

Squad Vehicle to ‘Motorize’ IBCTs

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The Army announced on 26 June that it has selected GM Defense, LLC, to produce the Infantry Squad Vehicle (ISV) to motorize infantry brigade combat teams (IBCTs). Delivery of this modernized capability is slated to begin with the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division next winter.

The ISV program provides IBCTs an additive lightweight vehicle to move Soldiers and their equipment quickly over complex and difficult cross-country terrain. ISVs will provide greater mobility to IBCTs, as they are designed to move across restrictive terrain, allowing Soldiers to close on objectives with less fatigue and greater readiness. The Army can deliver the vehicle to the field by airdrop or helicopter, which increases the flexibility of Soldiers on the move.

This is the second important production contract award for Army light tactical wheeled vehicle modernization programs of record in the last year. The Army announced in June 2019 the production contract of the Joint Light Tactical Vehicle (JLTV). JLTV is modernizing the Army’s and U.S. Marine Corps’ light tactical wheeled vehicle fleets with a leap-ahead balance of payload, performance and protection.

“The Infantry Squad Vehicle meets the challenges we’ve faced to give our IBCT Soldiers greater mobility and increased survivability,” said Chris Stone, the Maneuver Capabilities Development and Integration Directorate’s (MCDID’s) deputy Army capability manager - IBCT at Fort Benning, GA. The MCDID is the Army’s proponent for generating and validating the operational need for the Infantry Squad Vehicle.

“As the Army’s newest light tactical vehicle, ISV will allow IBCTs more flexibility and a greater advantage getting to the objective,” he added.

The ISV’s basic operational capabilities include:

- Nine-man squad carrying capability



The Infantry Squad Vehicle carries a nine-man squad, can be externally sling loaded under Black Hawk and Chinook helicopters, is air droppable, and provides exceptional mobility over all terrain.

(Photos by Michael J. Malik)

- Payload of 3,200 pounds
- External sling load by a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter
- Internal load/external lift by CH-47 Chinook helicopter
- Low-velocity air drop by fixed-wing C-130 or C-17 transport aircraft
- Exceptional mobility over all terrains

The comprehensive team responsible for bringing the ISV program to production contract award involves not only Army acquisition professionals, but also relevant stakeholders representing the Army's funding and testing communities, Army Futures Command, and Forces Command. Soldier evaluation via user-acceptance efforts has been a key element of the ISV program from the outset and has helped compress the time it takes to field a modernized capability that meets infantry Soldiers' needs.

"The Infantry Squad Vehicle program has focused on meeting the Army's emphasis on enhancing Infantry Soldier mobility and survivability by rapidly fielding modernized capabilities. Our product management team for Ground Mobility Vehicles undertook a great challenge to develop a strategy using experimentation and technical demonstrations to streamline the ISV acquisition process," said Timothy G. Goddette, the Army's program executive officer for Combat Support and Combat Service Support (PEO CS&CSS).

According to Steve Herrick, the Army's product lead for Ground Mobility Vehicles, PEO CS&CSS, the next steps in the ISV program include GM Defense delivering eight ISVs to Aberdeen Test Center in Maryland within four months. "Following delivery, our program office, along with Army testers, will execute an aggressive and tailored testing plan," he said.

Herrick went on to explain the Army will conduct tailored production qualification testing to address the vehicles' ability to meet the performance specifications in areas not previously tested. The ISV will also undergo transportability certification, which includes low-velocity air drop and helicopter sling loading. Next summer and fall, the Army will hold an initial operational test and evaluation.

"The program office is marching toward delivering ISVs to the first unit, the 1/82nd at Fort Bragg, approximately eight months after the contract award," Herrick added. "We are excited about the commercial nature this product brings to the Soldier, and in the future, we could possibly see greater leaps in technology and concepts to include reconnaissance or electric vehicles."

Rae Higgins serves with the Program Executive Office for Combat Support & Combat Service Support.



The ISV underwent rigorous Soldier evaluation as part of the formal acquisition process. Soldiers from the 101st and 82nd Airborne Divisions played a crucial role in the selection.