

Material from previous versions of the Hammers Slammers rules books – the *Technical Manual* and *Hammer's Anvils*

In producing *Hammer's Slammers: The Crucible*, some material was removed from the book simply to keep the book to a sensible size (and cost!). Other material was removed as it had been superseded.

The following document contains much of the background material for the Slammers primary vehicles, the M2 'Blower' tank and the M9 combat car, a great deal of which had been trimmed for *The Crucible*. In places it has been updated to reflect material in *The Crucible*.

Icarus Industries M2 'Blower' tanks

Icarus Industries, of Hamburg, Terra, make one of the most powerful tanks in use in state armies or mercenary companies. In terms of overall performance, they have the best combination of speed, armour and firepower available anywhere and are much sought after by those organisations that can afford to use them. By 353TW, the M2 series of heavy tanks has been in continuous production with Icarus for over forty years. It has 'reached the end of its production run' many times but - without a definite replacement finalised – The M2 will probably be in use for many years beyond the mid 350's. Certainly the M2 will continue to be upgraded both by the original manufacturer and other companies that now make upgrade packs for this vehicle.

The M2A1 is the first major variant of this model, being the first to be up-gunned with the 20cm powergun as its main weapon.

The heavy, domed turret, which accounts for 38 tonnes of the vehicles weight, spins on frictionless magnetic bearings. The main weapon, whose barrel is 3m long, has a short breech assembly which is fed by 20cm plastic ammunition discs from a 20 round 'ready magazine' however the vehicle itself carries over 800 rounds in total.

Mine clearance is achieved via a large, 12cm tri-rocket mortar unit fitted in the front hull. The rockets drag an explosive mesh 'net' to a distance of around 500 metres and with a width of between 5 and 20 metres clears a path around 400 metres deep (starting 100 metres or so from the vehicle bow). This 'net' is then detonated clearing a mine free path in front of the vehicle. Combat use has shown this system to be almost completely effective.

Because of the increase in efficiency of the 'Booster' – the Artificial intelligence suite - the M2 has a crew of just two (reduced from 3 on its predecessor). The driver's position is almost central at the front of the hull, just forward and left of the turret front with an access hatch and vision aids. The turret has a cupola with similar vision aids on the roof for the commander/gunner. The single crew person turret is fitted with a large stowage basket at the rear, as – despite their size – the M2 series is not spacious internally, although the command variants have more internal space in a bigger turret.

As with most applications of the 2cm tri-barrel, it is fitted on a curved pintel mount, with the magazine feed tube coming up through its swivel. On the right hand side, there is a domed –

almost bullet shaped - sensor array on the roof of the turret but – in addition – at least one radio aerial is also featured – this is usually painted red on Hammer's tanks. It can be configured to glow to give visual recognition in low light conditions.

For use against rocket propelled grenades and similar slow moving anti-tank weapons (usually collectively called 'buzzbombs') the vehicle is fitted with the Automatic Defence System (ADS).

The Icarus vehicles – the M2 and M9 series specifically - are not true 'hovercraft' or ACVs (air cushion vehicles) but are rather a cross between jet powered helicopters/jet-copters and hovercraft, with fans that can be swivelled, directed and flared like a helicopter but blowing air that is contained within a steel plenum chamber. The M2 series jets – and all other on board systems - are powered by variants of the Westal AE5 fusion power plant at the hull rear which lifts its 170 tonnes mass on eight armoured fans (hence the name 'Blowers') with shielded 1.5m oval intakes in 'shoulders' of the upper hull. Speeds of up to 120 kph can be achieved on paved surfaces.

The M2 has insufficient power to lift more than 15cm on the power of its fans alone and generally skims above the terrain using 'ground effect'. This 'ground effect' is vital to the vehicle's movement: unlike the M9 combat car, the M2's mass precludes the crossing of open water – too much water is displaced and the tank will start to sink.

M2 Variants

M2A2

The M2A2 was introduced to exploit mixed weaponry of both missiles and powerguns. The A2 was an experimental vehicle and carried a less massive turret than the A1. The shape was unusual having a 'scooped out' area to either side of the main weapon – a high intensity 5cm powergun. These scooped out sections carried armoured binnacles, each housing eight guided anti-armour missiles.

The rationale for the A2 variant was that, although the 5cm weapon probably had insufficient penetration to destroy another tank in the same class – except at virtually point blank range or with a side hit – it was quite capable of knocking out APCs and combat cars over a considerable distance.

However, the fitted missile load employed the new 'Kestrel' ATGW that used missiles with their own internal AI system. The field usage of the M2A2 was problematic, however, with the AI often being fooled by non-vehicle based targets and counter measures meaning it still had to employ a degree human control (via the commander/gunner) to successfully hit targets.

In addition, although the 5cm weapon has a proven track record, its use against heavy targets was unsatisfactory. The Kestrel is still employed on lighter AFVs but the M2A2 is rarely seen in combat: the only force to use them in any number being the Waldheim Dragoons.

M2A3

The M2A3 was introduced to exploit alternative weapon systems such as lasers. Other than a slightly smaller turret, the M2A3 has the 17cm, wave-guide ruby laser as a main armament. This model can be fitted with a variety of secondary weapons - light flechette, light laser etc.

M2A4

This M2A4 is the model in use with the Slammers from their inception to the 340s when they were beginning to be supplemented by the up armoured M2A4UA. The A4 is fitted with an improved AI suite and the steel plenum chamber strengthened with the beryllium and iridium lattice re-enforced material that had been originally planned. The fan units are more efficient than previous models with a second layer of blades, which retains performance at a similar level as the A2 model. The power system is upgraded with a second smaller Westal AE7 fusion bottle to supplement the primary unit.

A new technology has been developed by Icarus for polishing the interior of the barrel on the L14 20cm powergun which has increased its overall life-span by 50% and extended its tolerance to rapid fire. Main weapon ammunition stowage has been reconfigured to make it safer in the event of a hull breach although this – and the extra fusion bottle - has reduced main weapon ammunition capacity to 600 rounds.

Last in this list of improvements on the M2A4 are a pair of 12cm Ground-penetrator rockets mounted in the rear hull and fired through the plenum chamber. Guided by the vehicles sensors and AI the vehicle can be positioned by the 'Booster' over tunnel systems or underground chambers and fired directly downwards into the soil. The weapons will penetrate up to 3m in average soil densities, although this is reduced to 1.5m in rocky ground. When arriving at the AI/Sensor guided anticipated target depth – perhaps an open space or a concrete slab – the warhead will be detonated to cause maximum damage.

Command Variants the M2A2F and M2A4F

The F versions of the M2 – the M2A2F and M2A4F all have a larger turret with more internal space for an extra crewmember, sometimes two extra crewmembers. They feature an extension to the turret rear, which also houses extra communications equipment and a further enhanced AI 'Booster'. An additional cupola and hatch is fitted for the platoon commander, although the standard fitment has no extra weaponry associated with that hatch.

M2A7

The Lightning Division began updating their forces post 340TW to non-tracked based vehicles and of the choices they made was to use the M2. They employ a version called the M2A7. In effect this is a refit of surplus M2A2F and M2A4F tanks bought from Icarus' stocks. It has a small turret with a 1cm gatling rail-gun fitted in the enlarged, rear-turret area and a 22cm discarding sabot rail-gun as the main weapon

M2A4UA

By 350TW the FDF have replaced all of their frontline tanks with the 190 tonne M2A4UA. Some of the Slammer's and New Friesland Defence Force M2A4UA tanks are new build and some are refurbished A4s These have further internal reinforcement of its armour in weaker areas, particularly the sides, top, lower (underside) – both the hull 'belly' and the plenum chamber skirts - and the rear of the vehicle, with up rated lift fans with a third layer of blades to maintain performance. It also has an enhanced 20cm powergun for its main weapon, delivering greater explosive and penetrative power from identical sized, although thicker ammunition disks. The command variant has an additional tribarrel and up-rated AI.

Combat Cars and IFVs

The M9 combat car, manufactured by Icarus Industries (Terra) is the latest in a long line of Infantry Support vehicles based on an Air Cushioned Vehicle (ACV) chassis although, like the M2 'Blower' tank, the M9 is not a true ACV but a cross jet-copters and hovercraft 'cross', with vectoring fans blowing air into a steel plenum chamber. The M9 design borrows heavily from the smaller and lighter M6, which was itself a replacement of the M5 series, however the two earlier vehicles were true ACVs.

The M5

The M5 Mechanised Infantry Combat Vehicle (MICV) was an overly large AFV that was expensive to purchase and forced users to combine infantry transportation and fire support in the one vehicle. In addition, the aluminium ceramic armour was barely adequate (being breached by even small arms Powergun fire). It was not popular with the troops that used it and was often relegated to rear echelon positions.

The Slammers use the M5AC8 for ammunition supply for 'Hogs' as it does offer greater mobility and protection than most ACV trucks and – with an ADS pod added to the roof to offer some protection against Buzz-bomb and missile attack – if makes a successful ammunition hauler, feeding into the rear of the turret of the M53 via a conveyer system.

The M5's in service with the Slammers are all conversions for transport duty (there are no combat versions of the M5 in use with the regiment. There are six in use with the Artillery Battalion but Transport Battalion runs another 20. Although these vehicles can carry some 13,000kg of stores, they are generally classified with the GD800, eight-tonne capacity transports and are used alongside them, often where transport to 'hotter' areas are called for. They are unpopular to work on, being enclosed and with no winch. However, when near the front line, the M5AC8's greater mobility and protection from its aluminium ceramic armour is usually most welcome.

The M5AC8 has the same ten-fan (6 front, 4 rear) layout of its donor vehicle, blowing into a semi-rigid, flexible polymer, monofilament beryllium mesh re-enforced skirt. It also has its own fusion plant (Westal AE3), which – aside from powering the vehicle itself - is useful for charging other vehicles, especially GD800's transports. It is common practice, away from the front line, for each M5AC8 to have two GD800's accompanying it.

The M6

The M6 was a reaction from Icarus to the M5's lack of success. At 21 tonnes – under half of the operational weight of its predecessor the M5 - the M6 carried a crew of 5: driver at front left; two 'wing gunners' with pintel mounted 1cm, automatic powerguns at the forward left and right positions of a rear fighting compartment and two further crew firing infantry weapons from ports in the rear or sides of the vehicle.

The fighting compartment at the rear was enclosed but had a shuttered roof section that could be split and slid forward and backwards. These ceramic and aluminium armoured roof sheets, when deployed, afforded overhead protection from shell splinters and small arms fire. Closed up, all four crew in the rear compartment could use firing ports with their individual weapons

through two side ports or two more in the rear door but the vehicle lacked forward fire power unless the crew slid back the roof section and utilised the two 'wing' powerguns, or used them remotely from controls within the vehicle.

Although a successful vehicle, the M6 was very cramped in use if the roof panels were not slid open and this - in addition to the limited firing arcs afforded by the crew's individual weapons - meant that the M6 usually went into combat with only three crew in the fighting compartment or - more usually - with the roof plates slid back, or even removed and stowed on the sides of the vehicle. This latter configuration offered the additional bonus of increasing armour to the flanks of the vehicle) at the expense of obscuring the side firing ports.

The M6 used a shielded intake, six-fan unit and this, with the M6's aluminium and composite plenum chamber, meant that the vehicle's greatest defensive advantage was speed. Use of iridium armour was confined to a small welded compartment at the front of the vehicle, housing the Westal AE4 fusion bottle, the driver and the AI system. The rear of the vehicle was built from a cast aluminium 'tank' with panels of ceramic and composite sandwich bonded to the outer areas.

M6 units are still very popular, especially when converted to a number of lighter roles. They are often found employed as mortar carriers, with a range of auto loading 10cm or 12cm mortars fitted. In addition, the M6 is employed by mercenary groups as a guided missile carrier, mounting a pair of ATGW missiles on a retractable boom or mini turret system.

The heaviest weapon fit is the twin 3cm Powergun mount (by Ralarg Industries) although in this role the M6 loses some degree of mobility being slightly 'top heavy'. With both the ATGW mount and the twin 3cm mount, the M6 dispenses with the pintel mounted 1cm powerguns but retains the firing ports.

Although used by the Slammers early on when the company took vehicles from their previous paymasters the Friesland government, there were soon superseded and then replaced by the M9 series.

The M9 Combat Car

The M9 is a "blower" style ACV. Overall combat weight for the M9 and variants up to the M9A4 versions is around 30 tonnes and greater - up to 50 tonnes - for the M9A7.

The M9 has a driving compartment at the front and a fighting compartment in the rear and has a crew of four and looks somewhat like an enlarged M6, however, there the similarity ends.

This rear compartment is, externally, larger than the M6 but internally is around the same size. The crew complement in this compartment is reduced to three and is therefore slightly less cramped than an M6, but only *slightly*.

M9 - Early armament

Initially the M9 mounted a 2cm tribarrel powergun in a forward position for the crew chief, with two pintel mounted 1cm powerguns to the rear 'wing' positions. No firing ports were fitted, as the vehicle was never intended to be fully enclosed. Instead the crew compartment has a

'coaming' that comes up to around chest height with each of the weapons provided with gun shields and the crew themselves equipped with the latest in ceramic body armour.

In use the rear 1cm weapons were often replaced in the field with additional 2cm tribarrel powerguns and this was found to be a far more effective offensive system. The 2cm weapon is more effective in combat: the rotating barrel cluster enabled more efficient cooling and a high sustained fire rate of 500 rpm – and the standardisation of calibre alleviated ammunition supply miss-matches. This became the M9A1.

M9A1

The hull of the M9 was, for the first time on a vehicle of this size, a single, iridium casting. The inside of the crew compartment had a ceramic liner fitted initially but – after combat usage showed this liner tended to fragment when penetrated, simply adding to crew injuries - this was subsequently removed for the M9A1 and replaced with an additional sheet iridium layer. The skirts of the plenum chamber are manufactured from face-hardened steel armour plate.

The 7m long vehicle's overhead protection above the open fighting compartment is provided by a Splinter Shield - usually a beryllium 'fishnet' mounted 1m above the fighting compartment on steel hoops though - in the field – this is very often loaded up with personal baggage that won't fit elsewhere on the vehicle. This shield will stop shell fragments and mortar rounds or grenades but nothing more substantial.

Icarus carried out extensive research into the combat effectiveness of the M5 and M6 with their enclosed rear hulls before designing the M9's open fighting compartment with its overhead protection. The layout gives the three crew (with their three, shielded, tribarrels) an exceptional view with little fear of attack from above: anything small enough or close enough to be thrown in through the top of the compartment should be stopped by the Splinter Shield and anything bigger should - ideally - be knocked down by the unit's air defence systems firing slaved tribarrels on AI controlled trajectories. This system is only effective, however, when used in conjunction with the other anti-artillery facilities offered by a "fully featured" armoured brigade, available only in well-funded standing armies and the better equipped mercenary units like the Slammers.

The front driver's compartment houses the Westal AE7 fusion bottle; the driver and the AI system. A mine clearance launcher, when fitted, is attached to the front of the plenum chamber. The fusion bottle drives 8 turbine fans mounted in individual nacelles. Allowing for a combat load, this can propel the vehicle of more than 120kph on smooth-going surfaces and has enough power with a skilled driver to achieve over a metre of lift just on the fans alone. The power to weight ratio of an M9 gives the vehicle the ability to cross calm, open water without preparation and a kit can be supplied to enable rough seas with waves of up to 1.2m in height to be negotiated, although this is not often carried.

Mine clearance is achieved with a similar unit to that fitted to the larger vehicles from the same manufacturer. A bolt on module can be fitted which houses a tri-rocket mortar. When fired, this drags an explosive mesh 'net' to a distance of around 150 metres and with a width of between 3 and 7 metres clears a path around 100metres deep (starting 50 metres or so from the vehicle bow). This 'net' is then detonated clearing a mine free path in front of the vehicle. Combat use has shown that, to be completely effective, vehicles should launch overlapping nets.

The M9 in all its variants employs the Automatic Defence System (ADS): AI enabled, 1 metre long strips of active defence panels for anti-personnel and buzz-bomb point defence that were introduced on the M6. These flat panels of explosive, fronted with barrel shaped steel (later iridium) 'shrapnel', are sometimes used on command to clear the vehicle area of a variety of threat types.

The rear floor of the vehicle is usually covered in ammo boxes for the three tri-barrels and gunners can use the vehicles AI unit to slave guns to each other's control if they take crew casualties or other needs have reduced the fighting compartment's crew complement. Combat Cars sometimes tow a wheeled trailer but this is usually restricted to rear echelon areas as usage slows the vehicle down and makes manoeuvring more difficult.

M9A2

Experimentally, a different fit of turbine fans were tried on a variant, which became the M9A2. Because of a shortage from the supplier of the 1.1 metre fans (as used in the M9A1 variant), Icarus used a fitment of 80cm fans made by Gurney, as used on Jeeps manufactured by F.N (Friesland). To get the lift required, 12 of these units were fitted into a modified cast hull. Raw performance of the M9A2 was similar to the M9A1 and there were some advantages to the system: it was quite popular with drivers – specifically highly skilled drivers – as they reported that the extra lift and tilt options afforded by the greater number of nacelles gave finer control and increased redundancy in the case of combat damage.

Maintenance crews hated the increased workload, however, and the only advantage the 12 fan option offered in this area was that the smaller fans were in plentiful supply, being already in stock with supply units.

Other than some very small changes in hull shape and the positioning of grab handles to accommodate the increased number of fan inlet ducts, the A1 and A2 are virtually indistinguishable. These ducts are, as with all other similar vehicles, armoured with a beryllium mesh and have either iridium, or monofilament crystal and composite blades.

M9A4

The M9A4 (or the M9A4/3 - with a 12 fan hull) has a high, built up, fully enclosed rear body with no splinter shield fitted. This variant - massing at 40 tonnes - is sometimes employed away from the front line. Sometimes seen as an armoured ambulance or other support vehicle, the most common usage is as a Command Car fitted with extensive communications equipment. The Slammers do use the Command Car in front line service. In front line use especially, the M9A4C is fitted with a roof mounted tribarrel, which can be fired via a top hatch or remotely.

Of the same overall length, width and mass as the M9A1/2, the M9A4 has lighter armour in the enclosed, rear compartment. The M9A4C has firing ports in this area and can be used as an APC but this is rare. The Lightning Division – from 340TW or so onwards – began using a variant of the M9A4C: the M9A14 Crew Car. This has space for a small squad or infantry in the rear – usually no more than four men – and has a pair of 1cm gatling rail-gun mounted in remote turrets on the roof of the rear compartment.

All of the M9A4's have slightly more space in the rear as the armour casting is not supplemented by the extra iridium plate of the other models, and the increased roof height gives enough head room for the average human male to stand erect in a comm helmet.

Access to all M9A4 models (and the M9A14 Crew Car) is via a rear-loading ramp that hinges downwards.

M9A7

By 350TW the FDF have replaced all of their frontline Combat Cars with the 50 tonne M9A7. This has a solid splinter shield and an enhanced armour overlay leading to increased defensive levels all round and updated drive systems to retain performance and cross country ability.

The M53 "Hog"

From year 330TW, all earlier M18 15cm Rocket Assisted Howitzers had been replaced in service by either the M46 or M53 20cm weapon.

The M53 howitzer uses the same turret as the earlier M46 but on a new built hull with a more powerful fitment of lift fans – six instead of four. This spacious 2.5 metre tall turret is manufactured from aluminium and ceramic composites and gives protection from shell splinters and small arms fire to its crew.

The gun requires eight crew in total, four of whom can be accommodated on the move in the turret (with some discomfort) and with three next to the driver. The turret has a half height, loading door at the rear, which – like the M18 15cm howitzer that preceded this model – is usually left open when firing for any length of time. A loading ramp is part of the turret design of the M53 (and M46).

All up combat weight, depending on model, armour packages and ammunition stowage, can vary between 40 and 60 tonnes and its manoeuvring ability and cross country performance is only slightly degraded from the other "blower" vehicles it accompanies – and this is due more to having a higher centre of gravity than because of any particular degradation of its power to weight ratio.

The AL27 20cm weapon mounted on the M53 (and earlier M46) chassis uses a similar technology to the smaller, 15cm AL22. Ammunition is kept in a 6 round ready drum which can be emptied, in a rapid burst of fire, in 15 seconds. Sustained fire rates are around ten rounds per minute.

The effective range is 130 kilometres with standard rounds, increasing to 170km with the extended range driver motors (with a commensurate loss of warhead mass). All shells have the same type of rocket motor fuelled by powdered beryllium with a ramjet sustainer combination as the smaller calibre AL22. Velocity of rounds for the AL27 is around 880m per second depending on warhead type.

Ammunition usage

To avoid confusion with the troops, the 15cm and 20cm weapons systems share commonality of markings for ammunition types.

15cm munitions

15cm rounds available for the M18/6,9 (AL22) are coded with coloured bands around the olive drab casing (with a white booster stage) and include:

Round type	Colour bands (number and size)
Nuclear (often known as "Red Pills")	One red, one white
K3 (gaseous, non persistent nerve agent; some times known as "Bitter Pills" because of the smell left by the nerve agent)	Two black
HE	One brown, one white
Solid Targeting	One grey, one white
Incendiary (White Phosphorus and time-fused Zirconium pellets)	Two white
Illuminating/Star shells	One green, one white
SFASAA (Self Forging, Active Seeking, Anti Armour)	One purple, one white
Cluster Munitions ("firecrackers")	One blue, one white
Practice	One pink, one white
Practice, Extended range	One pink, one black
SFASAA (Self Forging [depleted Uranium], Active Seeking, Anti Armour), Extended range	One purple, one black
HE, Extended range	One brown, one black
Solid Targeting, Extended range	One grey, one black
Flechette	One thick orange
AFPFDS	One thick blue

These latter two rounds are designed for anti-personnel and anti-armour direct fire deployment respectively. They are rarely employed and used very much as a 'last resort'.

Shells weigh between 80kg (K3) and 110kg (Solid Targeting) and the ready drum of ammunition can be discharged within 20 seconds.

20cm munitions

The AL27 20cm weapon mounted on the M46 and M53 chassis identical markings to the 15cm AL22 and all ammunition types are duplicated. Rounds for the AL27 are significantly larger, weighing between 110kg (K3) and 180kg (Solid Targeting). Two additional types of rounds are carried, however:

Round type	Colour bands
LOLDCOM (Low Orbit, Limited Duration, Communication packages of satellite clusters, known as "Constellation")	Two silver
LOR (a limited duration, Low Orbiting Reconnaissance satellite)	Two gold

Both of these rounds lack the ramjet sustainers but are completely rocket powered in two separate stages. They can inject their payloads into orbits of between 85 and 245 kilometres, depending on atmosphere densities and other combat related factors (anticipated life-span, low observability requirements etc)

22 rounds are carried on the M46 hull, 24 rounds on the M53. Accompanying M5 (or similar) support vehicles carry 80 rounds plus vehicle and weapon spares.

As mentioned earlier, by TW330 the M53 has superseded the M46 and M18 in service with Hammer's Slammers, although it may be found in use with other mercenary companies and is still in the reserve of the Nieu Friesland forces and remains there up until 348TW when they are retired with the ascension of Colonel Hammer to the presidency .

Developments

There has been some development of a 'hardened' or 'combat ready' version of an artillery piece by Icarus Industries. Based on an M2 blower chassis, with full armour suite and a lower, more heavily armoured turret than its contemporaries, this has been designed to operate at the combat front line.

The weapon mounts an AL27 20cm weapon and a cupola mounted 2cm tribarrel for defence, plus a full ADS package. It's major disadvantages in trials seem to centre around a lack of crew and ammunition space. Three crew – driver, gunner/commander and loader – as dictated by the available space and configuration, fire the weapon from a ready magazine under the turret that holds only 19 rounds. Replenishment requires a team of 6 extra crew in a support vehicle (an M5 or similar) with another 44 rounds and enough 'non-combat down time' time to load the magazine through the rear of the turret. It's other disadvantage is persuading anyone to actually find a combat requirement for this vehicle – initially named the M2-20C – and then purchase some.

Older Infantry Combat vehicles: *The M5 and M6*

The M9 Combat Car, manufactured by Icarus Industries (Terra) in use in various models and variants with the Nieu Friesland and Slammers forces from 315TW until at least 353TW were supported in service by a long line of Infantry Support vehicles based on an Air Cushioned

Vehicle (ACV) chassis. The M9's open backed design borrows heavily from the smaller and lighter M6, which was itself a replacement of the enclosed M5 series.

The M5

The M5 Mechanised Infantry Combat Vehicle (MICV) was an overly large vehicle that was expensive to purchase and forced users to combine infantry transportation and fire support in one vehicle. In addition, the aluminium ceramic armour was barely adequate (being breached by even small arms Powergun fire).

Still in use with the Slammers up until the late 340s, the M5AC8 is an up- armoured version, proof against some small arms fire although heavy calibre support weapons and even infantry Powerguns will still damage it, especially from the rear. It does offer greater mobility and protection than most ACV trucks and – with an ADS pod added to the roof to offer some protection against Buzz-bomb and missile attack – if makes a successful ammunition hauler, feeding into the rear of the turret of the M53 hog via a conveyer system and it is in this front line support role that the M5 is used by the Slammers, although it is still in use as a combat vehicle with other forces.

As there are no Combat M5's in service with the Regiment, all are conversions to ammunition supply or transport duty. Deployment include six in use with the Artillery Battalion as ammunition haulers but Transport runs another 20. Although these vehicles can carry some 13,000kg of stores, they are generally classified in the Eight-Tonne group and are used along side them, often where transport to 'hotter' areas are called for. They are unpopular to work on, being enclosed and with no winch (winches on hover vehicles being hard to implement) but they do have a crane capable of lifting the unloaded vehicle in extremis. Full AVRE vehicles with the Slammers are tracked.

When near the front line, the M5AC8's greater mobility and protection from its aluminium ceramic armour is usually most welcome. The M5AC8 has the same ten fan (6 front, 4 rear) layout of it's donor vehicle, blowing into a semi-rigid, flexible polymer, mono-filament beryllium mesh re-enforced skirt. It also has its own fusion plant (Westal AE3) which – aside from powering the vehicle itself – is useful for charging other vehicles, especially otyther transport vehicles, jeeps and infantry skimmers.

The M6 was a reaction to the M5's lack of success.

The M6

Icarus's M6 massed at 21 tonnes – under half of the operational weight of it's predecessor the M5. The M6 carried a crew of 5: driver at front left; two 'wing gunners' with pintel mounted 1cm, automatic powerguns at the forward left and right positions of a rear fighting compartment and two further crew firing infantry weapons from ports in the rear or sides of the vehicle. The fighting compartment at the rear was enclosed but had a shuttered roof section that could be split and slid forward and backwards. These ceramic and aluminium armoured roof sheets, when deployed, afforded overhead protection from shell splinters and small arms fire. Closed up, all four crew in the rear compartment could use firing ports with their individual weapons through two side ports or two more in the rear door but the vehicle lacked forward fire power unless the crew slid back the roof section and utilised the two 'wing' powerguns, or used them remotely from controls within the vehicle.

Although a successful vehicle, the M6 was very cramped in use if the roof panels were not slid open and this, in addition to the limited firing arcs afforded by the crew's individual weapons, meant that the M6 usually went into combat with either only three crew in the fighting compartment or – more usually – with the roof plates slid back, or even removed and stowed on the sides of the vehicle. This latter configuration offered the additional bonus of increasing armour to the flanks of the vehicle) at the expense of obscuring the side firing ports.

The M6 used a shielded intake, six fan unit and this, with the M6's aluminium and composite plenum chamber, meant that the vehicle's greatest defensive advantage was speed. Use of iridium armour was confined to a small welded compartment at the front of the vehicle, housing the Westal AE4 fusion bottle, the driver and the AI system. The rear of the vehicle was built from a cast aluminium 'tank' with panels of ceramic and composite sandwich bonded to the outer areas.

M6 units are still very popular, especially when converted to a number of lighter roles. They are often found employed as mortar carriers, with a range of auto loading 10cm or 12cm mortars fitted. In addition, the M6 is employed by mercenary groups as a guided missile carrier, mounting a pair of ATGW missiles on a retractable boom. The heaviest weapon fit is the twin 3cm Powergun mount (by Ralarg Industries) although in this role the M6 loses some degree of mobility being slightly 'top heavy'. With both the ATGW mount and the twin 3cm mount, the M6 dispenses with the pintel mounted 1cm powerguns but retains the firing ports.

The older M6A2 often had it's weapons mounts upgraded with 3cm tri-barrels, replacing the older - and significantly inferior - 1cm Heavy Barrel fitments.