

Military matters

This month, Steven Downes looks at a pair of 1:50th-scale heavyweight armoured JCB backhoes from Motorart.

The specially designed JCB High Mobility Engineering Excavator (HMEE) took three years of development and testing to become the first choice machine for the US Army to replace the aging small emplacement excavator. More recently, the British Army has ordered a small fleet of similar armoured machines.



The 1:50th-scale model is available in both US military tan and EU olive green liveries, with the EU version supplied with a choice of two front loader attachments that fit to the quick coupler.



The models feature fully functional four-wheel steering allowing tight and crab-steer modes to be demonstrated and the rubber tyres, based on Bridgestone 445/80 R25 have a detailed tread pattern moulded into the surface. The simulated auxiliary hydraulic system has been modelled with the drum mounted to the side of the chassis, complete with hose detailing which, on the full-sized machine, allows various hydraulic hand tools to be used.



The cab interior has been replicated with both driver and commander seating, joystick controls for both front and back digging equipment and printed dials and gauges visible on the front and side console. The cab has been modelled on the lightly armoured version of the HMEE and has rubber window seal highlighting, rear view mirrors, side storage boxes, roof mounted air conditioner and accurate placement of the safety markings.



The large opening bonnet reveals the modelled 6.7-litre Cummins six-cylinder QSB02 diesel engine, which can generate up to 200hp, allowing the HMEE to travel at an impressive 55mph (88kph). The large fan blades, silver painted exhaust manifold and elevated air intake are all authentically placed.



The rear, centre-mount backhoe slews through 180 degrees with fold-down stabilisers and stiff cylinders allowing the backhoe to be positioned as required, capturing the realism, ruggedness and functionality of the full-size machine, which are currently on duty with the US Army.