

RNZAC ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER #200 July 2021

Meetings Happy Hour: Thursday 5 August 2021 at 1700 hrs at the Papanui RSA Committee Meeting to follow.

Whose is it?



Admin & Log

Attached to the newsletter is a progress report on the Corps History Project and book. Please take the time to read through it.

Answer: United Kingdom Ajax

The Ajax, formerly known as the Scout SV (Specialist Vehicle), is a family of armoured fighting vehicles being developed by General Dynamics UK for the British Army.

The Ajax is a development of the ASCOD armoured fighting vehicle used by the Spanish and Austrian armed forces. The family was originally developed by Steyr-Daimler-Puch Spezialfahrzeug and Santa Bárbara Sistemas in the early 1990s. Both companies were purchased by General Dynamics in the early 2000s.

A £3.5 billion production deal with the British MoD was signed in 2014 to manufacture 589 vehicles in several different configurations to form a key element of Army transformation

plans. The principal variant is an ISTAR vehicle equipped with a turret and revolutionary 40 mm CTAI cannon.

The vehicles weight is 38 tonnes, with growth potential to 42 tonnes. Length 7.62m, width 3.35m, height 3m. The Ajax has a crew of 3 and can carry 7 passengers in the PMRS variant. Its main armament is a CT40 40mm cannon and has a secondary coaxial L94A1 7.62 chain gun. MTU Friedrichshafen 600 kW (800 bhp) V8 engine, RENK 6 speed HSWL 256B transmission, torsion bar suspension system, maximum speed 70 km/h

The first vehicles were meant to be delivered in 2017. To date only around 14 of the ARES troop carrying variant have been delivered. The Ajax has encountered significant design problems. These include excessive vibration, which had required the Army to impose speed restrictions on the vehicle and limits on the time crews could operate them. The vehicles cannot reverse over obstacles more than 20 cm high, personnel must wear noise-cancelling headphones when operating them and undergo ear tests afterwards, and the Household Cavalry Regiment “cannot conduct effective collective training” in them.

In a statement, the MoD confirmed trials had been halted but said test work had now resumed “with appropriate safety measures in place.” “We are committed to the Ajax programme which will form a key component in the Army’s modernized warfighting division, with current plans for initial operating capability scheduled for summer 2021,” a ministry spokesperson said in a statement. “The MoD can confirm that some training on the Ajax family of vehicles was paused as a precautionary measure.” “The Army, General Dynamics and the MoD [are] now engaged in an intensive round of assessments and rectification work to resolve any outstanding issues.”

In March the UK parliamentary Defence committee published a report on the state of armoured fighting vehicle capabilities. Titled, “Obsolescent and Outgunned: The British Army’s Armoured Vehicle Capability,” it didn’t make for happy reading. Talking about the Ajax programme, the committee said: “The Ajax programme, which is now seriously delayed, is yet another example of chronic mismanagement by the MoD and its shaky procurement apparatus.” The committee said it was “particularly worrying, as Ajax is fundamental to the establishment and deployment of the Army’s new Strike Brigades, which are intended to be a key part of its future order of battle.”

Humour







Reminders; RNZAC Association Web site: www.rnzac.co.nz Contributions to this newsletter are gratefully accepted. Email: smithmd@xtra.co.nz Phone 02108049178.

Mike Smith, Editor