

Contact: Ariel Gavilan  
Michele Callender

## Jeep® Brand History

February 20, 2011, Auburn Hills, Mich. -

In July 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:

- 272 kg (600 lb) load capacity
- Wheelbase less than 190.5 cm (75 in)
- Height less than 91.4 cm (36 in)
- Smooth-running engine from 5 to 80 km/h (3-50 mph)
- Rectangular-shaped body
- Four-wheel drive with two-speed transfer case
- Fold-down windshield
- Three bucket seats
- Blackout and driving lights
- Gross vehicle weight below 590 kg (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, Maryland. Each of the three designs exceeded the Army's specification of 590 kg (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 1941. Bantam was to produce 1,500 Model 40 BRC vehicles; Ford would build 1,500 modified and improved GP Pygmies; and Willys-Overland would build 1,500 Quads. Further testing and evaluation led to the Army's selection of Willys-Overland as the primary manufacturer.

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 a while, 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-Overland struggled to reduce the weight to the new Army specification of 980 kg (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 181 kg (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-Overland 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-Overland as the creator of the vehicle.

## OVERVIEW OF KEY HISTORICAL JEEP CIVILIAN VEHICLES

### Jeep CJ-2A: 1945-49

The first civilian Jeep vehicle, the CJ-2A, was produced in 1945. It came with a tailgate, side-mounted spare tire, larger headlamps, an external fuel cap and many more items that its military predecessors did not include. Several CJ-2A features - such as a 2196 cm<sup>3</sup> (134 in<sup>3</sup>) I-4 engine, a T-90A transmission, Spicer 18 transfer case and a full-floating Dana 25 front and Dana 23-2 rear axle - were found on numerous Jeep vehicles in future years. The CJ-2A was produced for four years.

### Jeep Jeepster: 1948-51

The Jeepster was the last phaeton-style open-bodied vehicle made by a U.S. automaker, using side curtains for weather protection instead of roll-down windows. Originally offered with the "Go-Devil" engine, it was eventually fitted with the 2638 cm<sup>3</sup> (161 in<sup>3</sup>) six-cylinder "Hurricane" engine but never offered in four-wheel drive.

### Jeep CJ-3A: 1949-53

Introduced in 1948, the CJ-3A was very similar to the previous model but featured a one-piece windshield and a more robust rear axle and retained the original L-head four-cylinder engine.

### Jeep CJ-3B: 1953-68

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.

### Jeep CJ-5: 1955-83

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. With a 205.7 cm (81 in) wheelbase, more than 600,000 CJ-5s were produced over 30 years.

### Jeep CJ-6: 1956-75

A long-wheelbase model (50.8 cm/20 in longer than the CJ-5) was introduced and was known as CJ-6. Apart from a longer wheelbase, the CJ-6 was almost identical to the CJ-5 but with more cargo space. Jeep also introduced a forward-control cab-over-engine variation to the CJ line in 1956. AMC equipped both the CJ-5 and CJ-6 with heavier axles, bigger brakes and a wider track.

In 1965, a new "Dauntless" V-6 engine was introduced as an option on both the 205.7 cm (81 in) wheelbase CJ-5 and 256.5 cm (101 in) wheelbase CJ-6. The 155 kW 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. Beginning in 1973, all Jeep CJs came

equipped with AMC-built 4982 cm or 5899 cm (304 in or 360 in ) V-8 engines.

#### **Jeep Pickup: 1947-65**

A 299.7 cm (118 in) wheelbase pickup that realized few product changes. It was Willys-Overland's first attempt to diversify the Jeep brand from the CJ.

#### **Jeep Willys Wagon: 1946-65**

A 265.4 cm (104.5 in) wheelbase wagon that was long an enthusiast favorite. Four-wheel drive was introduced in 1949.

#### **Jeep Wagoneer/Grand Wagoneer/Cherokee (SJ): 1963-91**

In 1962, Jeep introduced the first automatic transmission in a four-wheel-drive vehicle with the Wagoneer line (a predecessor to the Jeep Cherokee). The 1963 Wagoneer was also the first four-wheel-drive vehicle with an independent front suspension option. Quadra-Trac®, the first automatic full-time four-wheel-drive system, was introduced in 1973 and available in full-size Jeep trucks and wagons and, later, in the CJ-7.

#### **Jeep FC 150/170 Pickup: 1957-65**

These Forward-Control series Jeep vehicles were essentially work trucks - with a 205.7 cm (81 in) wheelbase for the FC 150 and 262.9 cm (103.5 in) for the FC 170. They received few changes during their lifecycle, though some 1959 and 1960 models featured full-floating front and rear axles, and some 1959 models included dual rear wheels and a four-speed manual transmission.

#### **Jeep Gladiator/J-Series Pickup: 1963-87**

Resembling the Wagoneer, Gladiator debuted in 1963 in either 304.8 cm (120 in, J-200) or 320 cm (126 in, J-300) form and featuring a Dana 20 transfer case and Dana 44 axles front and rear. The Gladiator name was dropped in 1972.

#### **Jeep Commando: 1967-73**

A 256.5 cm (101 in) wheelbase vehicle equipped with the "Dauntless" V-6 engine and full-floating Dana 27 and 44 rear axles. Fewer than 100 versions of the 1971 Commando Hurst Special were produced, making it one of the favorite and rarest vehicles among Jeep collectors.

On February 5, 1970, American Motors Corporation acquired Kaiser Jeep Corporation. The change in ownership triggered a decade of growth and expansion unprecedented for Jeep.

#### **Jeep CJ-7: 1976-86**

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 237.5 cm (93.5 in) wheelbase CJ-7 and 212.1 cm (83.5 in) 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.

#### **Jeep CJ-8 Scrambler: 1981-85**

Introduced in 1981, the Scrambler was a Jeep similar to the CJ-7 but with a longer wheelbase. Known internationally as the CJ-8, it was available in either hard- or soft-top versions. Less than 30,000 Scramblers were built, though they are extremely popular among collectors today.

#### **Jeep Cherokee (XJ): 1984-2001**

Built on a unibody platform, the Cherokee XJ was a smaller but much more advanced version of the Cherokee SJ. Highlights included the introduction of Jeep's Command-Trac® four-wheel-drive system and Quadra-Link coil front suspension. Cherokee Limited debuted in 1988, and a 4.0-liter I-6 engine was introduced in 1989.

#### **Jeep Wrangler (YJ): 1987-96**

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. The response was discontinuing the CJ series and introducing the 1987 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 headlamps, which was a first (and last) for this type of Jeep. The YJ model exceeded 630,000 units.

On August 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 Comanche (MJ): 1986-92**

Based on the Cherokee platform and similarly equipped, the pickup received a 1.8 m (6 ft) bed in 1987. Later models offered Selec-Trac<sup>®</sup> or Command-Trac four-wheel-drive systems.

#### **Jeep Grand Cherokee (ZJ/WJ): 1993-2004**

The Grand Cherokee famously first appeared by crashing through the convention center glass at the North American International Auto Show in Detroit during its introduction there on January 7, 1992. The first SUV equipped with a driver's side air bag, it set new standards for on-road ride, handling and comfort in an SUV.

#### **Jeep Wrangler (TJ): 1997-2006**

The 1997 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 Grand Cherokee, and featured a new interior, including driver and passenger air bags. The TJ retained several classic Jeep features such as round headlamps, 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.

Enter the then-best-equipped Jeep ever - the 2003 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.

In 2004, the Wrangler Unlimited was introduced - a longer-wheelbase Wrangler, featuring 33 cm (13 in) more cargo room and 5.1 cm (2 in) of additional second-row legroom. While maintaining the unmatched open-air fun and 4x4 capability of the original Wrangler, the Unlimited model offered more refined on-road comfort as well as even more versatility.

#### **Jeep Cherokee (KJ): 2001-2007**

Cherokee (known as Liberty in North America) became the brand's new mid-size SUV entry and was the first Jeep vehicle to feature a standard independent front suspension.

#### **Jeep Grand Cherokee (WK): 2005-10**

A complete redesign of the ZJ/WJ, it boasted improved ride and handling capabilities, the 5.7-liter HEMI<sup>®</sup> V-8 engine and upscale amenities to make luxury-car buyers envious.

#### **Jeep Commander (XK): 2006-10**

A seven-passenger three-row Jeep based on the WK platform, but 5.1 cm (2 in) longer and with unique stadium-style seating.

#### **Jeep Cherokee (KK): 2008-present**

Jeep introduced the third generation of the Cherokee featuring the industry-exclusive Sky Slider open-air roof, the Selec-Trac<sup>®</sup> II four-wheel-drive system and new Hill Descent Control and Hill Start Assist systems.

#### **Jeep Compass and Patriot (MK): 2008-present**

The Jeep brand's entries into the popular compact-SUV segment, these vehicles offer on- and off-road capability and competitive 4x4 fuel economy at a great value.

#### **Jeep Wrangler and Wrangler Unlimited (JK): 2007-present**

Building on the successful, original Jeep formula with an all-new frame, exterior and interior design, engine and safety and convenience features, the JK delivers 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 JK Wrangler Unlimited expanded 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.

Today's Wrangler models are lean, rugged and simple, achieving best-in-class off-road capability while delivering a true open-air driving experience. For 2011, all Wrangler vehicles boast an all-new interior, and Sahara models feature a more premium body-color hardtop.

#### **Jeep Grand Cherokee (WK2): 2011-present**

All-new for 2011 and more than 4 million sales after the first Grand Cherokee, Jeep improves the formula and delivers the perfect blend of on-road refinement and off-road capability. The new WK provides premium on-road performance, legendary Jeep craftsmanship, improved fuel economy, a world-class interior, a sleek new exterior design, true American craftsmanship and a host of safety and technology features.

#### **Jeep Brand**

Celebrating its 70th anniversary in 2011, Jeep is the authentic SUV with class-leading capability, craftsmanship and versatility for people who seek extraordinary journeys. The Jeep brand delivers an open invitation to live life to the fullest by offering a full line of vehicles that continue to provide owners with a sense of security to handle any journey with confidence.

The Jeep vehicle lineup consists of the Wrangler, Wrangler Unlimited, Grand Cherokee, Cherokee, Compass and Patriot. To meet consumer demand around the world, all six Jeep models are sold outside North America - and all are available in right-hand drive versions and with petrol and diesel powertrain options. Chrysler Group LLC sells and services vehicles in approximately 120 countries around the world.

For the year 2010, Jeep sales globally were up 24 percent versus 2009. Jeep was the top-selling brand and currently comprises 50 percent of Chrysler Group's international sales.

For more information about the Jeep brand, please visit the European media site at [www.jeep-press-europe.com](http://www.jeep-press-europe.com) or the Chrysler Group media site at [www.media.chrysler.com](http://www.media.chrysler.com).

-###-

Additional information and news from Stellantis are available at: <https://media.stellantisnorthamerica.com>