

NEW RECRUITS

By Steve Butler

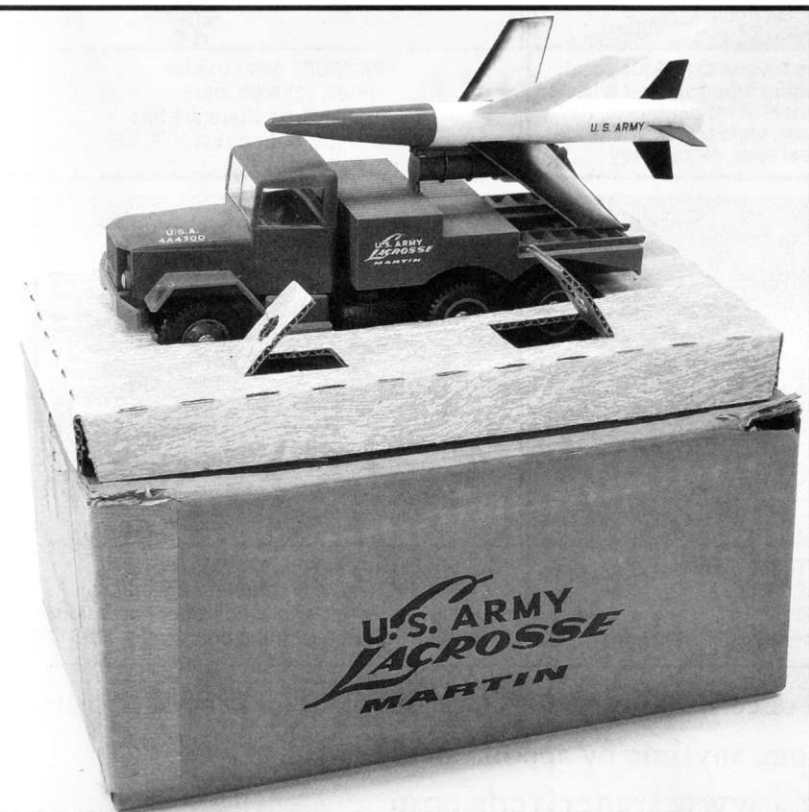
CONDITION, APPEAL AND SCARCITY are the three primary criteria for new additions to my toy collection. Featured herein are two new recruits which scored highly at least on the first and third criteria. One is mint/boxed and the other rated about excellent with at least the remains of the original box - so much for condition. As for scarcity, I've never seen a complete example of either truck. In fact, until last November, I was not aware that either truck existed. In my book, they passed scarcity with ease. That leaves appeal which may come through when the paragraphs to follow and related photos are addressed.

The first Army recruit was made by Topping circa 1955 and was a promotional likely created to garner a production contract with the Army. Army trucks of the era are rather generic in design having been produced by a possible variety of manufacturers. However, after a moderate investigative effort, it seems quite likely that this 8.5-inch truck (exclud-

ing the overhang of the rocket) is a GMC M-35.

The plastic truck molded in olive drab rides on six non-directional treaded tires marked "HEAVY DUTY" and "10.00 - 20" with a matching spare mounted on the underside. The rear platform is covered with a simulated grating and has a pair of access steps retained thereon. The rocket support is curiously angled yet has a vertical hydraulic lift. Both the support and hydraulic cylinder pivot to facilitate the requisite raising and lowering of the rocket. Although the lift mechanism is not truly hydraulic, it provides sufficient resistance when used to keep the rocket angled in any position desired. All that is appealing stuff!

The rocket is actually a Lacrosse Martin XM4 short-range ballistic missile. As packaged by Topping, the 7.7-inch plastic missile came in 10 pieces. Not suitable as such for display, this example was assembled for display and photo purposes using silicone sealer so that at any time it could be



returned to its original, unassembled state and without any damage. The original box with liner and replete with Topping markings on one side and Army Lacrosse Martin markings on the other completes the package. The appeal criteria is easily met.

The second recruit was issued by Wyandotte in 1941, probably just before the outset of World War II. The 21-inch pressed steel Army truck was Wyandotte's model #1006 Engineer Corps Truck. The cab is of a generic and, at best, a curious design and was used for several other Wyandotte trucks as well. The rear was an adaptation of one that the company also used for a tow truck with said rear not exactly suited for either application. Despite the depiction on the box, the canvas atop the rear actually has no markings.

The original box required some effort to get squared off but was accomplished using paper taping on the inside only and added support liner inserts. However, just having the remains of a box to work with is unusual because boxes were not the forte of Wyandotte or other makers (e.g. Marx and Girard) of the era. Included was an instruction sheet for assembling and mounting the canvas (cotton cloth) rear. Surprisingly, although the truck showed some box rub, the original canvas was in superb condition. This recruit, which probably was retired before war's end, now has a one-term enlistment until the appeal matter is settled.

Comments, information and inquiries can be addressed to the author at toysofde.com or at 2696 Brookmar Drive, York, PA 17408. Please include a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

