

AWD, the former Bedford Trucks business that crashed in June owing tens of millions, was yesterday sold by its receivers to Marshall SPV, a privately owned manufacturer of special purpose vehicles based in Cambridge, writes Michael Harrison.

The price was not disclosed, although it is thought to have been a fraction of the pounds 20m the entrepreneur David Brown paid General Motors in 1987 when he took over the Dunstable-based business and renamed it AWD.

Marshall's purchase will not save many jobs, nor will it result in production continuing at Dunstable, which once produced virtually all the British Army's trucks. The new owners plan to run down the Dunstable plant over the next few months and transfer all production to Cambridge.

When AWD went into receivership, most of its 850 workers were made redundant. Only about half the 150 workers left at Dunstable will be offered jobs at Cambridge.

The receivers, Roger Oldfield and Tony Thompson of KPMG Peat Marwick, have kept AWD open since June, producing one truck a week, and secured new orders for military trucks worth pounds 160m from customers in South America, Asia and Africa.

Marshall, which employs 2,500 and makes military vehicles, ambulances, buses, refuse vehicles and car transporters, indicated that it would continue to produce AWD's range of military and commercial heavy lorries.

It has not yet been decided whether to retain the AWD name, but Marshall has acquired the licence to use the Bedford marque overseas. Bernard Williams, Marshall's managing director, said the acquisition would benefit its expansion plans.

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<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/business/awd-sale-to-put-bedford-in-cambridge-1557330.html>