

# PROJECT PERENTIE

By Cpl Phil Mayne

IN JUNE 1986, Land Rover Australia, a division of Jaguar Rover Australia (JRA), was awarded the contract to replace the Army's ageing light vehicle fleet as part of Project Perentie.

Since then it has supplied more than 1400 diesel-powered 4WD vehicles, with a further 1100 still to be manufactured.

But while the 4WD has proved very successful, it was soon realised that the vehicle didn't suit all of the Army's requirements. The Army needed a mobile, all-terrain, heavyweight vehicle that could serve, in its different variants, as a troop or cargo carrier, an ambulance, a maintenance vehicle, a patrol vehicle or an air defence vehicle.

It called for a totally new, purpose-built-and-designed vehicle. So JRA's engineers put their heads together and came up with Australian-born-and-bred turbocharged, 3.9 litre, diesel-powered 6x6 Model 110 Land Rover, the first of which was taken into service in March last year. By the end of this year, 400 of the two-tonne vehicles will be in service.

It is the first time the Army has contracted a specific-to-task fleet of vehicles, relying in the past on modifying the basic vehicle as required.

The 6WD has proved to be so innovative and has created so much interest that it has captured the attention of military specialists around the world, setting up JRA for a possible export product worth millions of dollars.

The Canadian Army has expressed an interest in buying 4200 of the vehicles, only with an automatic transmission and a 6.2 litre V8 engine in place of the 3.9 litre Australian Army version. JRA has also been approached by representatives from the Oman Army in the Middle East and the company is building a trial vehicle to send there for evaluation.

For the Australian Army, there are six variants of the 6WD Land Rover that will be introduced into service this year, with command post and communications variants planned for production in the near future.

The truck cargo, which is also available with winch, is a general purpose vehicle for carrying troops or equipment. It seats three in the cabin plus 12 fully equipped troops in the

rear. Alternatively, a fully equipped vehicle with driver can carry a payload of about three tonnes. The rear body can be interchanged with the specialised rear bodies fitted to several other derivatives.

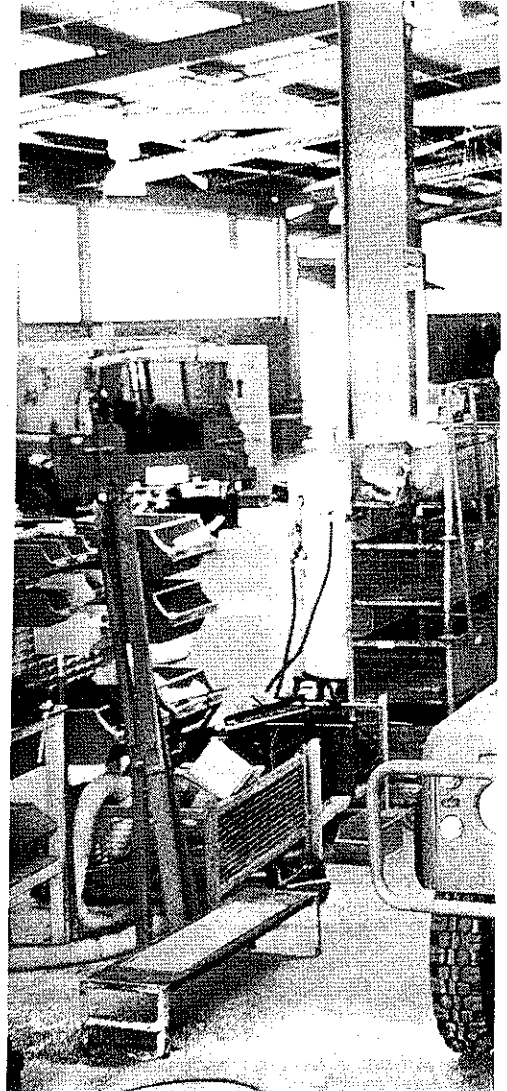
The ambulance FFR with winch comprises a modular rear body fitted to a 6x6 chassis cab vehicle. In the rear it can carry a medical assistant and either four stretcher patients or eight seated patients. It has an air conditioning system linked to an engine-mounted compressor and a separate heating system. The ambulance was used successfully last year on Exercise Kangaroo 89.

The truck air defence FFR with winch has a variant to suit both Rapier and RBS-70 missile systems. It is fitted with a 24-volt FFR supplementary electrical system and a compressor to aid in quick tyre repair. Both variants have unique rear bodies with racks developed for missile storage, and the rear section is recessed to permit easy loading and storage of the optical tracker and camera and electronic unit.

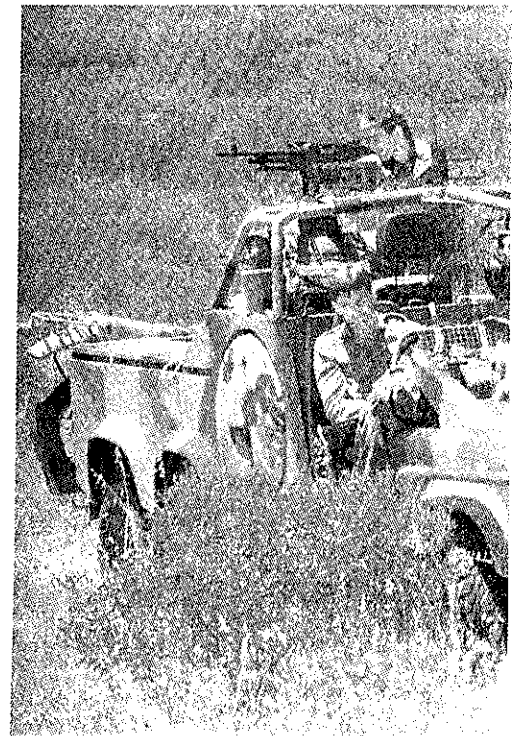
There are two repair vehicles in the new 6WD range: the truck general maintenance with winch, and the truck electronics repair. The general repair vehicle will be used for tasks associated with the maintenance of vehicles, weapons, electrical equipment, aircraft or as a welder's vehicle. The electronics repair vehicle is air conditioned and will be used by units for field repair of telecommunications and radio equipment.

The last of the 6WD variants is the long-range patrol vehicle, specifically designed for the Perth-based SASR. It seats two in the front and one looking rearward in the back, with extra seating if necessary on the side storage boxes. It has a removable windscreen and canvas canopy, a motorcycle mounting on the rear and it can stow up to 10 jerry cans. The vehicle has machine gun mountings front and rear, suitable for the Minimi and Mag 58, or a .50 cal can be mounted in the rear. It also features a 300 litre mid-mounted fuel tank, with a 50 litre auxiliary tank, giving the vehicle a range of up to 1800km.

The arrival on the military scene of the new 6WD Land Rover marks the start of a new era in light vehicle transport for the Australian Army. Adapting fleet vehicles for the Army's unique and specialised roles had become a thing of the past.



Assembly line at JRA's Heathcote factory.



Long-range patrol vehicle.



**BODY CONFIGURATIONS**



**Cargo Truck**



**Ambulance**



**Shelter Transport**



**Patrol Vehicle**



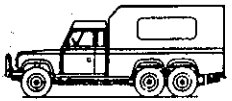
**Troop Carrier**



**Fire Truck**



**Maintenance Vehicle**



**Command Post**



**Gun Tractor**



**Air Defence Vehicle**



**Ambulance FFR with winch.**



**Troop carrier**



Assembly line at JRA's Heathcote factory.



Long-range patrol vehicle.



Ambulance FFR with winch.



Troop carrier