

THE GREAT RACE

THE LITTLE STORY IN THE BIG STORY



THIS ARTBOOK WAS CONCEIVED AND WRITTEN BY JEAN-CLAUDE QUOINEAUD,
WHO SUPPORTED THE "GREAT RACE" PROJECT FROM THE VERY BEGINNING.
HIS UNWAVERING PASSION SHINES THROUGH THE STORY HE CREATED!

THANK YOU, JEAN-CLAUDE.

ANDRÉ CITROËN,

INDUSTRIALIST & TALENT-DISCOVERER

HE WAS BORN ON FEBRUARY 5, 1878, AND DIED ON JULY 3, 1935, IN PARIS.



AS HE WAS VISITING HIS FAMILY IN POLAND IN 1900, ANDRÉ CITROËN DISCOVERED A V-SHAPED GEARING SYSTEM IN USE IN LOCAL FLOURMILLS AND SPINNING MILLS. UNTIL THEN, STRAIGHT-CUT GEARS WERE COMMONLY USED. CITROËN IMMEDIATELY UNDERSTOOD THAT THIS NEW PROCESS WOULD ALLOW FOR MORE POWER WHILE ALSO LIMITING THE STRAIN AND WEAR SUFFERED BY THE GEARS. HE BOUGHT THE SYSTEM'S PATENT AND WENT BACK TO FRANCE TO START HIS OWN COMPANY, MANUFACTURING V-SHAPED DOUBLE-TOOTH GEARS. THAT'S HOW CITROËN'S CURRENT LOGO, THE "DOUBLE-CHEVRON" (HERRING-BONE MOTIF), WAS CREATED.

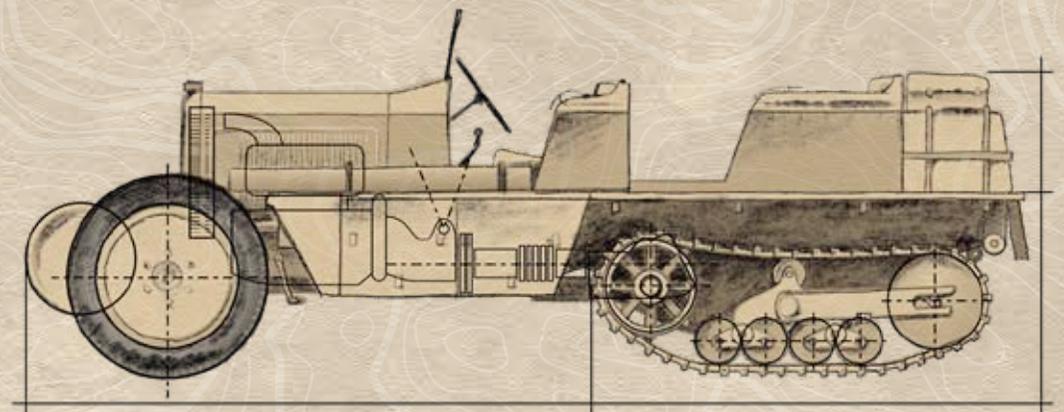
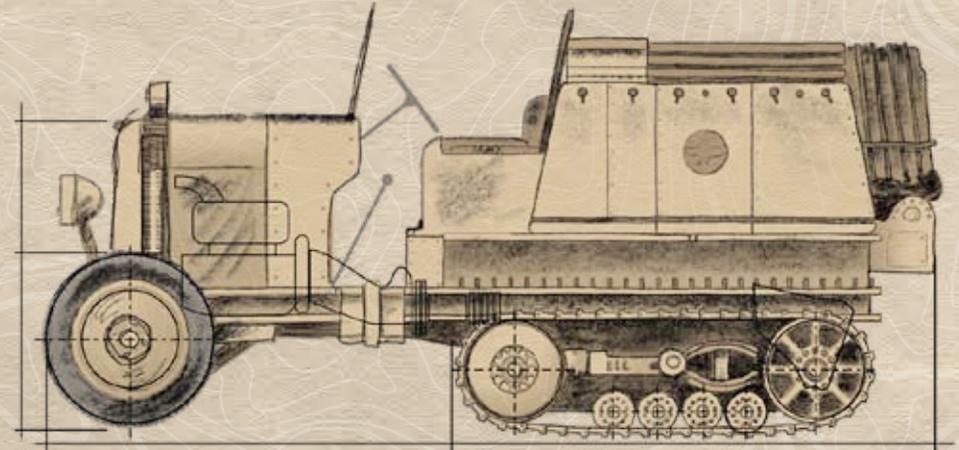
IN 1912, AFTER BUYING MORS'S CAR MANUFACTURING COMPANY, HE VISITED THE FORD FACTORY IN THE US AND DISCOVERED ITS MASS-PRODUCTION AND COST-CUTTING ORGANISATION. HE THEN IMPLEMENTED THESE METHODS IN FRANCE AND ALLOWED MORS TO PRODUCE 800 VEHICLES IN 1913, COMPARED TO 300 IN 1908.



IN 1914, HE ADAPTED HIS COMPANY TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE WAR EFFORT AND STARTED TO PRODUCE AMMUNITION, USING THE SAME REVOLUTIONARY TECHNIQUES. THESE NEW PROCESSES, ALONG WITH HIS INTERPERSONAL SKILLS, ALLOWED HIM TO BECOME ONE OF THE MOST PROMINENT WARTIME INDUSTRIALISTS AND TO MAKE HIS FORTUNE. HE ALSO BUILT UP A FIRST-RATE POLITICAL NETWORK, WHICH PROVED USEFUL IN THE COURSE OF HIS CAREER.

ANDRÉ CITROËN WAS NOT AN INVENTOR. NOR WAS HE A TECHNICIAN. BUT HE WAS A TALENT-DISCOVERER. AFTER THE WAR, HE REALISED THAT THE ARMIES WERE TO BE INCREASINGLY MECHANISED, AND THAT IN A TIME OF LACK OF HORSES, AUTOMOTIVE VEHICLES EMBODIED THE FUTURE.

THAT'S WHY AS SOON AS 1917 HE ADAPTED HIS COMPANY TO START MANUFACTURING CARS. IN 1919, HE CREATED AN ALL-TERRAIN DEPARTMENT. HE RECRUITED AN ENGINEER, ADOLPHE KÉGRESSE, WHO INVENTED A FLEXIBLE TRACKS SYSTEM. THAT'S HOW THE PRODUCTION OF THE CITROËN KÉGRESSE HALF-TRACK VEHICLES STARTED.



ANDRÉ CITROËN,

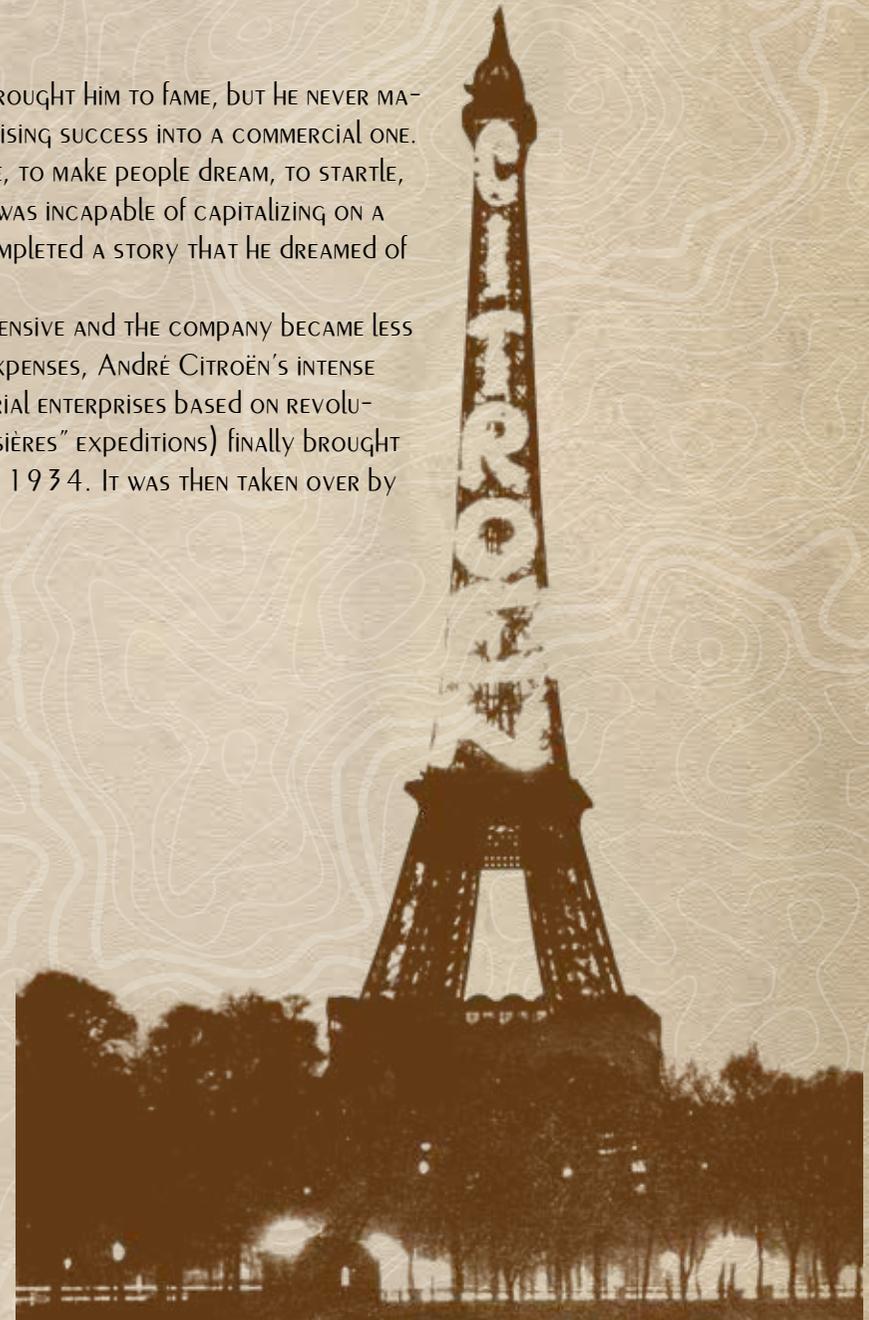
A VISIONARY DREAMER

IN ORDER TO popularize his concept and to remain competitive against Louis Renault, André Citroën introduced yet another innovation. He set up a network of car dealers, initiated consumer credit and created an after-sales service. From 1925 to 1934, he used the Eiffel Tower as an advertising panel, paving the way for our bright billboards today.

Naturally organised and practical, André Citroën built a factory in the 15th arrondissement, in Balard, to imagine, plan and organise, in great secrecy, sponsored expeditions that would become legendary.

His well-known "Croisières" brought him to fame, but he never managed to translate this advertising success into a commercial one. His main objective was to shine, to make people dream, to startle, to innovate, to invent. But he was incapable of capitalizing on a success. No sooner had he completed a story that he dreamed of another.

All these innovations were expensive and the company became less profitable. Huge advertising expenses, André Citroën's intense social life and his great industrial enterprises based on revolutionary techniques (the "Croisières" expeditions) finally brought the company to bankruptcy in 1934. It was then taken over by Michelin.



THE GREAT STORY OF THE “CROISIÈRES”

IN 1920, WHILE PRODUCTS WERE STILL ADVERTISED FOR IN NEWS-PAPERS, CITROËN WAS ABOUT TO INTRODUCE MARKETING.

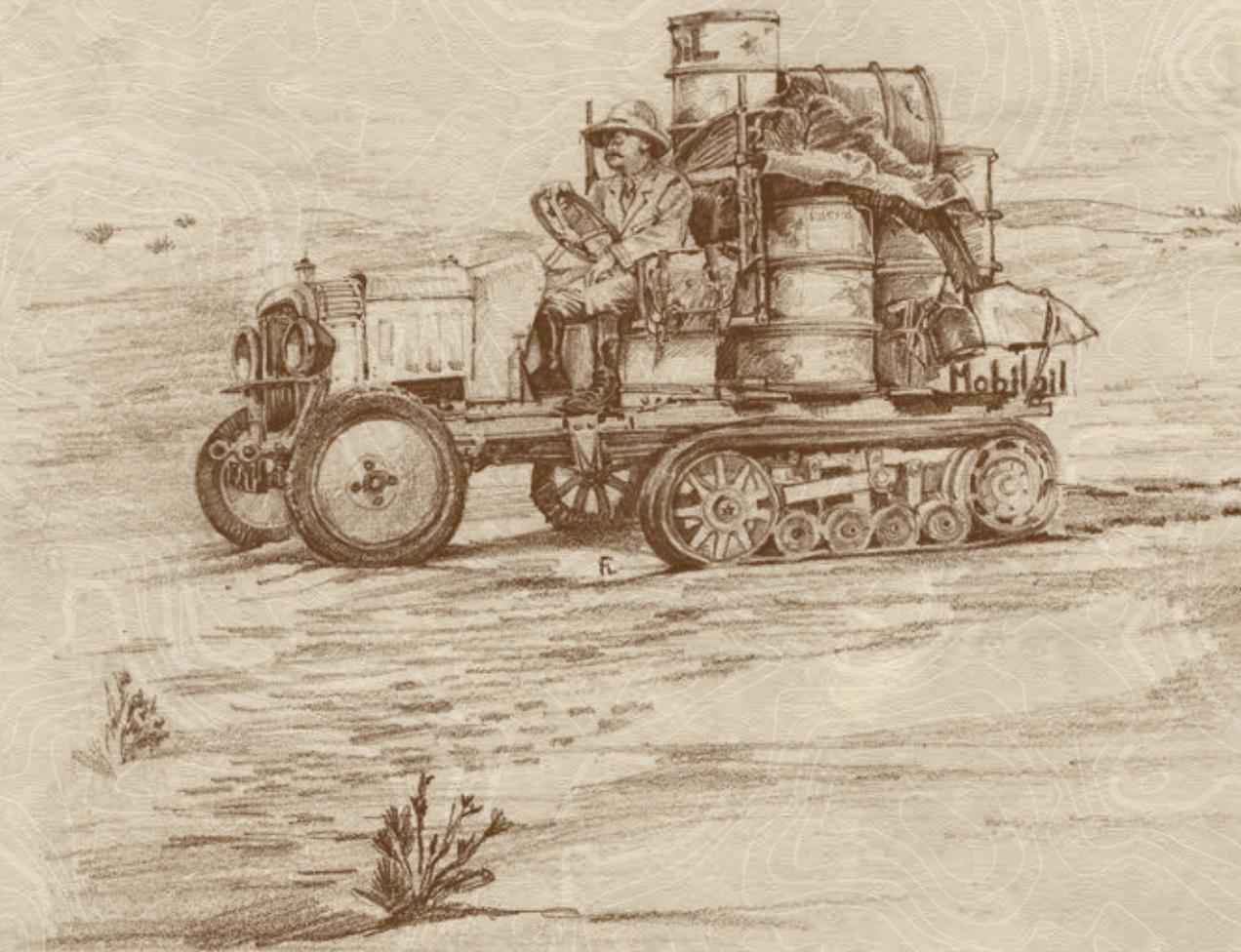
THE IDEA OF THE CITROËN “CROISIÈRES” EXPEDITIONS HAD TAKEN FORM. THEIR PURPOSE WAS TO PRESENT THE BRAND’S VEHICLES THROUGH FILMING EXPEDITIONS IN UNKNOWN AND INACCESSIBLE REGIONS, UNDER THE PRETEXT OF SCIENTIFIC, CULTURAL AND CARTOGRAPHIC STUDIES. IT WAS TO BE A WAY FOR CITROËN TO POPULARIZE HIS BRAND BY MAKING PEOPLE DREAM AND SELLING HIS CONCEPT.

ANDRÉ CITROËN ORGANISED FOUR “CROISIÈRES” BETWEEN 1923 AND 1934. THE MEN WHO TOOK PART IN THESE EXPEDITIONS MOST CERTAINLY EXPERIENCED A LIFE OF ADVENTURE.

THE LAST EXPEDITION, THE “CROISIÈRE BLANCHE”, WAS A FINANCIAL AND HUMAN DISASTER.

THE GREAT RACE RECOUNTS THE SECOND EXPEDITION – AND ALSO ONE OF THE MOST FAMOUS OF THEM ALL. IT TOOK PLACE IN CENTRAL-AFRICA AND WAS ALSO CALLED THE “CROISIÈRE NOIRE”. FOR THE FIRST TIME, MOTORISED VEHICLES WOULD TRAVEL ACROSS A WHOLE CONTINENT, THE LARGEST PART OF WHICH WAS STILL TOTALLY UNKNOWN TO SCIENTISTS, HISTORIANS AND CARTOGRAPHERS.

THE RISKS AND THE MATERIAL, FINANCIAL AND HUMAN ACCIDENTS OR DIFFICULTIES ARE IMPOSSIBLE TO FORESEE AND WILL HAVE TO BE DEALT WITH AS THEY ARISE.



HISTORICAL CONTEXT *colonial times*

FRANCE ALWAYS COMPETED WITH HER SWORN ENEMY, GREAT BRITAIN, AND COLONIAL ISSUES WERE ONLY THE TIP OF THE ICEBERG IN THIS ECONOMIC WAR. AFRICA WAS ONE OF THE GREAT BATTLEFIELDS ON WHICH THE TWO EUROPEAN COUNTRIES FOUGHT AGAINST ONE ANOTHER. OTHER COUNTRIES ALSO MANAGED TO GET A SLICE OF THE PIE: WITH MUSSOLINI IN POWER, ITALY ENGAGED INTO A COLONIAL ADVENTURE BY DEFEATING ABYSSINIA AND TAKING OVER LIBYA.

AFRICAN COUNTRIES WERE MILITARILY WEAK AND ECONOMICALLY UNDERDEVELOPED. THEIR NATURAL RESOURCES HAD THEREFORE BEEN LEFT UNTOUCHED AND MANY REGIONS ABOUNDED IN METAL-BEARING ORE, PRECIOUS STONES AND EXOTIC WOOD.

THE EXPLOITATION OF LOCAL WORKFORCES PAID ON STARVATION WAGES MADE THE WHOLE ENTERPRISE VERY PROFITABLE. IN TERRITORIES WHERE EVERYTHING WAS STILL TO BUILD, COLONIZING COUNTRIES USED AND MISUSED THEIR TECHNOLOGICAL AND MILITARY POWERS TO PURSUE THEIR STRATEGY, GIVING HUMANITARIAN RELIEF, CULTURAL INTEREST AND MASS-SCHOOLING PROJECTS AS A PRETEXT TO SECURE THEIR ECONOMIC PREDOMINANCE.

-  FRENCH POSSESSIONS
-  BRITISH POSSESSIONS
-  ITALIAN POSSESSIONS
-  BELGIAN POSSESSIONS
-  SPANISH POSSESSIONS
-  PORTUGUESE POSSESSIONS

IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE TREATY OF VERSAILLES AFTER THE ARMISTICE OF NOVEMBER 11, 1918, TANGANYIKA (NOW ZANZIBAR) AND CAMEROON, FORMER GERMAN POSSESSIONS, WERE RESPECTIVELY CEDED BACK TO GREAT BRITAIN AND FRANCE.



THE "CROISIÈRE NOIRE" HOW IT ALL STARTED

The "CROISIÈRE NOIRE" WAS CITROËN'S SECOND EXPEDITION, BUT THE FIRST TRANS-AFRICAN AUTOMOBILE EXPEDITION.

IN 1920, ANDRÉ CITROËN WAS ALREADY IN SHARP COMPETITION WITH LOUIS RENAULT. HE SET A CHALLENGE BETWEEN THE TWO COMPANIES, AND TRAVELLED ACROSS THE SAHARA IN 1923: IT WAS THE FIRST "CROISIÈRE". LOUIS RENAULT TOOK UP THE GAUNTLET BY LAUNCHING HIS TORPEDO 10CV MODELS, WITH 6 WHEELS, INCLUDING 4 DRIVING ONES. IT WAS A TIE BETWEEN THE TWO INDUSTRIALISTS. THIS WAS FIRST AND FOREMOST A SPORTING COMPETITION, AND THE AIM WAS TO DRIVE FROM ALGERIA TO THE SUDANESE REGIONS FOR THE FIRST TIME. THEY ALSO CONTEMPLATED THE CREATION OF A COACH LINE IN THE LONG RUN. THIS WAS A PROMISING MARKET. ANDRÉ CITROËN, ALWAYS A RISK-TAKER, DECIDED TO STRIKE A DECISIVE BLOW. THE CREATION OF NEW ROADS WAS OF LITTLE IMPORTANCE TO HIM: WHAT HE REALLY AIMED AT WAS TO MAKE A NAME FOR HIMSELF ON THE INTERNATIONAL STAGE, AND TO BUILD A STRONG PUBLIC IMAGE. WHILE LOUIS RENAULT FOCUSED ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE IDEA OF ROAD LINES, ANDRÉ CITROËN WAS INTERESTED IN SPECTACULAR ACHIEVEMENTS, OFTEN AT THE COST OF PRAGMATISM.

THIS TIME, THE SPORTING EXPEDITION WAS REPLACED WITH AN EIGHT-MONTH LONG-DISTANCE RALLY OVER 20,000km ACROSS THE AFRICAN CONTINENT. FROM NORTH TO SOUTH, STARTING FROM COLOMB-BÉCHAR IN ALGERIA - THE EVENT'S BASE CAMP -, THE SECOND CITROËN "CROISIÈRE" WOULD TRAVEL ACROSS THE SAHARA TO REACH NIGER, TCHAD AND OUBANGUI-CHARI BEFORE HEADING FOR THE BELGIAN CONGO.



THE TEAMS WOULD THEN REACH LAKE VICTORIA AND SOUTHERN AFRICA. IT WAS SIMPLY UNIMAGINABLE AT THE TIME. SO MANY UNKNOWN REGIONS, FOSTERING UNKNOWN PEOPLE AND WILDLIFE, NEW TERRITORIES TO EXPLORE. ANDRÉ CITROËN WAS REGARDED AS A HERO OF HIS TIME. THIS EPIC RACE WOULD BE CLOSELY FOLLOWED IN FRANCE. THE COUNTRY WAS ONCE AGAIN IN THE LIMELIGHT, READY TO DISPLAY ITS TECHNOLOGICAL, INDUSTRIAL, CULTURAL, DIPLOMATIC AND POLITICAL STRENGTHS.

THIS ROUTE WAS TO BE MODIFIED SEVERAL TIMES, ACCORDING TO THE DEMANDS OF LOCAL COLONIZING AUTHORITIES, WHO SAW THE EXPEDITION AS A WAY TO BRING OUT THEIR COLONIAL ACHIEVEMENTS. FRENCH PRESIDENT GASTON DOUMERGUE THUS WANTED THE EXPEDITION TO REACH ITS FINAL DESTINATION IN THE GEM OF FRENCH POSSESSIONS, MADAGASCAR. BUT BELGIAN KING ALBERT I WISHED THE EXPEDITION TO HEAD FOR STANLEYVILLE - THE CONGOLESE CAPITAL - VIA NIANGARA, NORTH OF THE OUELLÉ RIVER. THESE WERE TWO RICH REGIONS, BUT SEPARATED BY A DENSE RAINFOREST, WITHOUT ANY MEANS OF COMMUNICATION. THE LOCAL GOVERNOR THEREFORE IMMEDIATELY INITIATED THE CONSTRUCTION OF A 500km ROAD TO ALLOW THE CITROËN MISSION TO REACH THE CAPITAL OF BELGIAN CONGO.

FROM THERE, THE CITROËN TEAM WAS TO SPLIT UP INTO FOUR GROUPS WHO, AFTER VISITING KENYA, TANGANYIKA, NYASSALAND, MOZAMBIQUE AND BRITISH SOUTHERN AFRICA, WOULD MEET UP IN MADAGASCAR. THE "CROISIÈRE NOIRE" WAS NOW REACHING AN INTERNATIONAL SCALE.

ORGANIZING THE EXPEDITION

IT IS ONE THING TO TRACE A ROUTE ON A MAP, BUT ANOTHER TO CONCRETELY ORGANISE THIS JOURNEY. ONE HAS TO PLAN, SET UP REFUELLING POINTS, STOCK THE NECESSARY AMOUNT OF FOOD SUPPLIES, MECHANICAL SPARE PARTS, FUEL AND MONEY ALL ALONG THE EXPEDITION'S ROUTE.

NO LESS THAN SIX SUPPLY MISSIONS WERE NEEDED TO CREATE THIRTY REFUELLING POINTS ALL ALONG THE 20,000KM ROAD. WITHOUT THIS COLOSSAL PREPARATION, THE CITROËN EXPEDITION WOULD NEVER HAVE COMPLETED THIS INCREDIBLE JOURNEY ACROSS A CONTINENT.

WHILE THE SUPPLY MISSIONS WERE OPERATING, TESTS WERE ALSO CONDUCTED IN COLOMB-BÉCHAR. THE EQUIPMENT WAS CHECKED UP. HALF-TRACK VEHICLES WERE PUT TO THE TEST ON ROCKY HAMADA TERRAIN. EVERYTHING WAS NOTED AND PHOTOGRAPHED. DYSFUNCTIONAL OR BROKEN PIECES WERE SENT BACK FOR ANALYSIS TO CITROËN'S TOP-SECRET FACTORY, WHICH HAD BEEN SPECIFICALLY BUILT TO PREPARE THE EXPEDITIONS, IN BALARD.

ALL THIS INFORMATION WOULD LEAD TO THE CREATION OF A NEW MODEL: THE HALF-TRACK P2 CROISIÈRE NOIRE 10 HP.

MEANWHILE, ANDRÉ CITROËN BROUGHT ALL HIS WORLD WAR I NETWORK INTO PLAY AND REACHED OUT TO THE WAR, COLONIAL, AND PUBLIC INSTRUCTION OFFICES, THE UNDER-SECRETARY FOR AERONAUTICS AND THE FOREIGN OFFICE.

ARMS AND CAMPING EQUIPMENT WERE BOUGHT IN LONDON AND INFORMATION ABOUT THE BRITISH COLONIES WAS GATHERED WITH THE HELP OF GENERAL SWINTON. SPANISH AND ETHIOPIAN AUTHORITIES WERE ALSO REACHED OUT TO.

THE EXPEDITION WAS CONSIDERABLY SCALING UP: IT WAS NOW TAKING ON ASSIGNMENTS GIVEN BY THREE MINISTRIES AND TWO SCIENTIFIC SOCIETIES – THE GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY AND THE NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM IN PARIS – AND COULD PRESENT ITSELF AS AN ECONOMIC, HUMANITARIAN, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ENTERPRISE. GEORGES-MARIE HAARDT, DIRECTOR OF THE CITROËN FACTORIES AND MEMBER OF THE COMPANY'S BOARD, AND LOUIS AUDOIN-DUBREUIL, A FLIGHT LIEUTENANT AND EXPERIENCED SAHARAN TRAVELLER, WERE TO LEAD THE EXPEDITION.

THE EXPEDITION WAS ENTIRELY FINANCED BY ANDRÉ CITROËN. THE FRENCH AUTHORITIES WERE HERE TO HELP, SENDING TROOPS, BUT THE RISKS WERE SO IMPORTANT THAT NO POLITICIAN OR INVESTOR WANTED TO SPONSOR THIS ADVENTURE. BUT NEVER MIND, ANDRÉ CITROËN THOUGHT, FOR "WHEN IT COMES TO GREAT IDEAS, THE PRICE DOESN'T MATTER".



THE HEROES OF THE EXPEDITION

To complete the great race in preparation, exceptional men possessing courage, audacity, thoughtfulness, and prepared to live the hard way, were needed. Major Bettenbourg, from colonial infantry, was to take on the teams' protection. He would lead one of the four teams after the expedition's split-up, north of Ouganda. Charles Bull, an engineer, would be in charge of finding solutions to help the vehicles get over obstacles, be it by removing them or by building infrastructures on the spot. He would also assess the expedition's engineering needs when crossing territories under French administration.

Alexandre Lacovleff, a great traveller, but also a painter and an ethnologist, George Specht, a photographer and cameraman, and his assistant Léon Poirier, were to gather ethnological data for the Natural History Museum and the Geographical Society. Professor Eugène Bergonnier, a tropical diseases specialist and a taxidermist, was to set vaccination campaigns in place and bring back exotic animal specimens for the Natural History Museum. Last but not least, Maurice Penaud would be head of the mechanical team scattered all along the expedition's route to prepare the refuelling points, see to unavoidable repairs, material improvements,

and find solutions so that the expedition would not be brought to a standstill due to material damage. 20,000km of unknown roads, unexplored forests and hostile deserts lay ahead.

tribes on guard against foreigners, come upon impassable rivers, follow unending roads, all the while facing fatal diseases and dangerous animals. Only a deep passion for adventure could prompt these men to engage in such an expedition, and on October 12, 1924, at 2 AM, rue des entrepreneurs in Paris, the last hammer blows to close the crates were delivered in André Citroën's presence. The eight half-track vehicles and all their equipment were to be transported in great secrecy to Marseille and then to Colomb-Béchar.



The expedition only had approximate maps at disposal, and rough distance evaluations needed to be corrected. Local guides were hard to find. Compasses provided a solution during the day and were replaced with sextants and celestial navigation at night. Food supplies would sometimes be scarce, local climates were difficult and unsettled, even unbearable; the expedition would sometimes enter hostile regions, encounter



THE GREAT RACE

EVERYTHING HAD BEEN DONE IN GREAT SECRECY SO FAR. ANDRÉ CITROËN, KÉGRESSE AND HINSTIN MET ON THE QUAYSIDE, BUT NO JOURNALIST HAD BEEN WARNED OR INVITED.

CITROËN, THOUGH A MARKETING DEVOTEE AND A SPOTLIGHT LOVER, HAD FOR ONCE BEEN EXTREMELY DISCREET, PARTLY BECAUSE A SPANNER HAD BEEN THROWN INTO THE WORKS REGARDING THE AMBITIOUS "CROISIÈRE" IN CENTRAL ASIA A FEW MONTHS BEFORE.

INDEED, GEORGE ESTIENNE, A CRACK DRIVER, AND HIS BROTHER, WHO HAD BOTH PARTICIPATED IN THE FIRST TRANS-SAHARAN EXPEDITION, BETRAYED HIM. THEY HELPED CITROËN ORGANISE HIS SECOND EXPEDITION, USING THEIR EXPERIENCE, BUT THEN JOINED LOUIS RENAULT WHO WAS ALSO PREPARING A RALLY.

WITH HIS TORPEDO 6X4 MODELS, LOUIS RENAULT INTENDED ON FOLLOWING THE CITROËN TEAMS ON THEIR HEELS AND EVEN COUNTED ON OVERTAKING THEM ON SOUTHERN-AFRICAN ROADS, TO WHICH HIS CARS WERE ESPECIALLY SUITED.

THE LOADING OF THE VEHICLES IN MARSEILLES WAS THEREFORE NOT PUBLICIZED. ALL MESSAGES, SENT OR RECEIVED, REGARDING THE CITROËN EXPEDITION IN CENTRAL AFRICA WERE ALSO ENCODED.

GEORGES-MARIE HAARDT RECEIVED THE EIGHT HALF-TRACK VEHICLES IN COLOMB-BÉCHAR. ON OCTOBER 28, 1924, STANDING IN HIS CAR – WHICH HE HAD NAMED THE GOLD BUG –, HE GAVE THE EXPEDITION'S STARTING SIGNAL.

THE OTHER SEVEN VEHICLES WERE ALSO GIVEN NAMES: THE PACK-SADDLED ELEPHANT, THE TRAVELLING SUN, THE WINGED SNAIL, THE SILVER CRESCENT, THE DOVE, THE CENTAUR AND PEGASUS.

THE GREAT RACE HAD BEGUN; IT WOULD END ON JUNE 26, 1925. THOROUGHLY RELAYED BY THE MEDIA, IT WOULD ALSO OUTSHINE THE RENAULT EXPEDITION EVEN THOUGH THE TORPEDOS' PERFORMANCE WAS MORE IMPRESSIVE (TECHNICAL DETAILS WILL BE DEALT WITH IN THE PART DEVOTED TO THE GRADIS MISSION).

COLONIAL EXHIBITIONS IN MARSEILLES AND PARIS WERE INUNDATED WITH PAINTINGS AND PHOTOGRAPHS BY LACOVLEFF, WHILE IN-DEPTH STUDIES WERE SUBMITTED TO THE MINISTRIES INVOLVED IN THE EXPEDITION. ANDRÉ CITROËN'S LEGITIMACY AS AN INNOVATOR AND A SOCIALITE WAS FURTHER ESTABLISHING ITSELF IN PARIS.

GEORGES-MARIE HAARDT'S MOTTO WAS "RES, NON VERBA" (DEEDS, NOT WORDS), SO THE "CROISIÈRE NOIRE" WAS ONLY A PRELUDE TO SOMETHING GREATER, SOMETHING GRANDER.

ON JULY 4, 1925, AS THE CHAMBORD WAS SAILING AWAY FROM THE MADAGASCAN COAST, BRINGING BACK TO FRANCE THE WHITE HALF-TRACK VEHICLES AND THEIR WORN-OUT PENNANTS, LOUIS AUDOUIN-DUBREUIL AND GEORGES-MARIE HAARDT WERE LONGING FOR ONE AND ONLY THING: ANOTHER EXPEDITION.





THE GRADIS MISSION

LOUIS RENAULT GAINED HIS REPUTATION THROUGH MOTOR RACING. HIS RESEARCHES WERE FOCUSED ON POWER, SPEED, AND SPORTING ACHIEVEMENTS, WHILE ANDRÉ CITROËN WAS MORE CONCERNED WITH MARKETING, STATE-OF-THE-ART TECHNIQUE AND INNOVATION.

FIRST MISSION (CITROËN)

GENERAL JEAN-BAPTISTE EUGÈNE ESTIENNE, ALONG WITH HIS SON GEORGES ESTIENNE, ORGANISED THE ALGERIA-NIGER MISSION WITH THE HELP OF THE TRANS-SAHARAN GENERAL COMPANY (COMPAGNIE GÉNÉRALE TRANSSAHARIENNE, ALSO KNOWN AS CGT), FOUNDED BY GASTON GRADIS, AND THE SUPPORT OF SEVERAL MINISTRIES.

THE EXPEDITION WAS HEADED BY GEORGES ESTIENNE AND STARTED ON NOVEMBER 9, 1923, WITH FOUR CITROËN-KÉGRESSE HALF-TRACK VEHICLES TOWING A NIEUPORT AIRCRAFT WITH FOLDING WINGS. AFTER REACHING ADRAR (A TOWN IN CENTRAL ALGERIA) ON NOVEMBER 17, IT TOOK THEM ONLY THREE DAYS TO CROSS THE TANZROUFT DESERT USING A NEW ROUTE WHICH PROVED ESPECIALLY SUITABLE FOR DRIVING OR LANDING. ANDRÉ CITROËN MET UP WITH THE TEAM IN THE SAHARA, BRINGING MANY JOURNALISTS WITH HIM. THE EXPEDITION WAS WIDELY COVERED BY THE MEDIA.

SECOND MISSION (RENAULT)

IN ORDER TO CREATE A PERMANENT AIR-ROAD-RAIL LINK BETWEEN NORTHERN AFRICA AND NIGER, THE RALLY FORMING THE SO-CALLED "SECOND GRADIS MISSION" TOOK PLACE IN 1924 WITH THREE CARS BELONGING TO RENAULT'S SIXTH SERIES, WITH MH 10 CV TWIN WHEELS AND A 6X4 SYSTEM, THE DRIVING WHEELS BEING SET ON TWO REAR AXLES. THE RACERS LEFT THE FOREIGN LEGION FORT IN COLOMB-BÉCHAR ON NOVEMBER 14, 1924.

GRADIS AND HIS TEAMMATES (AMONG WHICH WERE MARSHAL LOUIS FRANCHET D'ESPÉREY, THE ESTIENNE BROTHERS, AND HENRI DE KÉRILLIS, A WRITER) FOLLOWED THE SO-CALLED "GREAT AXIS" ROAD FOR MORE THAN 1,900KM, UNDER THE PROTECTION OF THREE BRÉQUET 16 AIRCRAFTS, EQUIPPED WITH RENAULT 300 CV ENGINES, HEADED BY LIEUTENANT NOËL PAOLACCI. THEY REACHED BOUREM ON NOVEMBER 24, AFTER AN EXPRESS ELEVEN DAYS' JOURNEY INCLUDING ONLY ONE DAY OF REST IN ADRAR. THE CONVOY THEN CROSSED THE NIGER RIVER 700KM FARTHER, IN GAYA, TO REACH COTONOU. THE TECHNICIANS-CUM-DRIVERS WERE LIAUME, LIOCOURT AND BONNAURE, EACH CAR BEING ALSO ESCORTED BY FOUR LEGIONNAIRES WHO KNEW HOW TO DRIVE.

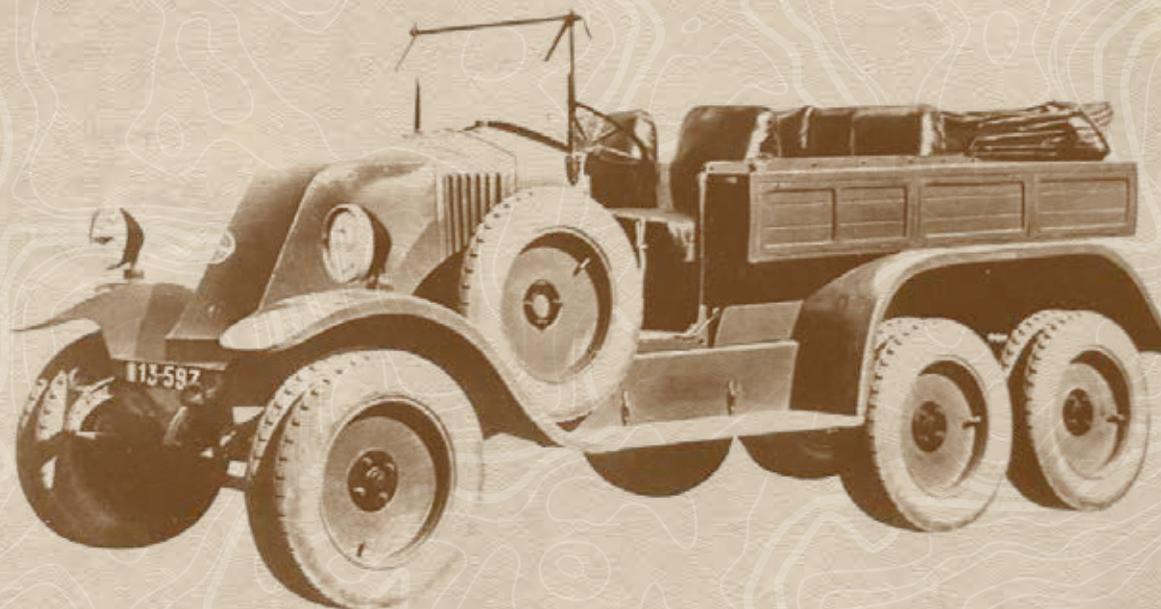
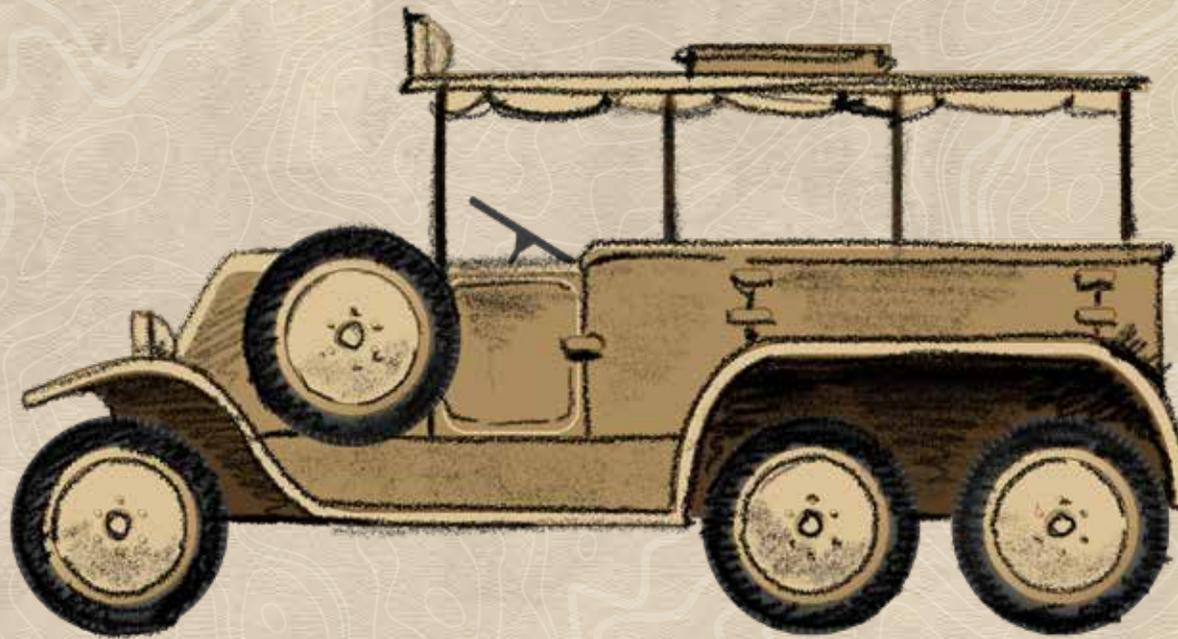
HAVING FULFILLED ITS MAIN MISSION, THE EXPEDITION THEN HEADED FOR THE FRENCH COLONIES IN CENTRAL AFRICA, 200KM SOUTH OF GAO (SUDAN), ON DECEMBER 11, 1924.

YET ONLY THE JOURNEY ACROSS THE SAHARA AND THE CITROËN "CROISIÈRE" WOULD GO DOWN IN HISTORY. LOUIS RENAULT DID NOT MANAGE TO PUBLICISE HIS FEAT, WHICH WAS OF HIGHER QUALITY THAN THE CITROËN EXPEDITION THROUGH THE SAHARA. MARKETING TOOK OVER TECHNIQUE AND INVENTIVENESS.

RENAULT'S 10CV TORPEDO (1924)

CITROËN'S project of an expedition through the SAHARA REACHED LOUIS RENAUULT'S EARS. CITROËN ONLY SAW IT AS AN ADVERTISING OPPORTUNITY, BUT RENAUULT, WHO WAS FAR MORE PRAGMATIC, ENVISIONED THE CREATION OF A NEW ROAD LINK. HE DECIDED TO TAKE UP THE GAUNTLET. USING HIS 10 CV MODEL AS A BASE, HE HAD THE STEEL FRAME MODIFIED TO ADD A SECOND REAR DRIVING AXLE. INDEED, RENAUULT'S MAIN FOCUS WAS PROPULSION – AND A FEW MONTHS LATER, HE WOULD FIRE HIS CHIEF ENGINEER, ANDRÉ LEFEBVRE, WHO RATHER SAW TRACTION AS A WAY TO BREAK NEW GROUND. IRONICALLY, ANDRÉ LEFEBVRE WOULD THEN BE HIRED BY CITROËN AND INVENT A FRONT-WHEEL DRIVE SYSTEM BEFORE CREATING THE 2 CV AND THE DS MODELS. AS FOR RENAUULT'S TORPEDO, IT WAS EQUIPPED WITH SIX TWIN WHEELS, ALLOWING A BETTER ROAD-HOLDING. THE LOW-PRESSURE TIRES COULD ALSO BE DEFLATED TO FACILITATE DRIVING ON SANDY GROUND.

THE FIRST SIX WHEELS MH MODEL WAS FINALISED AT RENAUULT'S FACTORY IN BILLANCOURT ON DECEMBER 1, 1923. THE VEHICLE HAD FOUR REAR DRIVING WHEELS ATTACHED TO TWO PARALLEL AXLES.



TWO VEHICLES WERE TESTED IN DECEMBER 1923 DURING A RALLY FROM TOGGOURT TO TOZEUR, IN SOUTHERN ALGERIA AND TUNISIA. THEN, FROM NOVEMBER 15, 1924, TO DECEMBER 3, 1924, THREE TORPEDOS TOOK PART IN THE GRADIS MISSION. THEY TRAVELLED ACROSS THE SAHARA WITH MARSHAL FRANCHET AND MAJOR D'ESPÈREY AS CREW MEMBERS. THE TEAM LEFT COLOMB-BÉCHAR AND HEADED FOR COTONOU. IN 1925, THEY CROSSED AFRICA FROM NORTH TO SOUTH ALONG A 23,000KM ROUTE, WITHOUT MUCH PLANNING: IT WAS THE DÉLINGETTE EXPEDITION.

THE RENAUULT TORPEDOS COULD DRIVE UP A 60 PER CENT SLOPE. DURING THE DÉLINGETTE EXPEDITION AND THE "CROISIÈRE NOIRE", RENAUULT AND CITROËN VEHICLES COVERED THE SAME DISTANCE, BUT IT ONLY TOOK RENAUULT'S TORPEDOS ELEVEN DAYS, WHILE THE CITROËN TEAMS NEEDED TWENTY-THREE DAYS. BUT ONLY THE "CROISIÈRE" WENT DOWN IN HISTORY: MARKETING TOOK OVER. YET LOUIS RENAUULT ACHIEVED WHAT ANDRÉ CITROËN WAS NEVER ABLE TO DO: HE CREATED A PERMANENT ROAD LINK BETWEEN NORTHERN AFRICA AND NIGER, SUPERVISED BY THE TRANS-SAHARAN GENERAL COMPANY, USING 10 CV VEHICLES TRANSFORMED INTO COACHES.

THE HISTORICAL FIGURE BEHIND THE CHARACTER
JEAN DELATOUR.



LOUIS AUDOUIN-DUBREUIL (1887-1960)

HE WAS BORN IN SAINT-JEAN-d'ANGÉLY ON AUGUST 2, 1887. FROM 1907 TO 1910, HE DID HIS MILITARY SERVICE IN THE 10TH HUSSAR CAVALRY REGIMENT AND THEN AT THE SAUMUR MILITARY SCHOOL. IN 1911, HE TOOK OVER THE MANAGEMENT OF HIS FATHER'S COGNAC BUSINESS. ON AUGUST 2, 1914, HE WAS MOBILISED IN LA ROCHELLE WITH THE 10TH HUSSAR REGIMENT AS A LIAISON DEPUTY OFFICER. HE FOUGHT ON THE MARNE BATTLEFIELDS, IN THE ARRAS TRENCHES, AND THEN IN THE ARGONNE REGION, ON THE FOUR-DE-PARIS BATTLEFIELDS. IN 1916, HE FOUGHT IN THE MALENCOURT FOREST AND ON THE LEFT WING OF THE VERDUN OFFENSIVE. WHEN THE CAVALRY REGIMENTS WERE DISCHARGED, HE WAS IN BELGIUM. IN 1917, HE GOT HIS FLYING LICENSE AND WENT TO SOUTHERN TUNISIA, WHERE HE CREATED THE ZARSIS AVIATION CAMP. HE FOUGHT AGAINST THE SENOUSSIS AND SET UP SECTIONS OF ARMoured VEHICLES. IN 1919, HE WAS HEAD OF THE AUTOMOBILE SECTION DURING THE SAOURA-TIDIKELT MILITARY MISSION IN THE SAHARA. IN 1920, HE MET UP WITH ANDRÉ CITROËN AND GEORGES-MARIE HAARDT TO PREPARE THE FIRST TRANS-SAHARAN EXPEDITION. HE DID ON-SITE RECONNAISSANCE MISSIONS AND CHOSE THE REFUELLING POINTS. HE WAS DEPUTY CHIEF OF THE FIRST CITROËN EXPEDITION FROM DECEMBER 1922 TO JANUARY 1923 AND THEN OF THE "CROISIÈRE NOIRE" IN 1924-1925.



IN THE GAME

JEAN DELATOUR HAS ALREADY TAKEN PART IN A TRANS-SAHARAN EXPEDITION AND THEREFORE KNOWS WHICH WAY TO GO. HE IS ABLE TO CONDUCT ONE RECONNAISSANCE MISSION AND TO REVEAL TWO TILES ON THE MAP ON EACH TURN.





THE HISTORICAL FIGURE BEHIND THE CHARACTER **SIR ANDREW WALLEDDGRAVE.**

PERCIVAL «PERCY» HARRISON FAWCETT

HE WAS BORN ON AUGUST 18, 1867 IN TORQUAY AND PROBABLY DIED IN 1925. HE WAS A BRITISH LIEUTENANT-COLONEL, A CARTOGRAPHER, AN ARCHAEOLOGIST AND AN EXPLORER. HE WENT MISSING IN THE BRAZILIAN JUNGLE WHILE LOOKING FOR A LOST CITY.

THE UNCERTAINTY REGARDING HIS DEATH GAVE BIRTH TO A VARIETY OF MYTHS, LEGENDS AND RUMOURS THAT THRIVED FOR OVER TWENTY-FIVE YEARS. HIS DISAPPEARANCE REMAINED A MYSTERY. HE WAS EDUCATED AT NEWTON ABBOTT COLLEGE BEFORE EMBRACING A MILITARY CAREER. IN 1886, HE GOT HIS OFFICER QUALIFICATIONS IN THE ROYAL ARTILLERY AND JOINED THE TRINCOMALEE GARRISON IN CEYLON. IN 1901, HE WAS SENT ON A SECRET MISSION IN NORTHERN AFRICA, WHERE HE LEARNED TOPOGRAPHY. IN 1906, HE WAS CONTACTED BY THE LONDON GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY TO MAP THE BORDERS BETWEEN BRAZIL AND BOLIVIA. HE STARTED TO EXPLORE THIS REGION IN 1906 AND THOROUGHLY DOCUMENTED HIS TRIP, TAKING NOTES ABOUT THE LOCAL GEOGRAPHY, STRANGE ANIMALS (FROM PIRANHAS TO ANACONDAS), AND THE LIFE OF LOCAL WORKERS (WHOSE MORTALITY RATE WAS OVER 50 PER CENT). FROM 1906 TO 1913, HE TOOK PART IN SIX DIFFERENT EXPEDITIONS, WITH THE AIM OF MAPPING BOLIVIA BUT ALSO TO EXPLORE UNKNOWN REGIONS. ONE OF THESE EXPEDITIONS ALLOWED HIM TO DISCOVER THE RICARDO FRANCO HILLS, A ROCKY HIGH PLATEAU SURROUNDED WITH IMPASSABLE CLIFFS. A FEW YEARS LATER, SIR ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE, A FRIEND OF FAWCETT'S, USED IT AS ONE OF HIS NOVELS' SETTING, THE LOST WORLD, POPULATING IT WITH PREHISTORICAL ANIMALS. IN 1925, FAWCETT AND HIS TEAM LEFT THE CAPITAL OF MATO GROSSO, CUIBA, AND HEADED FOR UPPER XINGU. THEN THEY VANISHED INTO THIN AIR. RUMOURS QUICKLY STARTED TO CIRCULATE: INDIANS ASSERTED HE HAD BEEN SEEN LIVING WITH AN INDIAN PRINCESS. OTHERS BELIEVED HE HAD FINALLY FOUND A LOST CITY AND HAD DECIDED NEVER TO GO BACK TO CIVILISATION.

IN 2005, DAVID GRANN, A JOURNALIST FROM NEW YORK, VISITED A KALAPALO VILLAGE IN UPPER XINGU AND DISCOVERED THAT ORAL TRADITIONS REGARDING FAWCETT WERE STILL HANDED DOWN FROM FATHER TO SON. ACCORDING TO THEM, FAWCETT AND HIS COMPANIONS STOPPED AT THE VILLAGE BEFORE HEADING FARTHER EAST. THE KALAPALOS TRIED TO DISSUADE THEM FROM LEAVING, WARNING THEM AGAINST SAVAGE INDIANS LIVING IN THIS REGION. THEY WERE ABLE TO SEE THE EXPLORER AND HIS TEAM'S CAMPFIRES FOR FIVE DAYS. THEN THE FIRES DISAPPEARED FOR GOOD. ACCORDING TO THE KALAPALOS, FAWCETT AND HIS FRIENDS WERE CERTAINLY KILLED BY INDIANS.



IN THE GAME

SIR ANDREW HAS MANY CONTACTS IN THE ROYAL NAVY. HE CAN EMBARK ON SHIPS WITH THE GREATEST EASE AND HAS A TALENT FOR FINDING SOLUTIONS. HE IS THEREFORE ABLE TO SAVE 50F FOR A SEA JOURNEY ON EACH TURN.



THE HISTORICAL FIGURE BEHIND THE CHARACTER **LEONARD VAN HOTTEN**

WAVRIN DE VILLERS-AU-TERTRE

MARQUIS ROBERT WAVRIN DE VILLERS-AU-TERTRE WAS AN ETHNOLOGIST AND AN EXPLORER. HE WAS BORN ON AUGUST 29, 1888, IN BOTTELARE (EAST FLANDERS) AND DIED IN UCCLE ON JUNE 29, 1971. FROM 1913 TO 1937, HE EXPLORED SOUTH AMERICA, STUDYING THE AMERINDIAN POPULATIONS HE ENCOUNTERED, ESPECIALLY IN THE ORINOCO AND AMAZONIAN BASINS. HE FINANCED HIS EXPEDITIONS USING HIS OWN FORTUNE, WHICH ALLOWED HIM TO CONDUCT THEM FREELY. FROM 1913, ROBERT WAVRIN SPENT MANY YEARS EXPLORING SOUTH AMERICA'S LEAST KNOWN REGIONS, THEN WENT BACK TO EUROPE AS A WAR VOLUNTEER IN 1917 AND SERVED UNTIL 1919. HE THEN RESUMED HIS EXPLORATIONS RIGHT AFTER BEING DISCHARGED. HE THUS SPENT TWENTY-FIVE YEARS OF HIS LIFE TRAVELLING IN SOUTH AMERICA, CARRYING HIS CAMERA AT ALL TIMES AND TAKING PICTURES OR FILMING REGIONS, CULTURES AND TRADITIONS OF SEVERAL ETHNIC GROUPS WHOSE WAY OF LIFE WOULD SLOWLY BE DESTROYED BY THE INEXORABLE ADVANCE OF MODERNITY. HE ALSO STUDIED LOCAL WILDLIFE AND EVEN DISCOVERED NEW SPECIES, SUCH AS THE BIOTODOMA WAWRINI, A FISH NOW BEARING HIS NAME.

HE LEFT A HUGE AND DETAILED DOCUMENTATION ABOUT THE TRADITIONS AND CULTURE OF MANY DIFFERENT TRIBES. HIS FILMS ARE OF GREAT INTEREST, SINCE THEY PROVIDE FIRST-HAND INFORMATION ABOUT ETHNIC GROUPS WHO HAVE BEEN DECIMATED OR DISAPPEARED SINCE. HE GATHERED A COLLECTION OF AMERINDIAN OBJECTS, SHOT FOUR FULL-LENGTH AND SEVEN SHORT FILMS, BUT ALSO THOUSANDS OF PHOTOGRAPHS. HIS BEST-KNOWN FILM, ENTITLED IN THE LAND OF THE SCALP (1931), EVOKES THE SHUARS – ALSO KNOWN AS JIVAROS – AND THEIR HEAD-SHRINKING TECHNIQUES. WAVRIN ALSO WROTE MANY BOOKS AND ARTICLES ABOUT SOUTH AMERICA.





IN THE GAME

LÉONARD VAN HOTTEN IS A SKILLFUL BUSINESSMAN AND A CUNNING DIPLOMAT. NO MATTER WHERE HE IS, HE IS ALWAYS WELL RECEIVED. ON ENTERING A TOWN, LÉONARD ALWAYS PICKS AT LEAST TWO SUPPLY CARDS.



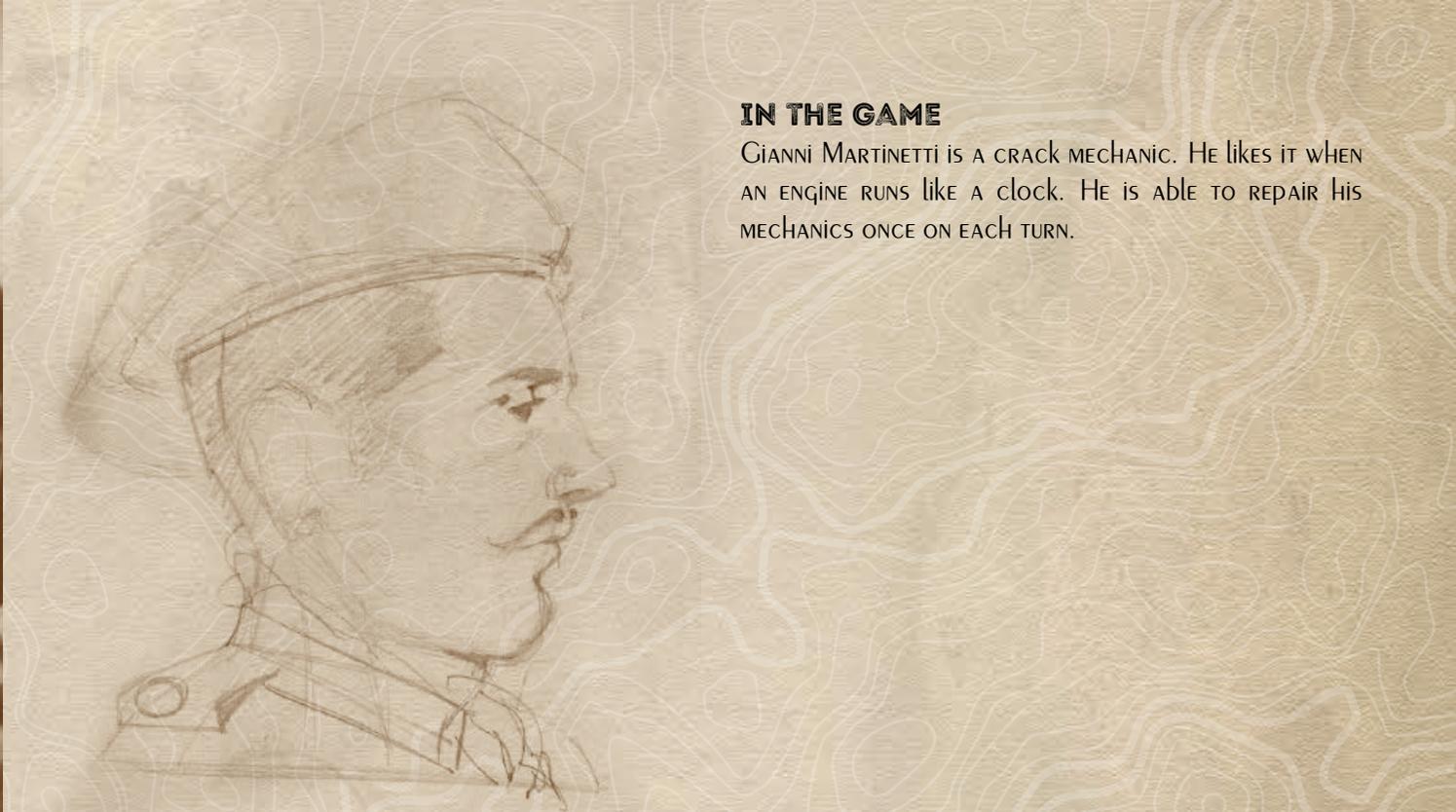
THE HISTORICAL FIGURE BEHIND THE CHARACTER
GIANNI MARTINETTI.

FELICE NAZZARO was born in MONTE DA PO on DECEMBER 4, 1881, in the PIEDMONTSE PROVINCE of TURIN and died on MARCH 21, 1940, in TURIN. He was nicknamed "THE KING OF SPEED" and "THE MAN WHO COULD DRIVE TWO MILES A MINUTE". He was an ITALIAN DRIVER who became famous before World War I, but also boosted his reputation in 1922, at forty, by winning the FRENCH AUTOMOBILE CLUB'S GRAND PRIX with a FIAT CAR. He was first hired by FIAT as a MECHANIC'S APPRENTICE and worked on one of the CEIRANO BROTHERS' ENGINE. Then he became VINCENZO FLO- RIO'S CAR MECHANIC and ran several races with him. He became a DRIVER and first got behind the WHEEL during the GORDON BENNETT AUTOMOBILE CUP in 1905. OUTSTANDING performances then piled up, until he was considered as the world's best driver in 1907. Along with his adopted brother, he founded his own company in TURIN: NAZZARO & C. FABBRICA di AUTOMOBILI.

DURING World War I, he contributed to the war effort by MANU- FACTURING LORRIES which were propelled by a 10 CYLINDERS ANZANI ENGINE. BUT AS THE GOVERNMENT did NOT place orders, he had to close his factory in 1916.

He died in 1940 after a long illness. FIAT gave him a SOLEMN FUNERAL and he was buried in the family vault next to his wife in MONTIQLIO MONFERRATO'S CEMETERY.





IN THE GAME

GIANNI MARTINETTI IS A CRACK MECHANIC. HE LIKES IT WHEN AN ENGINE RUNS LIKE A CLOCK. HE IS ABLE TO REPAIR HIS MECHANICS ONCE ON EACH TURN.



THE HISTORICAL FIGURE BEHIND THE CHARACTER **LOUIS CHEVY.**

LOUIS CHEVROLET, THE SECOND CHILD IN A FAMILY OF SEVEN, WAS BORN ON DECEMBER 25, 1878, IN LA CHAUX-DE-FONDS IN SWITZERLAND, WHERE HIS FATHER WORKED IN THE WATCH-MAKING INDUSTRY. IN 1880, AS THE ECONOMIC CRISIS CAME TO AN END, HIS FATHER, WHO WAS A TALENTED WATCHMAKER, WENT BACK TO WORK IN HIS NATIVE VILLAGE: BONFOL. AT THAT TIME, THE FAMILY LIVED IN BEURNEVÉSIN, A NEIGHBOURING VILLAGE. IN 1887, THEY MOVED TO FRANCE AND SETTLED IN BEAUNE. LOUIS CHEVROLET BECAME A BIKE MECHANIC AND STARTED TO RUN BIKE RACES. HE THEN MET THE AMERICAN BILLIONAIRE VANDERBILT, WHO OFFERED HIM A JOB IN THE US. IN SPITE OF THIS OFFER, HE DECIDED TO STAY IN FRANCE AND WORK IN THE DARRACQ CAR FACTORIES IN PARIS. HE THEN HEADED FOR AMERICA, AND AFTER A SHORT STAY IN QUEBEC, HE ARRIVED IN THE US IN 1900 AND FOUND A JOB AT DION BOUTON AMERICA IN NEW YORK. IN 1905, HE STARTED WORKING FOR FIAT, AND IT WAS UNDER THE COMPANY'S COLOURS THAT HE WON HIS FIRST RACE. THE FOLLOWING YEAR, HE BROKE THE "MILE RECORD", DRIVING A DARRACQ CAR. WILLIAM DURANT, CEO OF THE BUICK GROUP, GOT IMPRESSED BY HIS PERFORMANCES AND OFFERED HIM TO HELP CREATE AND DRIVE THE BUICK BUG. IN 1909, AFTER WINNING SEVERAL RACES, HE RANKED SECOND AT THE AMERICAN CHAMPIONSHIP. THE CHEVROLET MOTOR COMPANY WAS CREATED IN MICHIGAN ON NOVEMBER 3, 1911, AND CREATED THE CLASSIC SIX, A LUXURIOUS SEDAN THAT IS REMEMBERED AS A PARAGON OF INNOVATION IN AMERICA. LOUIS CHEVROLET SEIZED A TRIP TO EUROPE AS AN OPPORTUNITY TO GO BACK TO WHERE HE GREW UP. BACK IN THE US, A DISSENSION LED HIM TO CEDE BACK ALL HIS PARTS AND HIS BRAND TO HIS ASSOCIATE, WILLIAM DURANT. FOLLOWING HIS MOTTO, "NEVER GIVE UP", HE THEN FOUNDED HIS OWN STABLE, FRONTENAC, AND HIS OWN RACING CAR IN 1914. INCREDIBLY LIGHT AND POWERFUL, THANKS TO THE USE OF ALUMINIUM, THIS CAR BROUGHT HIM TO FAME BUT ALSO CAUSED THE DEATH OF HIS BROTHER, GASTON, WHO WAS POSTHUMOUSLY HAILED AS AN AMERICAN CHAMPION. AFTER GASTON'S DEATH, LOUIS DEVOTED HIMSELF TO HIS PASSION: MECHANICS. IN 1921, HE FOUNDED THE CHEVROLET BROTHERS MANUFACTURING COMPANY WITH THE HELP OF ANOTHER BROTHER, ARTHUR. THEY DEVELOPED ENGINES FOR CARS AND PLANES. WITH THE 1929 CRISIS APPROACHING, LOUIS LEFT THE COMPANY IN THE HANDS OF HIS BROTHER AND STARTED TO WORK IN THE CHEVROLET FACTORY IN DETROIT. WASTED BY DISEASE AND RUINED BY THE CRISIS, HE DIED ON JUNE 6, 1941, AND WAS BURIED IN INDIANAPOLIS'S CEMETERY. THE MEMORIAL CELEBRATING THE LIFE OF A MAN WHO CHANGED AMERICAN HISTORY CAN STILL BE SEEN THERE.





IN THE GAME

Louis Chevy knows where to find sponsors and has many driving races contacts, thanks to his reputation as a daredevil. That's why he earns 20F on each turn. That's going to help him move his pawns, for sure!



THE HISTORICAL FIGURE BEHIND THE CHARACTER **SIMONE DE FORÊT.**

SIMONE LOUISE PINET DE BORDE DES FOREST, MORE GENERALLY KNOWN AS SIMONE LOUISE DES FOREST OR SIMPLY SIMONE DES FOREST, WAS A FRENCH DRIVER. SHE WAS BORN ON MARCH 7, 1910, IN ROYAN (CHARENTE-MARITIME) AND DIED ON NOVEMBER 15, 2004, IN VICHY (ALLIER). SHE WAS ONE OF THE FIRST WOMEN TO GET A DRIVING LICENSE IN FRANCE, IN 1929, AND RAN DRIVING RACES AS SOON AS 1930. HER NAME ALSO ORIGINATED A FRENCH IDIOM: "EN VOITURE, SIMONE!". ONE YEAR AFTER GETTING HER LICENSE, SHE RAN HER FIRST AUTOMOBILE SPORTING RACE, THE BARAQUE COAST RACE, NEAR CLERMONT-FERRAND. SHE THEN EMBRACED A CAREER IN THE AUTOMOTIVE WORLD AS A DRIVER, CHALLENGING THE PREJUDICE OF THAT TIME. SHE TOOK PART IN MANY RACES AND RALLIES WITHOUT HAVING A SINGLE ACCIDENT UNTIL 1957. IN 1931, SHE RAN THE PARIS-VICHY RACE WITH HER MOTHER AS A CO-DRIVER. IN 1934, SHE COMPETED IN THE MONTE-CARLO RALLY WITH HER FRIEND FERNANDE HUSTINX, DRIVING A 301 PEUGEOT. THE TWO WOMEN LEFT ROMANIA AND REACHED MONACO AFTER A 3,772km JOURNEY, FACING MANY ADVENTURES THAT SIMONE DES FOREST RECOUNTED AND ILLUSTRATED IN A LOGBOOK. THE TWO WOMEN ALSO WON THE COUPE DES DAMES. IN 1935, COMPETING ONCE AGAIN IN THE MONTE-CARLO RALLY, SIMONE DES FOREST AND ODETTE SIKO, DRIVING A TRIUMPH CAR, RANKED THIRD AT THE COUPE DES DAMES, AND THIRTY-SIXTH AT THE GENERAL RANKING (WITH A LOW-DISPLACEMENT ENGINE: 1,232cm³, COMPARED TO 3,000cm³ FOR THE WINNING FEMALE TEAM'S CAR). ALONG WITH ODETTE SIKO, HELLÉ NICE AND CLAIRE DESCOLLAS, SHE CONDUCTED SPEED TESTS FROM MAY 19 TO MAY 29, 1937, AT THE CAR-RACING TRACK OF MONTLHÉRY, WITH THE HELP OF THE ENGINE OIL COMPANY YACCO, WHO WAS HER SPONSOR. UNDER THE GUIDANCE OF ODETTE SIKO, AND IN SPITE OF RISING TENSIONS DUE TO SIMONE DES FOREST'S AND CLAIRE DESCOLLAS'S HOSTILITY TOWARDS HELLÉ NICE, THE FOUR WOMEN BROKE TWENTY-FIVE WORLD RECORDS, SOME OF WHICH REMAIN UNBEATEN. DURING WORLD WAR II, SIMONE DROVE A RED CROSS LORRY. AFTER THE WAR, SHE PARTICIPATED IN THE FRENCH LORRY DRIVERS CHAMPIONSHIP AND RANKED TENTH. ACCLAIMED BY THE GREATEST DRIVERS – INCLUDING FANGIO HIMSELF, APPARENTLY –, SHE THEN TURNED TO CIVIL AVIATION. SHE WAS ALSO ONE OF THE FIRST WOMEN TO OPEN A DRIVING-SCHOOL, IN 1950, TEACHING THERE FOR TWENTY-FIVE YEARS.





IN THE GAME

SIMONE DE FORËT AND HER SUFFRAGETTES TEAM HAVE AMAZING ORGANISATIONAL SKILLS! DURING BIVOUAC PHASES, SHE EARNS A SUPPLEMENTARY CARD ONCE ALL THE OTHER PLAYERS HAVE PICKED THEIRS.



THE HISTORY OF THE SUFFRAGETTES

DURING World War I, women took the place of men, working in the fields and in factories. They provided food to civilians and soldiers and produced arms and ammunition. After the war, they wished to keep their freedom of action and reflection. Indeed, they had become aware of their importance in their social environment. They got interested in politics and wanted to win the right to vote in order to have a voice in the building of the society they lived in.

In Great Britain, this movement was widely popular and took the name of "Suffragette". Society was changing: women started to wear trousers and tomboy cuts. They also did sports which were reserved to men up to this point: driving, flying, exploring (Marie Marvingt, Amélie Earhart...). They got flying and driving licenses (Simone des Forest), headed exploration expeditions, became adventurers or movie makers (Alice Guy). This movement allowed British women to get the vote in 1928. French women would only get there in 1944, before finally being able to open a bank account without their husbands' consent in 1965. The notion of "head of household" was only erased from the Civil Code in 1970. These fights might seem improbable and out-of-date to us, yet before the war the female condition was far from ideal. And today, even if the notion of female salary disappeared, women are still payed 30 per cent less than men in some sectors.

The film "The Suffragettes" accurately describes this time when half of the world's population served men and suffered on a daily basis.

The Great Race, by including an all-female team, aims at reminding us and making us reflect on the fact that the right of women to self-determination is only quite recent. This fight started at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries.



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