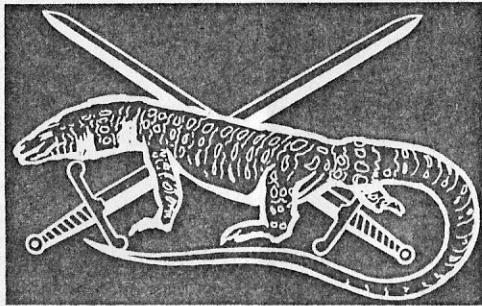


Truck trio selected for samples



PROJECT PERENTIE will be looking for a vehicle that's "fast, powerful, resourceful, and ideally adapted to arid areas of Australia".

They are the attributes of Australia's largest goanna, after which the project is named.

The perentie averages about 1.6m in length, but 2.5m-long specimens have been seen.

Uniquely Australian, it frequents the arid areas of Central Australia, in the States of Western Australia, the Northern Territory, Queensland and South Australia.

The perentie can now also be seen in front of the Army's crossed swords on the logo, above, for Project PERENTIE, to replace the fleet of light field vehicles.

CANBERRA: Three Australian manufacturers have been selected to provide sample vehicles for evaluation for Project PERENTIE, the project to replace the Army's fleet of light field vehicles.

The Minister for Defence, Mr Gordon Scholes, has announced that the companies are: Leyland Motor Corporation of Australia Ltd, Mercedes-Benz (Australia) Pty Ltd, and Jeep Australia Ltd.

Project PERENTIE is to eventually involve the replacement of about 3000 vehicles, some of which have been in service since the early '60s.

Vehicles will come in two classes: one with a 700-1000kg payload; the other, 1500-2000kg.

Project Perentie

After an extensive assessment of tenders, Leyland and Mercedes-Benz were asked to provide vehicles in the 700-1000kg and 1500-2000kg payload ranges, and Jeep was asked to provide 700-1000kg payload vehicles.

Models selected for evaluation are the new 4x4 and 6x6 Land-Rover; the newly-released 300GD Mercedes-Benz and the Unimog 1300L; and the Jeep AM10.

The company or companies finally selected to provide the Army fleet of light field vehicles will manufacture them in Australia over about six years, beginning in 1986.

Three vehicles of each model mentioned will be purchased for extensive trials throughout Australia.

After the trials, the suppliers of the evaluation vehicles that are acceptable will be invited to submit updated tenders for production quantities.

The assistant project director of Project PERENTIE, Maj Geoff McPherson, said the eventual cost of the new fleet would be in tens of millions of dollars.

An 80-man trials team is being raised, led by Maj Mike Hansen, formerly of the Army School of Transport.

Members of the team will represent all the corps that will be major users of the light field vehicles.

An estimate puts the top corps-users at Infantry, about 35 percent; Artillery about 15 percent; Engineers, about 12 percent; Signals, about 11 percent; and Transport, about 9 percent.

The trials team will begin work in October, and will operate from a base at Puckapunyal.

But vehicles will travel over much of Australia, including Woomera, for arid trials; and Innisfail, for tropics trials.

Maj McPherson said vehicles would each average in excess of 24,000km during the trials.

He said the scope would be wide, including hot wet; hot dry; engineering, reliability and maintainability; whole of life costs; and supportability and user trials.

Column One

TOWNSVILLE: A Papua New Guinea Defence Force contingent of 120 troops is near the end of a three-week training exercise with 2nd/4th Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment.

