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THE VAB, 40 YEARS, ENSURING THE SMOOTH INTRODUCTION OF SCORPION

40 years ago the five hundred year old 1st Infantry Regiment welcomed the first armoured vanguard vehicle (Véhicule de l'avant blindé VAB) into its ranks, from the outset making it the centre of operations. The faithful servant of past operations, it is now ensuring the smooth introduction of the Scorpion Programme.

It was in 1970 that Robert Galley, Minister of Defence, launched the VAB programme, and that SAVIEM filed the patent for the vehicle's architecture.

As early as 1971, an agreement was signed between SAVIEM, the contractor, designer, architect, engine and powertrain supplier and Creusot-Loire, subcontractor, for the design and manufacture of the body and the assembly of the prototypes.

Following notification of the study contract to SAVIEM and Panhard, two configurations, 4X4 and 6X6, were tested and the SAVIEM VAB 4x4 solution was adopted.

In May and July 1975 SAVIEM was given notification of a target of 4,000 vehicles. Two versions were launched – the all terrain (VTT) and the Cargo - and now over 40 versions have been produced, including a Canon armoured vehicle version, SAVIEM VBC, equipped with a 90 mm turret for the Gendarmerie.

One thousand VAB were produced and exported to countries like Morocco and Cyprus, putting the original VAB at the heart of external operations.

The reasons for its success are as follows. It is an effective concept, simple and flexible, in fact a modular vehicle that can be adapted to the operational needs of the forces. Simple, the VAB was upgraded throughout its life with versions like the VAB "Valorisé", the VAB "Ultima", and the VAB "Génie".

Finally the cost of ownership is reasonable: it is an armoured truck, a militarized vehicle on a proven chassis that is easy to maintain.

The VAB is expected to continue on for a few more years in order to support the introduction of the Griffon, which will be significantly reduced from 2025.



The VAB ULTIMA, one of the flagship versions of the vehicle

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RENAULT TRUCKS Defense is one of three players in the short term joint venture to which the Minister of Defence gave notification of the Scorpion contract on 5 December 2014. As such it will be involved in producing the new generation of the Army's armoured Infantry and Reconnaissance vehicles, the Griffon and the Jaguar.

In this context, Renault Trucks Defense is in particular responsible for supplying the powertrains and the remote controlled turrets on the two vehicles, and for ensuring all the logistics for their sub assembly and spare parts.

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