



MEDIA RELEASE

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DCD Group celebrates 125 years of delivering innovative solutions.

South African defence company DCD demonstrated its innovative product range, including a new system, whilst celebrating its 125 years legacy in business.

At the 4th Military Attaché and Adviser Corps demonstration on the 19 July 2023, high-ranking SANDF officials, together with foreign Ambassadors and military attachés in South Africa witnessed the formidable capabilities of DCD group at the CSIR Paardefontein facility, north of Pretoria.

With a proud history going back to 1898, DCD honed its skills with mobility solutions in the form of military vehicles it built for South African forces during World War II. DCD group is a South African based manufacturing and engineering company which developed products and solutions to the rail, mining, energy, marine, and defence sectors over many decades. It delivers innovative sustainable solutions through local and international partnerships.

“In the defence arena, we’ve progressed to become an original equipment manufacturer of vehicle-mounted mine detection systems (‘VMMD’) that culminated in today’s world-renowned Husky system,” said general manager Cornelius Grundling. “It is arguably the most successful mine and IED detection and route clearance system anywhere, with an unsurpassed record in numerous theatres around the globe.”

DCD global footprint stretches over five continents and 25 countries. In addition to its Husky range, the company offers a variety of special purpose armoured vehicles that play key roles in route clearance for military forces and civilians.

The day-long demonstration covered DCD’s route clearance concept as a turnkey solution.

Leading the route clearance convoy, the Husky vehicle sporting the new generation Amulet ground-penetrating radar (GPR) is meant to detect landmines and IEDs. Once a possible explosive device is detected, the operator of the latest version Husky 3G deploys its stand-off interrogation arm to interrogate the threat from the safety of the cabin.

According to Grundling, this is the doctrine followed by combat engineers operating the Husky mobile mine detection vehicle the world over. “We believe the concept should also be considered by the African Union and United Nations in their peace support missions,” he stated.

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Over more than 30 years, the Husky has proven itself in high-threat military operations and humanitarian demining missions. Husky vehicles have been exposed to more than 7,500 detonations without any direct operator casualty.

DCD stated that the Husky has the “lowest” human occupant profile of mine-detection vehicles, which offers the best operator survivability in the world.

In a detonation the V-shaped hull protects the crew from injury, whilst the vehicle’s frangible configuration allows the structural components to ‘break apart’ in a predictable manner. This enables rapid in-field repairs, often completed within an hour or two, which increases system availability.

Grundling explained that the route clearance concept and field product support have been developed over many years in the Middle East and elsewhere and proved very successful in saving lives. “Our philosophy of ‘saving lives’ extends to numerous ‘toolkit’ peripherals to deal with the ever-increasing sophistication of asymmetric warfare.”

These include an articulating manipulator arm to provide safe stand-off capability in the interrogation process. The arm extends over three metres and can excavate and lift cached items weighing up to 70 kg.

Route clearance is undertaken in all weather conditions and all types of terrain. “Depending on road classification, terrain and threat, the route clearance speed will vary up to 35km/h,” Grundling explained. “However, in many cases Husky vehicles will lead normal logistic convoys to deliver supplies at convoy speeds over 70km/h. It is therefore critical that all convoy vehicles be reliable with good mobility and payload, whilst offering mine and ballistic protection.”

Invited guests also gained insight in DCD’s range of Springbuck vehicles.

These vehicles’ strategic mobility comprises high speed (max. 110km/h) and extended range, coupled with air transport in C-130 Hercules and Antonov An-124 airlifters. In addition, the Springbuck offers tactical and critical mobility, making use of run-flat inserts and an optional central tyre inflation system (CTIS).

DCD provides the highest levels of blast, IED and ballistic protection, with vehicle protection based on user requirements and the threat environment in which they operate.

The levels of protection were demonstrated live, with guests viewing the detonation of powerful (6kg TNT) landmines from the safety of a bunker. In a separate demonstration, guests were onboard the Springbuck vehicle fitted with steel wheels that drove over anti-personnel mines, detonating the mines in the process.

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“The Springbuck vehicles we currently produce are configured for a variety of roles, from Command Control & Communication, Border Patrol and Ambulance to EOD and Weapon Platforms,” Grundling said. “Our Springbuck vehicles are performing well on the African continent, with eight countries using them at present in AU and UN missions.”

As with the Husky, the vehicles are designed to be repaired rapidly, often in the field in two hours, following a landmine or IED blast.

Sherp vehicle

DCD also markets the Ukrainian designed and manufactured Sherp N vehicle, the latest in the Sherp family. Sherp vehicles can traverse almost any terrain, be it snow, sand or even water. It can overcome the most difficult natural obstacles, like rocks, fallen timber or ice. Tyre pressure is adjusted from an interior control panel to match the terrain it is negotiating.

The vehicle carries up to nine passengers, excluding the driver, with a 1,200kg payload capacity. It has a total fuel volume of 327 litres and can carry additional fuel inside wheel-mounted cannisters, giving the Sherp an endurance of 61 hours.

Firepower demonstration

The live fire demonstration took place at the CSIR’s detonics, ballistics and explosive laboratory (DBEL) at Paardefontein. The facility is used to develop protective technologies, define optimal mobility solution, evaluate products and systems, ultimately to ensure effective and safe military operations.

Besides the CSIR (Council for Scientific and Industrial Research), numerous partner companies of DCD displayed their capabilities. These included Safomar Aviation, Aquila Viour (with a locally designed helicopter drone), Chelton, Hensoldt, Military Products, RCF Defence, Redeployable Camp Systems SA (RCSSA), GC²T and Rajant. The day was supported by the SA Army in providing equipment and operators.

Both the Husky and Springbuck vehicles can be fitted with a variety of weapon and turret mounts for different calibre weapons, ranging from 7,62mm through 14,5mm and 40mm grenade launcher. The remote weapon station is operated from inside the vehicle.

“The Springbuck vehicle has emerged as an excellent weapon carrier platform to provide a high degree of firepower,” Grundling stated.

During the live demonstration, most of the weapons were fired for the benefit of the invited guests.

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In closing the demonstration, DCD unveiled a Springbuck APC vehicle fitted with the formidable ZU-23mm weapon platform in celebration of the company's 125 years of 'saving lives' – the philosophy underlying its core business. This vehicle is particularly suited to border control and theatre operations.

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