?

A. Folklore has it that the Abingdon factory telephone number was 251! The TA and TB models also started with 0251.

Q. Were any TCs made with left hand drive?

A. No. The first left hand drive model was the TD, again, introduced in 1950.

Q. Is it true that the TC really "introduced sports cars to America?"

A. Well, yes and no. Many U.S. servicemen discovered the MG sports car while serving in Britain during World War II. A few pre-war machines were brought back to the United States but the less than 2000 TC's imported to the United States during the period 1945 and 1949, was not much of a foothold. Also, given its ancestry to the TA, which dated from 1936, the TC model was 14 years when it yielded to the TD in 1950.

Finally, ten times as many TD's were shipped to America than TCs, so it was the volume of the TD that fully introduced the United States to sports cars. The TD gave people something to own and drive versus merely admire and crave.

Still it was the TC's unique style, simplicity, performance and irresistibility that contributed to that ever-lasting bit of MG magic and, its position as a prime example of what we today call a "Classic!"

Q. What other distinction has the TC achieved?

A. The MG TC is one of only nine cars originally selected for the Milestone Car Society. It was nominated based on its strength of design and performance. In addition, in 1951, the TC was chosen as one of eight automobiles for the New York Museum of Modern Art exhibit of classic design.

