

Case Study

# The 'Alamo Bridge' from Saving Private Ryan



Country	UK
Product	Mabey Quickbridge
Installation time	2 days
Completion date	April 1997

**mabey** bridge

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### The Challenges

There can be few times when a bridge can claim to be a star in an Oscar winning movie. The Bridge on the River Kwai is one example, and the 'Alamo Bridge' in Steven Spielberg's 1997 five-times Oscar winning blockbuster 'Saving Private Ryan' is another. The bridge was the centrepiece for the final dramatic scenes of the movie, which grossed \$481m worldwide at cinemas. Tom Hanks and his squad have to defend the bridge at all costs from the advancing Germans.

At the Hatfield Aerodrome in Hertfordshire the movie production team faithfully recreated a war-torn French town, complete with a river. Mabey Bridge was commissioned to supply a series of panel bridging for scenes throughout the film, as well as a Mabey Quickbridge that would be transformed by set designers into a mock masonry arch bridge to become the famous 'Alamo Bridge'.

### The Solution

Mabey Quickbridge was chosen as the basis for the Alamo Bridge as it would need to carry wheeled vehicles and even a tank. A modular, all steel system engineered to provide an off-the-shelf solution and developed by our in-house engineering team, the Quickbridge has been designed to provide safe, simple and rapid solutions to requirements on both site and public roads. Based on a standard module width of 1.725 metres, units are located side by side to provide the required roadway width and in spans ranging from 6m - 20m. The units are supplied complete with anti-skid surfacing to the decks, parapet and kerb units are normally supplied ready bolted to the outside units.

The movie bridge consisted of 3 x 12m and 2 x 6m Quickbridge spans supported by MAT 75 towers. The bridge was erected over the excavated riverbed in only a couple of days by a handful of workers with the help of a telehandler. Once individual components were lifted into position and bolted, the appearance of the structure was modified using timber cladding, cement and hessian to give the structure its masonry look. One of the units was omitted to simulate bomb damage. Once assembled, water was pumped in to create the river and the illusion was complete.

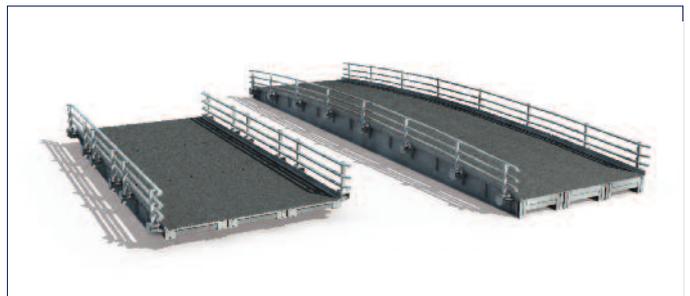
### The Result

While this movie was an unconventional use of the Quickbridge, it illustrates the rapid deployment and robust nature of Quickbridge. Within only a few days the bridge was installed, mocked up, and able to take the weight of a 26.5 tonne T-34 tank (modified to resemble a Tiger tank). It's fair to say this bridge is one of the most famous in movie history.



**Top:** The Quickbridge showing the missing deck, on the set at the Hatfield Aerodrome before the modifications.

**Bottom:** The completed mock masonry bridge, known as the 'Alamo Bridge' in position ready for filming to take place.



### About the Mabey Quickbridge

Introduced in 1995, the Mabey Quickbridge consists of a number of pre-assembled fully welded modular steel bridge units that arrive on site ready for immediate installation. The system is ideal for small span permanent bridges and combines with fully adjustable supports to create temporary flyovers for rapid deployment during maintenance works on busy highways.

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