

To judge from the British media, whose reportage sometimes verges on the hysterical, British troops are moving around Afghanistan in an inadequate number of death traps.

While it is true that approaching 100 troops have been killed this year, many of them by innocuous sounding IEDs – landmines to you and me – there is a wide range and quantity of kit in theatre and more on the way. So far 500 vehicles have been delivered so far this year.

When a GMLRS (guided multiple launch rocket system) hit a large anti-tank landmine in Helmand Province earlier this year, its crew of three walked away without a scratch. The vehicle was not so lucky. A track, three wheels and bar armour was blasted off. Shock absorbers and armour sponson plates were damaged.

But the crew was protected by upgrades put in place last year to improve ballistic and mine protection, including underbody armour and better protected seats. The GMLRS is designed to fire a precision guided rocket up to 70 Km, and is said to be the support weapon of choice for UK, US and Danish forces.

The Jackal is a fast manoeuvrable cross country vehicle which can also do 80 MPH. When an IED was detonated under one recently, "the seats collapsed and the

protection systems worked," reports Sgt Mark Haig RM. None of the crew of this open topped replacement of the Land Rover WMIK was seriously injured. £74 million has been spent on upgrades to Jackal 2 standards, which is now in the field. More than 200 Jackals have seen service in Afghanistan and more Jackal 2's are on the way.

So too is the new 19 tonne Warthog all-terrain vehicle, of which over 100 were only ordered earlier this year. Manufactured in Singapore, the first one is due in the UK

within weeks. UK trainers are now being trained in operation and maintenance in Singapore. There will eventually be four variants – troop carrier; ambulance; recovery and repair; and command.

Material courtesy Defence Focus