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Mobility – Protection - Firepower



Mobility, protection, firepower are the three key attributes of armoured vehicles, which are made up of two broad categories in land-based military operations: fighting vehicles and tactical vehicles. While the discussion of tracks vs wheels is ongoing, the main focus was, still is and will forever be force protection! Balancing protection, payload, and performance is the next big hurdle and may require trade-offs. Platform, system and sub-system manufacturers over the years have sought to balance these conflicting requirements, as Armed Forces around the world have responded to the latest operational requirements and political pressures. Levels of protection have increased to meet new threats, but mobility and, in particular, speed of deployment, remain perhaps the key attributes as limited resources are allocated to apparently ever-increasing missions. Mobility also meaning to achieve air transportability by rotary or winged aircraft.

Protection equals weight, and weight reduces mobility: if assets can not be moved into theatre, or within an area of operations, what are the merits of “protection” from the military perspective? - And what level of protection/casualties is “acceptable” once operational deployment has been achieved? There are several options, such as forward deployment of materiel, deployment by sea rather than air, or rail rather than road, but in the end, whether for combat, reconnaissance, liaison, transport, logistic support, or medical missions, the modern armoured vehicle has to be all things to all people. And finally it is up to the manufacturers to come up with mobility, protection and firepower on time to an affordable price, so that the Armed Forces of today can defend our freedom and come home safe.

In this Special Issue we present snapshots of some of the major programmes around the world, while key manufacturers present their solutions. We wish you an informative and enjoyable read.

Dennis-P. Merklingshaus
Managing Editor

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For all the discussions about wheels vs. tracks as the best choice for AFVs, and all the considerations about the optimal balance of firepower, protection and mobility, let us not forget that the main element in armoured vehicles is and remains the crew. (Photo: USMC)

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