

Article Images



Article Archive

PRINT
 EMAIL
 REPRINT

[Return to Search Page](#)
[Return to Results Page](#)

This Article was Originally Published in **Tactical Response Magazine, January 2008.**

Related Subjects/Products: No Subjects/Products Available

Related Companies: No Companies Available

Article Not Displaying Correctly?
[Click Here](#)

What's New in Tactical & Command Vehicles

Written by Jennifer Gavigan

Many tactical vehicle companies are expanding the versatility of their product lines to encompass a wider range of threats and emergencies, including terrorism, natural disasters such as hurricanes, tornadoes, and more. Using new technology, what once used to be "just a SWAT vehicle" has turned into much more. Here is a look at some of the major players in the tactical vehicle market and what they have to offer in 2008.

The Armored Group LLC

Headquartered in Phoenix, AZ, The Armored Group offers a comprehensive product line of mobile armored vehicles. The Armored Group produces armored SWAT, rapid deployment, military and police tactical vehicles. Its custom-made vehicles feature advanced designs and engineering, using state-of-the-art laser equipment and CAD-CAM systems. Its manufacturing capabilities deliver flexibility with a wide range of options to meet agencies' needs.

Each vehicle built by The Armored Group is compliant with the ballistic requirements of the Underwriters Laboratories (UL) and the National Institute of Justice (NIJ), as well as European standards. All armored products from The Armored Group are built from stainless steel, Galvan Neal, aluminum, and hardened ballistic steel, as well as soft armor-like Kevlar yellow jacket. Utilizing the latest technology as well as new ideas and materials, The Armored Group's bulletproof vehicles meet or exceed all FMVSS / Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards.

The Armored Group also has a large inventory of used armored vehicles that are available for sale. Offering a full line of reconditioned vehicles that are affordable without compromising standards of quality and safety, the company can design a vehicle to fit an agency's budget and armored needs. It ships armored trucks and armored cars all over the world by boat, train, or plane depending on a department's needs. The Armored Group also takes trade-ins of armor or non-armored vehicles, to help agencies that don't have large budgets.

The Armored Group's armored and unarmored SWAT police and tactical units offer the highest level of protection and safety. An agency can tell the company its particular needs and The Armored Group will engineer and design the vehicle accordingly, building exactly to an agency's specifications. In addition, it offers prisoner transport vehicles, armored vans, armored buses, SWAT vehicles, tactical command centers and troop carriers. The Armored Group's SWAT Vehicle product line includes: BATT™-Ballistic Armored Tactical Transport; Rapid Deployment Vehicle; Prisoner Transport Vehicle; Protector Military Tactical; and MAD™-Mobile Armored Device.

The BATT line of vehicles has grown to include the following: 1) BATT-S: designed for departments with smaller budgets; 2) BATT: original design that was developed to offer teams a vehicle with unmatched room and comfort while still providing a high level of armor protection; 3) BATT-XL: designed for larger teams where maximum ballistic protection, room, storage and performance is required; ballistic protection for armor-piercing and .50 cal multi-hit rounds; both 4x2 and 4x4 options are available; 4) BATT-AP: provides armor-piercing and .50 cal multi-hit round protection; designed to carry 8 to 10 officers.

The BATT-S line of armored SWAT vehicles was unveiled at the 2007 Florida SWAT Round-Up in Orlando. The "S" stands for "smaller" in relation to the ballistic caliber protection. The Armored Group designed the unit for departments that cannot obtain larger grants for armored vehicles. The BATT-S provides departments with smaller budgets a SWAT vehicle, with rifle round protection and a design conducive to SWAT operations, for a much more affordable price than the standard armored personnel carriers. This allows many departments the ability to acquire a SWAT vehicle instead of resorting to purchasing a used



Cash-In-Transit unit, which is generally only handgun protection.

This BATT-S is designed to carry 10 to 14 officers, depending on the rear seating configuration chosen. An individual seat package is standard, but a bench seating package is available that allows for more officers in the cargo area. Base units come with protection against the AK47's 7.62x39mm cartridge and can be increased to the 308 Win (7.62 NATO) protection for a nominal fee. The BATT-S is GSA certified and is a part of the GSA Advantage buying program. The full line of vehicles is available on the GSA Advantage Web site.

Dodgen Mobile Technologies



Dodgen Industries has a 35-year history in manufacturing mobile command centers and tactical response vehicles. Dodgen units are built from the chassis up with a focused attention to the specific needs of the users. Every vehicle is quality inspected, water tested and road tested before delivery to the customer. Dodgen's customers and prospective clients are encouraged to come to the factory and see first hand how the vehicles are built and to receive complete instruction on the use of the vehicle after the purchase.

Dodgen offers basic floor plans for Mobile Command Vehicles, SWAT Vehicles, Command Post Vehicles, Mobile Health Clinics, Mobile Veterinary Clinics, Mobile Offices, and Mobile Showrooms, but each vehicle can be customized to meet an agency's needs. The company's Mobile Command Vehicles range from 22 feet in length to 32 feet and can be designed with a variety of equipment suited for specific application.



With a self-contained Dodgen Mobile Command Center, no CDL license is required. Built on a Ford Econoline Super-Duty chassis or a Chevrolet 5500 Kodiak chassis, the Dodgen Command Center's compact size allows officers to drive it down tight alleys and places where larger models can't go. Inside the unit are the components and conveniences that one would expect in a much larger unit. Through innovative design, Dodgen has maximized the available space. The communication area is pre-wired for radios that can be mounted overhead to keep surfaces clear. White marker board surfaces allow for easy note keeping that is visible to all. Internal pathways make antenna and equipment installations easy.

Dodgen Emergency Response Vehicles (ERVs) are designed to give an agency multiple uses within one vehicle. The overall design allows officers to do victim counseling; limited canteen dispensing of food or water; public relations appearances and fund-raising; and mobile office functions from a single vehicle. For agencies with a targeted focus on the vehicle use, the models can be custom designed specifically for its needs to maximize the use of space. Models are available in gasoline or diesel engines, and all vehicles are designed to tow a trailer if needed. A range of options allows an agency to outfit the vehicle to its specific situation.

On Dodgen's Command and Emergency Response vehicles, the Ford chassis features an electronic 5-speed automatic transmission, and the Kodiak chassis has an electronic 4-speed Allison automatic transmission. Other features include: auxiliary transmission oil cooler; all-season radial tires; four-wheel anti-lock braking system; power steering; cruise control / tilt steering; power windows / door locks; remote keyless entry / panic alarm; intermittent wipers and washers.

Two 12-volt remote and heated rear-view mirrors are on the inside, along with an AM-FM dash stereo with CD player and clock; dash air-conditioning and heat; auxiliary 12V dash outlet; driver and passenger airbags; flexsteel vinyl-covered captain chairs; six-way power driver seat; front tow hooks (Kodiak chassis only); airbag suspension system (Ford chassis); and link ultra ride air suspension (Kodiak chassis). Safety equipment includes: backup alarm (12V); LP gas alarm (12V) on all models except 22-foot; smoke detector (9V); CO alarm (9V); and fire extinguisher.

The body is made up of hand-molded fiberglass components with tubular roll bars. The interior sports laminated plywood cabinet construction and commercial-grade vinyl flooring. The vehicle has a rear entry door and a side entry door. The rear stainless steel bumper has a fold-up step, and the trailer hitch pulls 500 pounds of tongue weight and 5,000 pounds of towing weight. More features include: drag rollers; ladder and roof rack; and stainless steel wheel liners.

Several options are available on select Dodgen models, such as diesel upgrade; second Onan generator; diesel generator; second roof air-conditioner; crossover electrical system; backup camera; HWH four-point leveling jacks; awning; roof ground plane; Cat 5 network jacks and cable system; roof-mounted emergency lighting; flood lights and spotlights.

General Purpose Vehicles Inc.

The GPV SERGEANT 4X4 from Michigan-based General Purpose Vehicles (GPV) is a newly designed National Security vehicle developed to provide law enforcement, military police, HazMat units and emergency response teams with a significant level of mobility, versatility and protection. The SERGEANT fulfills specific mission roles for homeland security, special response intervention, search and rescue, and infrastructure security.

Several key features set the SERGEANT apart from other armored vehicles. First is the ability to ford up to 3 feet of water, allowing the vehicle and occupants immediate access into areas off-road or covered by water where traditional rescue vehicles cannot access. This capability is a necessity in natural disaster responses and search-and-rescue efforts.

Second, GPV can work with the customer to “customize” the vehicle to meet the department’s specific mission roles. This might include adding storage and cabinet space in the crew compartment or setting it up with tables for a command center. Other options may include the insertion of a camera system with thermal and optical capability or seating to accommodate SCBA (self-contained breathing apparatus) tanks for HazMat units.

Third, an NBC Overpressure System is an option to prevent and protect the occupants from external hazardous contaminants. If necessary, the vehicle can take a team into a hazardous materials zone for rescue purposes or logistical and tactical support. The NBC Overpressure System allows for occupant protection in a WMD (weapons of mass destruction) situation or chemical spill. In addition, the SERGEANT is a CBRNE- or NBC-compliant vehicle.

The engine in the GPV SERGEANT 4x4 is a Caterpillar C7 turbo diesel rated at 300 hp at 2,400 rpm and 800 ft-lbs torque at 1,440 rpm. The SERGEANT carries 52 gallons of fuel with the capability of adding an extended fuel tank with up to an 80-gallon capacity, allowing it to operate for long periods in the event of a power outage or emergency with no fuel available. It features an Allison 5-speed automatic, electronically controlled transmission with one reverse and five forward gears. A two- or four-wheel drive selection provides added torque for climbing steep grades and towing disabled vehicles. The SERGEANT features hydraulic disc brakes with a four-wheel anti-lock braking system (ABS) and is equipped with a 12-volt electrical system with three sealed gel batteries.

Interior space on the SERGEANT provides for two personnel in the forward crew area and 10 fully equipped officers with weapons, packs and body armor in the rear crew area. A three-point seat-belt restraint system is provided for driver and co-driver to protect from rollovers, crashes and mine blasts. Lap belts are provided for the crewmembers. Ten weapon ports throughout the vehicle allow occupants to engage targets with a variety of weapons within the security of the vehicle. It has six points of ingress / egress allowing for exiting out from both sides and the rear of vehicle.

The SERGEANT’s vehicle hull is composed of commercial high hardness steel that is comparable to military armor plate. The high hard steel provides advanced protection and safety to its occupants from armed threats, fire, explosives, extreme weather conditions and violent confrontations. Window locations and sizes are adjustable and enable 360-degree vision from within the vehicle. Base protection levels for the windows, doors and body sides are NIJ Type IV.

The Knoxville, TN Police Department’s Special Operations Squad (SWAT) was one of the first in the country to become certified in Level 1 Hazardous Material Suits. Because of that, Knoxville needed a vehicle that met Homeland Security requirements, provided CBRNE protection for its occupants, and would not be cost-prohibitive. The officers needed a vehicle that could provide individual ballistic protection, but also allow multiple operators to enter into an area, assess the contaminants, and provide a transportation source for rescue workers and victims. Their answer was the GPV SERGEANT 4x4.

Deputy Chief Don Green of Knoxville said it was apparent that GPV was more interested in seeing how it could meet Knoxville’s needs and adapt its manufacturing abilities to provide a product to work for them. Green calls the SERGEANT an “asset” for his department and for homeland security response. Because of its unique properties, it is more versatile. “Most departments have ballistic protection, but this is beyond that,” Green said.

The Pinellas County, FL Sheriff’s Office also procured a GPV SERGEANT 4x4 for use in its agency. Corporal Bruce van de Gohm said the SWAT Vehicle from GPV is one of the largest he has seen, and it is a huge step up both in protection level and ability to move an entire team. According to van de Gohm, they used the 3-foot fording capability and 4x4 feature as “selling points” for hurricane rescues and the HazMat capability with the over pressure system for CBRNE or industrial HazMat response. “The vehicle has performed well in training and is quite agile considering its size,” van de Gohm stated. In addition, the Warren, MI Police Department placed an order for three SERGEANTs to be deployed for regional law enforcement support in southeastern Michigan.

LDV Inc.

LDV is a leading provider of homeland security vehicles to federal, state and local customers throughout North America. LDV is committed to giving agencies what they ask for rather than concentrating on production efficiency that could be gained by increased standardization. The company’s representatives act as consultants, designers and manufacturers to help walk an agency through every step of the process, from concept to final product. That includes systems integration with the latest technologies, platform recommendations that fit an agency’s needs, and unique designs that bring ideas to fruition.

LDV’s ability to recommend the right body and chassis, integrated with a functional design utilizing the latest technologies, is critical to emergency response personnel responding to disasters and other extreme situations. Accessories, replacement parts and replacement keys are available to all LDV customers through the Parts Department. The in-house Graphics Department can customize signs and graphics for both truck interiors and exteriors. LDV recently completed a Mobile Command Center and a SWAT Truck for the Cape Coral, FL Police Department. Captain John S. Mahshie of the Special Operations Bureau for Cape Coral spoke with Tactical Response about his agency’s LDV vehicles.

Among the big advantages Mahshie sees with LDV’s Mobile Command Center is its ability to replace an emergency management center in times of need. This means the surrounding areas can call Cape Coral if a

tornado or hurricane strikes and they can operate the public safety system for both fire and police from the Command Center. Mahshie said LDV's Command vehicle has a "ton of electronics," and it was designed specifically to meet Cape Coral's needs. LDV asked Cape Coral officers what they were looking for and created a vehicle Mahshie calls a "catch-all" because it performs many different functions.

"Phenomenal" is also how Mahshie describes LDV's Command vehicle. He points out features like its radio interoperability. If police systems go down, any agency that comes in to help (fire, EMS, etc.) can all sync up and talk together. This function pertains to federal emergencies as well. Another feature is the "Smart Board," which looks like a big TV screen. Nine laptops onboard can tie into Cape Coral's computer systems and download vital information or overhead maps that can be viewed on the Smart Board. Officers can then use markers to write on the screen to mark locations, obtaining a full visual without even being there. In addition, the Command Center has a "microwave downlink" that enables air units to give a live visual feed to the Smart Board.

LDV's Command Center is a full dispatch center with satellite feeds and can be connected to the SWAT vehicle for sending information back and forth. It also acts as an "information gathering system" by uplinking TV news channels to use as a source of information during natural disaster situations such as a hurricane. Cape Coral also uses its Command vehicle as a command post for special events with large crowds. The onboard tower cam reaches 60 feet in the air, so an officer can get a full view of the crowd through the camera. In case something goes wrong, the action is digitally taped and downloaded onto a disc. In addition, the Command Center's powerful lighting system lights a large area for nighttime operations or events. Two 2 kilowatt onboard generators make the vehicle self-reliant. Officers can also plug in phone lines or cable lines from the outside with capability similar to a house or building.

According to Mahshie, Cape Coral's SWAT Truck from LDV was the top SWAT vehicle at this year's SWAT RoundUp in Orlando, FL, which included vehicles from all over the world. Mahshie said he worked with LDV and told the company his agency's needs. One of the "requests" was to have all the equipment (tools, flash bangs, guns, ammo, etc.) compartmentalized and designed to be available from the outside of the vehicle, similar to a fire truck. LDV invited Cape Coral to its headquarters in Wisconsin to look at the vehicles. Cape Coral officials told LDV what they wanted changed on the vehicles, and LDV did it. Mahshie described the process as a "work in progress" and a real "partnership" with LDV.

The SWAT truck's computer system has the same capabilities as the Command vehicle. The direct link to the Command Center is "invaluable," Mahshie said. According to LDV, SWAT trucks are becoming more versatile. The company frequently includes high-tech communications equipment in SWAT trucks in addition to traditional storage compartments and bench seating. LDV's next generation of SWAT trucks features more robust communications systems, enabling them to act as mobile command centers in certain situations.

A SWAT vehicle from LDV has a Freightliner MT-55 with 29,000 GVWR and air ride suspension. The 28-foot long all-aluminum body transports up to 20 tactical officers. Other features include: custom-fabricated aluminum cabinets; 240 Vac light tower; two 17-inch multimedia LCD monitors; and one 40-inch LCD monitor. In addition, the vehicle has a DVD-R/VHS combination unit; amplified TV antenna; two exterior audio / video inputs; multiple radios; landline telephone system; Cat6 computer network. There is an interactive Smart Board overlay for the 40-inch LCD monitor, as well as extensive exterior storage compartments and roof access ladder and NFPA treadplate roof.

Lenco Armored Vehicles

Lenco Industries Inc. designs and manufactures armored security vehicles for law enforcement, military, government agencies and private security forces. The company has produced more than 4,000 armored vehicles for use in more than 30 countries. Lenco has designed and built Special Forces armored vehicles for the U.S. Army, U.S. Navy, U.S. Air Force and U.S. Marines. The company also supplies to the U.S. Department of Defense, Department of State, Department of Energy, the FBI and others. Lenco's vehicles are used for national defense, force protection, homeland security and more.

Lenco Armored Vehicles meet the needs of SWAT, homeland security, counter-terrorism, force protection, military police, HazMat teams and dignitary protection applications. Agencies around the world use Lenco's vehicles for operations such as close-quarters battle engagements and citizen rescue and personnel / cargo delivery missions. Lenco's product line consists of the BearCat®, B.E.A.R.® and the ProCat® Crew Armored Transporter.

These vehicles are constructed of certified hardened steel armor plate and approved multi-hit ballistic glass. The vehicles are equipped with blast fragmentation-resistant floors, specially designed gunports, roof hatches with rotating turrets, gun mount platforms, gear storage and more. All Lenco armored trucks are built on commercially available truck chassis like Ford and Freightliner for OEM chassis service, parts serviceability and warranty support.

The Lenco BearCat is a versatile tactical armored vehicle that was originally developed for special operations units within the law enforcement community. The BearCat has the ability to repel multiple attacks from assault weapons with its life-saving ballistic armor protection. It has enabled agencies all over the world to perform critical response and rescue operations in a safe, secure and highly mobile armored vehicle. The BearCat's maximum highway speed of 85 mph and its off-road capabilities makes it ideal for a variety of roles, including perimeter patrol; assault / counter-assault; convoy; emergency response and rescue; repair and recovery; and tactical operations.

Lenco's B.E.A.R. (Ballistic Engineered Armored Response) vehicle was originally developed in direct response to the increasing threat to national security. The nation's SWAT teams utilize the B.E.A.R.'s protection, durability and mobility capabilities to implement life-saving tactics in the field. The B.E.A.R. is also used as a tactical support vehicle for military defense purposes. The cubic foot interior and large, rear double doors allow for easy deployment of a 15-person tactical team. Its high-level armor and mobility combine to make it suitable for a number of roles, including rapid deployment (15 officers); tactical EMS; command vehicle; emergency / rescue; hostage rescue; group evacuation (25 to 30 evacuees).

Patriot 3 Inc.

Patriot3 Inc. provides solutions for law enforcement, military and the consumer markets with revolutionary products, strategic marketing partnerships and commitment to service. Patriot3's Elevated Tactics Systems are innovative and versatile vehicle-mounted tactical ramp systems. They are currently utilized by elite military and police units around the world and offer tactical teams a new dynamic to critical situations.

The Mobile Adjustable Ramp System (MARS) from Patriot3 is a versatile vehicle-mounted ramp system. The MARS enables elevated rescue efforts during emergency evacuations for disasters such as hurricanes, floods, tornadoes, earthquakes and more. The MARS eliminates the need for ladders in most elevated tactical situations. Operators and rescuers now have the ability to enter a structure using multiple entry points at various elevations, resulting in safer, more efficient rescues.

The versatility of the MARS is enhanced by its wide array of ancillary equipment. This equipment helps optimize the MARS capabilities to the situation at hand. The Perimeter Breach Ramp is a 15-foot ramp designed for single or double perimeter breaching and bridging. It is mechanically operated (not manual).

The Evacuation Stairway folds for storage, but it can be deployed in less than 30 seconds, ready for safe and rapid evacuation of aircraft, schools, office buildings, etc. The Observer / Sniper Bench is adjustable to meet any ramp angle, and is perfect for spotters, snipers or observers. The Ladder Turret allows ladder deployment anywhere from the MARS deck surface. It also enables perpendicular ladder alignment to target. Finally, the Tactical Ladder is available in 8-foot and 12-foot lengths, providing additional access capability.

Patriot3's MARS Rescue Deployment Deck (RDD) increases a team's success by enhancing speed, surprise and domination to many tactical situations. The system allows simultaneous assault and/or rescue capability to the first, second and third floor of practically any building or target, access to any aircraft including the new Airbus A-380 and Boeing 747 upper doors, and various docked maritime vessels, all from a single platform.

The MARS RDD can deploy a team to one, two or even three floors simultaneously to provide additional entry options. The deck creates a significant enhancement to aircraft assault, multi-story active shooter evacuation, and barrier breach capabilities. The MARS RDD can be installed on a wide variety of chassis body vehicles including the Ford F-550 and other vehicles such as the low-cab forward (LCF) vehicle by Ford and Mitsubishi (Mitsubishi FE180 is available in RHD). F-550 vehicle armor options are available only with the gas engine option, not diesel. F-550 RDD versions are available in Standard, Super and Crew Cab vehicles. Rear Armor Deck (RAD) is available for protection of operators.

Supreme Corp.

Supreme Corp. is one of the nation's leading manufacturers of customized general-purpose truck and bus bodies. This niche market approach resulted in a wide variety of multi-purpose truck bodies that could be fitted to chassis built by major manufacturers. The Supreme Armored division produces specialty armored vehicles to help keep law enforcement agencies safe.

Using only high-quality, certified armor plate, Supreme delivers on budget whether it is dealing with an individual operator, a small business, or a fleet of thousands. With facilities across the country, the company can build and deliver vehicles more efficiently and cost-effectively. In addition, Supreme's MasterFab Composite Group manufactures its own fiberglass, which is then molded and customized into any angle, shape or size needed for many of its trucks and buses. This fiberglass is well recognized for its superior quality and cost-effectiveness.

Supreme recognizes that agencies have very unique needs. So it builds products that meet specific agency requirements. This includes homeland security vehicles and roving broadcast vans, and from public relations vehicles to tactical law enforcement units. With more than 11 years in armored vehicle production, the Supreme Armored division combines engineering expertise and critical build experience for maximum threat protection for tactical responders, executives and diplomats. Manufactured with state-of-the-art technology, every armored vehicle it offers is built to an agency's exact specifications. Whether it's for law enforcement / SWAT, export defense / state department, municipal, government or cash in transit, supreme delivers the right vehicle for the right application.

One of the new vehicles in the Supreme Armored lineup is the Super Avenger tactical armored transport. The Super Avenger is built on a Freightliner M2 4x4 33,000-pound (GVWR) commercial chassis. This armored transport features an overall length of 24 feet and stands 9.9 feet high and 8.6 feet wide. The interior height for armed tactical team members measures 6 feet to sit comfortably, rest, prepare and deploy. It provides a secure transportation of 14 to 16 tactical responders and has all the features and

benefits needed to bring tactical teams into a HOT-counter-fire situation.

This vehicle is armored at B6 level protection (AK47, 7.62 x 51mm) with optional rotating gun turret and an elevated platform that provides a commanding view for returning fire or controlling a violent situation. A full-width grip strut bumper provides a sure-footed entry and exit. Its "go-anywhere" 4x4 powertrain can handle maximum highway speeds as well. The Super Avenger offers other features such as lower step heights for a rapid deployment situation, along with oversized doors to allow unobstructed entry / exit.

Jennifer Gavigan is the former associate editor of Tactical Response. She can be reached at jengavigan@comcast.net.

Article Rating



Poor

Excellent

Article Comments

OPEN

[Return to Search Page](#)

[↑ Top](#)

[Home](#) | [Publications](#) | [Events](#) | [Subscribe](#) | [Media Kits](#) | [Resources](#) | [About Us](#) | [Contact Us](#)

Copyright © 2007 Hendon Publishing Company. All rights reserved.
Site Design by Lakeshore Concepts