

# Humvee's Last Hurrah In The U.S. Army

Carly Everson, Associated Press Writer

INDIANAPOLIS (AP) — Army Staff Sgt. Tom Davis never saw the bomb that destroyed his Humvee as he rounded a corner in Ramadi just a week into his second tour in Iraq in 2006. Davis lost a leg and broke his back and both arms and can no longer walk or work. He'll never know whether he would have been less severely injured if he'd been in a different vehicle.

But his experience, and those of thousands of other Americans wounded in bomb-shredded Humvees in Iraq and Afghanistan in recent years, foretold what now appears to be the official demise of the hulking all-terrain vehicles that came to symbolize the military as much as the rugged Jeeps they replaced.

The Army provided no new money for the Humvee in the service's recent budget proposal. Lt. Col. Jimmie Cummings, an Army spokesman, says the 2,620 vehicles ordered from Mishawaka, Ind.-based AM General will be the last as the Army moves on to newer designs.

Unless the decision is reversed, the Humvee will end a remarkable 30-year run that extended beyond the battlefield into popular culture.

The High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicle, dubbed the Humvee by soldiers, got its start when the Army began looking to replace the latest version of the Jeep in the late 1970s.

AM General won a prototype contract in 1981 and the company, a spinoff of Jeep, created the boxy vehicle that was more than seven feet wide and made up in utility for what it lacked in aesthetics. Since 1985, AM General has produced 240,000 Humvees.

The vehicle attracted attention during the 1991 Gulf War, but not just in the war zone. Then-actor Arnold Schwarzenegger became so enamored that he persuaded AM General to make a civilian version, and it became a must-have status symbol for car lovers until rising gas prices and the recession sent sales plummeting.

"Everybody points at a Hummer," said Eric Sitterle of Cincinnati, who serves on the board of Hummer Club Inc., the vehicle's fan club. The group organizes off-road events all over the country. "It's the most exciting thing you've ever been on — at three miles per hour."

Few would use the word "exciting" to describe the military Hummer.

It was developed as a light utility vehicle and not intended as an armored car, said James Atwater, assistant curator at the U.S. Army Transportation Museum in Fort Eustis, Va.

## Humvee's Last Hurrah In The U.S. Army

Published on Industrial Maintenance & Plant Operation (<http://www.impomag.com>)

---

The lumbering, low-riding vehicles became an easy target for insurgents, who attacked U.S. troops in Iraq and Afghanistan with increasingly powerful improvised explosive devices, or IEDs, hidden along roadsides.

A mounting death toll from IEDs — more than 1,700 in Iraq alone as of January 2010 — sparked calls for better protection for soldiers. The Army ordered armored versions of the Humvee, but "there were shortcomings when you added armor to a vehicle like this that's not designed from the ground up for that," said Atwater.

Davis, of Angola, Ind., said the Humvees were fine during his first deployment in 2003. "We rode in the back of the open Humvee at night because the IEDs weren't a real threat," he said.

But that began to change. The powerful IED that detonated under the passenger seat of his Humvee in 2006 hurled the vehicle two stories into the air, killing the vehicle's gunner and badly injuring Davis.

"Maybe if I'd been in a Bradley, I wouldn't have been hurt as much," said Davis, 32, a father of four.

Cummings, the Army spokesman, said the Army is moving to the larger and more heavily armored Mine Resistant Ambush Protected vehicles, or MRAPs.

The Army budget released last week still includes \$989 million for maintaining the existing Humvee fleet. And Atwater said he thinks the Army will still use Humvees for missions on which it is impractical to drive a massive MRAP, which has huge tires more often seen on trucks in demolition derbies.

AM General, the sole manufacturer of the Humvee, says it is talking with the Army and hopes to maintain vehicle production into 2011. Congressional representatives including Indiana Democrat Joe Donnelly, who represents the area, have pledged to try to maintain a military role for the Humvee. The Army purchases more than half the Humvees AM General produces, but the Marine Corps, Air Force and Navy also buy some.

AM General also makes the Humvee's civilian counterpart, the H2 Hummer, as a contract assembler for General Motors. Hummer sales peaked at 71,524 in 2006 but dropped to 9,046 in 2009. GM plans to sell the brand to a Chinese company.

**Source URL (retrieved on 08/21/2014 - 2:39am):**

<http://www.impomag.com/news/2010/02/humvees-last-hurrah-us-army>