



O USATC S100 0-6-0T from Chrezo and Minerva

Anticipating a need for switching locos in ports and depots following the planned invasion of mainland Europe, in 1942 the United States Army Transportation Corps ordered 382 S100 0-6-0 tanks from several builders (Davenport Locomotive Works of Iowa, H.K.Porter, Inc., of Pittsburgh, and Vulcan Iron Works of Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania). They were shipped to Great Britain in 1943; some saw use on British railways, then most were transferred to the mainland after D-Day.

They entered service in France immediately after the invasion, and eventually 77 were on the SNCF roster, with the last in use as late as 1970. Many were sold to industrial users.

They were distributed through France to Germany, Austria, Italy, Yugoslavia, and Greece. Several state railways (SNCF, ÖBB, FS, and JZ) used these locos after the war, in some places well into the 1970s. Examples could still be found even later in parts of the former Yugoslavia. Locos of this type were also used in countries such as Israel, Iraq, Iran, China, and Russia (broad gauge).

All this makes the loco an interesting prospect for a manufacturer, even if the type is restricted to yards and depots.

Minerva from the UK and Chrezo in France have collaborated to commission a 7mm scale (1:43.5) model for 32mm standard gauge, which has recently been released. Chrezo offer original USATC and French variants, with detail differences – e.g. TIA water treatment tank, safety valves, and bunker tops.

Minerva offer five British variants (reviewed in the current September 2025 RAILWAY MODELLER) with significant

modifications by the Southern Railway such as enclosed cabs, rectangular windows, large coal bunkers, and other specific details. Five colour schemes are planned including SR black with yellow shaded green lettering, BR black with early crest, BR black with late crest, BR lined green with late crest, and Keighley & Worth Valley Railway lined brown.

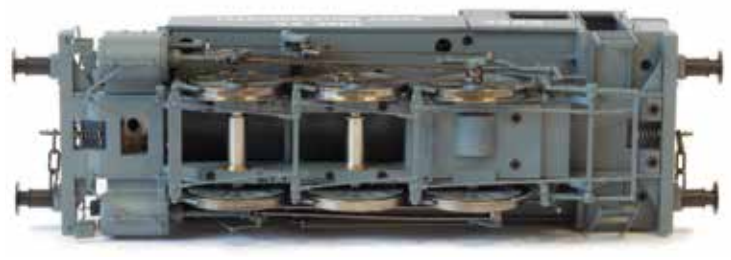
The model appears accurate according to published plans and photos, though note there were many detail differences over time.

Our sample is in plain USATC grey, numbered 4383, a machine built by Davenport; this later became SNCF 030 TU 22, allocated in this livery to Hirson (18th May 1946), then to Somain (17th June 1946), Calais (10th September 1948), Le Tréport (5th May 1949), and finally Longueau (13th December 1961), where it was withdrawn on 31st December 1966.

Other French 030TU versions offered include: grey un-numbered; black un-numbered; 4 black Est with 'Soyez Vigilant' lettering; 20 black Nord; 27 black Ouest; and 47 green Ouest.

The highly detailed model has been assembled from over 250 individual components, and features an injection moulded plastic body on a die-cast metal chassis.

The body has the tank fillers moulded in place and is enhanced with many separately applied details - note the smokebox and cab door handrails in fine wire, smokebox steps, top feed and pipework, sand pipes, safety valves, whistle, tank strap, detailed backhead with controls according to variant, protective bars on the rear spectacles (etched metal), injectors and pipework under the cab,



cab door steps, brake shoes and rigging, shunters' steps behind the front buffer beam, and sprung buffers. The chimney cover is movable.

Detail differences according to the version include the coal bunker (no coal rails as delivered); the position of rear spectacles (lower on original USATC, but soon raised when coal rails were added);

the type of regulator; and the front handrails (removed from British locos).

Some optional parts are provided – hinged front deck, Coale safety valves, TIA water treatment reservoir, and cab doors.

The detailed motion is very fine, a combination of metal and plastic parts. There is a working link to the mechanical lubricator on the front footplate.

The chassis casting incorporates leaf

springs, equalising beams, and rivets on firebox sides.

The model boasts fine scale wheels, with narrow treads and very fine flanges.

It comes fitted with three-link couplings on sprung hooks.

The mechanism employs a high torque motor with flywheel with a 40:1 gear drive onto the rear axle in the firebox; the wheels are coupled by the rods.

There are wiper pickups on the back of all wheels, well concealed despite the relatively open frames.

Two LS10X1 'sugar cube' speakers are installed during manufacture; there is also space for an additional speaker in the smokebox.

Options include DC (DCC ready), DCC fitted, and DCC sound using the latest technology (Zimo MS450R). This applies only in the UK only - in France a sound kit is offered as an extra only with online purchases direct from Chrezo.

The decoder is loaded with the characteristic sounds of the 030 TU, with files developed by British specialist Paul Chetter.

The model runs smoothly and quietly, from a crawl to a realistic maximum.

There are no traction tyres. With a weight of 820g, the hauling capacity should be adequate for shunting tasks.



The minimum radius is quoted as 1,028mm.

Length over buffers is 210mm.

The models have a two year guarantee.

The instructions (naturally in French with the Chrezo models) show how to remove the body to connect a decoder via the eight-pin socket. The front handrails and the drain cock operating rods need to be carefully disconnected.

Minerva are able to supply the French versions to order in the UK.

This model has been carefully researched and well made. Beware – it could tempt you into O!

Manufactured for

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PRICE £390.00 DC (DCC ready),
£445.00 DCC fitted,
£525.00 DCC sound.