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History of the Civilian Jeep®

August 31, 2006, Auburn Hills, Mich. - In June 1940, the U.S. military informed automakers that it was looking for a "light reconnaissance vehicle" to replace the Army's motorcycle and modified Ford Model-T vehicles. The Army invited 135 manufacturers to bid on production and developed a lengthy specification list for the vehicle, including the following:

- 600-lb. load capacity
- wheelbase less than 75 inches
- height less than 36 inches
- smooth-running engine from 3 to 50 miles per hour
- rectangular-shaped body
- two-speed transfer case with
- four-wheel drive fold-down windshield
- three bucket seats
- blackout and driving lights
- gross vehicle weight below 1,300 lbs.

At first, Willys-Overland and American Bantam Car Manufacturing Company were the only two companies answering the call. Soon, however, Ford Motor Company entered the picture, and competition began among the three over which company would receive the lucrative government contract.

Each company produced prototypes for testing in record time. Bantam's chief engineer, along with a team of Bantam executives, worked out a design, and the company built its field car within 49 days.

Willys-Overland Vice President of Engineering Delmar G. Roos designed the Willys Quad. Ford developed its Model GP (General Purpose), known as the Pygmy, which was powered by an adapted Ford/Ferguson tractor. Each company delivered its prototype to the Army in the summer of 1940 and received approval to build 70 sample vehicles.

The Army took possession of these vehicles in November 1940 at Camp Holabird, Md. Each of the three designs exceeded the Army's specification of 1,300 lbs., but the Army soon realized that limit was far too low and raised it for the next round of vehicles.

The Army issued the next round of contracts in March of 1941. Bantam was to produce 1,500 Model 40 BRC vehicles, Ford would build 1,500 modified and improved GP Pygmies, and Willys would build 1,500 Quads. Further testing and evaluation led to the Army's selection of the Willys vehicle as the standard.

Subsequently, most of the Bantams and Ford GPs produced were sent to Great Britain and Russia as part of the lend-lease program. In Great Britain, the Ford vehicle was popularly known as the "Blitz Buggy."

Willys MA/MB

With modifications and improvements, the Willys Quad became the MA, and later the MB. But the Army, and the world, came to know it as the Jeep®.

Some claimed that the name came from the slurring of the letters "GP," the military abbreviation for "General Purpose." Others say the vehicle was named for a popular character named "Eugene the Jeep" in the Popeye cartoon strip. Whatever its origin, the name entered into the American lexicon and, for awhile, served almost as a

generic title for off-road vehicles, while the Jeep itself became an icon of the war.

The Willys MA featured a gearshift on the steering column, low side body cutouts, two circular instrument clusters on the dashboard, and a hand brake on the left side. Willys struggled to reduce the weight to the new Army specification of 2,160 lbs. Items removed in order for the MA to reach that goal were reinstalled on the next-generation MB resulting in a final weight of approximately just 400 lbs. above the specifications.

Willys-Overland would build more than 368,000 vehicles, and Ford, under license, some 277,000, for the U.S. Army. The rugged, reliable olive-drab vehicle would forever be known for helping win a world war.

Willys trademarked the “Jeep” name after the war and planned to turn the vehicle into an off-road utility vehicle for the farm – the civilian Universal Jeep. One of Willys' slogans at the time was “The Sun Never Sets on the Mighty Jeep,” and the company set about making sure the world recognized Willys as the creator of the vehicle.

Jeep CJ

The first civilian Jeep vehicle, the CJ-2A, was produced in 1945. Willys advertisements marketed the Jeep as a work vehicle for farmers and construction workers. It came with a tailgate, side-mounted spare tire, larger headlights, an external fuel cap and many more items that its military predecessors did not include.

The CJ-2A was produced for four years, and in 1948 the CJ-3A was introduced. It was very similar to the previous model but featured a one-piece windscreen, and retained the original L-head four-cylinder engine.

The CJ Model was updated in 1953, becoming the CJ-3B. It had a taller front grille and hood than its military predecessor in order to accommodate the new Hurricane F-Head four-cylinder engine. The CJ-3B remained in production until 1968 and a total of 155,494 were manufactured in the U.S. In 1953, Willys-Overland was sold to Henry J. Kaiser for \$60 million. The Kaiser Company began an extensive research and development program that would broaden the Jeep product range.

Two years later in 1955, Kaiser introduced the CJ-5, based on the 1951 Korean War M-38A1, with its rounded front-fender design. It was slightly larger than the CJ-3B, as it featured an increased wheelbase and overall length. Improvements in engines, axles, transmissions and seating comfort made the CJ-5 an ideal vehicle for the public's growing interest in off-road vehicles.

The CJ-5 featured softer styling lines, including rounded body contours. A long-wheelbase model was introduced and was known as CJ-6. Apart from a longer wheelbase, the CJ-6 was almost identical to the CJ-5. Jeep also introduced a forward-control cab-over-engine variation to the CJ line in 1956.

The Jeep CJ-5 had the longest production run of any Jeep vehicle, from 1954 to 1984. In the 16 years of Kaiser ownership, manufacturing plants were established in 30 countries, and Jeep vehicles were marketed in more than 150 countries.

In 1962, Jeep introduced the first automatic transmission in a four-wheel-drive vehicle, in the Wagoneer line (a predecessor to the Jeep Cherokee). The 1962 Jeep Wagoneer was also the first four-wheel-drive vehicle with an independent front suspension.

In 1965, a new “Dauntless” V-6 engine was introduced as an option on both the 81-inch wheelbase CJ-5 and 101-inch wheelbase CJ-6. The 155-horsepower engine almost doubled the horsepower of the standard four-cylinder engine. It was the first time a Jeep CJ could be equipped with a V-6.

In 1970, Kaiser Jeep was purchased by American Motors Corporation (AMC). Four-wheel-drive vehicles were more popular than ever, and by 1978, total Jeep vehicle production was up to 600 vehicles a day – more than three times production at the start of the decade.

All Jeep CJs came equipped with AMC-built 304- or 360-cubic-inch V-8 engines. AMC equipped both the CJ-5 and CJ-6 with heavier axles, bigger brakes and a wider track.

Another first introduced by Jeep in 1973 was Quadra-Trac®, the first automatic full-time four-wheel-drive system.

Quadra-Trac® was available in full-size Jeep trucks and wagons as well as the CJ-7.

In 1976, AMC introduced the CJ-7, the first major change in Jeep design in 20 years. The CJ-7 had a slightly longer wheelbase than the CJ-5 in order to allow space for an automatic transmission. For the first time, the CJ-7 offered an optional molded plastic top and steel doors. Both the 93.5-inch wheelbase CJ-7 and 83.5-inch wheelbase CJ-5 models were built until 1983 when demand for the CJ-7 left AMC no choice but to discontinue the CJ-5, after a 30-year production run.

The Scrambler, introduced in 1981, was a Jeep similar to the CJ-7 but with a longer wheelbase, known internationally as the CJ-8.

Jeep Wrangler (YJ)

In 1983, the growing market for compact four-wheel-drive vehicles still sought the utilitarian virtues of the Jeep CJ series, but consumers also were seeking more of the “creature comforts” found in passenger cars. AMC responded to this demand by discontinuing the CJ series and introducing the 1987 Jeep Wrangler (YJ).

Although the Wrangler shared the familiar open-body profile of the CJ-7, it contained few common parts with its famous predecessor. Mechanically, the Wrangler had more in common with the Cherokee than the CJ-7. The Wrangler YJ had square headlights, which was a first (and last) for this type of Jeep. The YJ model exceeded 630,000 units.

On Aug. 5, 1987, about a year after the introduction of the Wrangler, American Motors Corporation was sold to the Chrysler Corporation and the popular Jeep brand became a part of Chrysler's Jeep/Eagle Division.

Jeep Wrangler (TJ)

The 1997 Jeep Wrangler (TJ) looked very similar to the CJ-7. Indeed its 'retro' look was quite deliberate, but very different from a mechanical standpoint. Nearly 80 percent of the vehicle parts were newly designed. The TJ used a four-link coil suspension, similar to the Jeep Grand Cherokee, and featured a new interior, including driver and passenger air bags.

The Jeep Wrangler (TJ) retained several classic Jeep features such as round headlights, a fold-down windshield (first seen in 1940) and removable doors, as well as a choice of a soft top or removable hard top. A factory-fitted sport bar was also standard.

Jeep Wrangler Rubicon

Enter the then-best-equipped Jeep ever – the 2003 Jeep Wrangler Rubicon. This vehicle earned the right to be called by the legendary trail name, as it was equipped with push-button-actuated locking front and rear Dana 44 axles, a 4:1 low-range transfer case, 32-inch tires and many more options not available on any production Jeep before it.

Jeep Wrangler Unlimited

In 2004, the Jeep Wrangler Unlimited was introduced - a longer-wheelbase Wrangler, featuring 13 inches more cargo room and 2 inches of additional second-row legroom. While maintaining the unmatched open-air fun and 4x4 capability of the original Jeep Wrangler, the Unlimited model offered more refined on-road comfort, as well as even more versatility.

Jeep Wrangler Unlimited Rubicon

With the 2005 Jeep Wrangler Unlimited Rubicon, Jeep married its ultimate off-road rig – the Jeep Wrangler Rubicon - to the new, roomier, versatile Jeep Wrangler Unlimited. The Jeep Wrangler Unlimited Rubicon featured locking front and rear differentials, front and rear Dana model 44 axles, four-wheel disc brakes and a 4:1 low-range transfer case.

Jeep Wrangler and Wrangler Unlimited (JK)

The legend continues. Building on the successful, original Jeep formula with an all-new frame, exterior and interior

design, engine, and safety and convenience features, the all-new 2007 Jeep Wrangler and Wrangler Unlimited deliver more capability, refinement, interior space and comfort, open-air fun, power, fuel efficiency, and safety features.

Featuring a one-of-a-kind, four-door open-air design, the 2007 Jeep Wrangler Unlimited expands the Jeep experience to new dimensions. With room for five adult passengers – a Wrangler first – and the most cargo space ever offered in a Wrangler, the Unlimited combines class-leading off-road capability with everyday practicality

Offered in three models – X, Sahara and Rubicon – the all-new 2007 Jeep Wrangler and Wrangler Unlimited are lean, rugged and simple, achieving best-in-class off-road capability while delivering a true open-air driving experience. With solid axles, removable doors, exposed hinges, a fold-down windshield and innovative removable and convertible tops, all Jeep Wrangler models retain the brand's coveted core values of freedom, adventure, mastery and authenticity.

Since Willys obtained the first United States Trademark Registration for the Jeep name in 1950, ownership of the Jeep trademark, which is now registered internationally, has passed from Willys-Overland to Kaiser to American Motors Corporation and then to Chrysler Corporation. Today the Jeep trademark belongs to DaimlerChrysler.

Jeep four-wheel-drive vehicles are built and sold at the rate of more than 600,000 vehicles each year. Chrysler Group manufactures Jeep vehicles in the U.S., Austria, China, Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia, Venezuela, Argentina and Egypt.

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