



## The Russian BMP-3 Is Not Ready for the Scrap Yard

**OE Watch Commentary:** Russia has a long track record of upgrading and modernizing combat systems for greater savings and effectiveness. The BMP-3 entered the Soviet ground forces inventory in 1987 and has a proven combat record as an infantry fighting vehicle. The new BMP-3 will be able to function more effectively with modern tanks and artillery, and its survivability and lethality is enhanced. Older BMP-3s can be upgraded with the new Epokha unmanned universal combat module which is featured on the tracked Kurganets chassis. The upgraded BMP-3 has also been fitted with the new Berezhok turret, which is also going on the upgraded BMP-2. The BMP-3 has a three-man crew, but Russia is attempting to develop the Epokha module to the point where the commander will handle the weapons as well: this potentially could allow for a two-man crew. The enhanced BMP-3 will eventually be replaced by the Kurganets-25 infantry fighting vehicle. **End OE Watch Commentary (Grau)**

*“The BMP-3 vehicles that will be delivered to the troops have a significantly different configuration than the base model. The vehicles will receive additional protection against antitank missiles and the latest optronic surveillance devices with a laser spotlight.”*



BMP-3 with Epokha turret.

Source: Vitaly Kuzmin, <https://www.vitalykuzmin.net/Military/ARMY-2017-Exhibition-pavilions/i-DjMc6Ds/A>



## Continued: The BMP-3 Is Not Ready For the Scrap Yard

**Source:** Anton Lavrov and Roman Kretsul “ Infantry Fighting Vehicles to receive New Protection, Powerful Laser “, *Izvestia*, <https://iz.ru/1044448/anton-lavrov-roman-kretcul/shchit-i-luch-boevye-mashiny-pekhoty-poluchat-novuiu-zashchitu-i-moshchnyi-lazer> , 6 August 2020

### ***Infantry Fighting Vehicles to receive New Protection, Powerful Laser***

*More BMP-3 infantry fighting vehicles will reinforce the Southern Military District. The Defense Ministry has signed an additional delivery contract for 168 BMP-3s. This version has enhanced protection against antitank missiles. The vehicle will also receive modern optronic surveillance devices and an advanced laser spotlight for the conduct of nighttime combat. The updated BMP will enter service this year....*

*The contract between the Defense Ministry and the KBP AO [Joint Stock Company] for the acquisition of armored vehicles has become one of the largest in recent years. The Military Department purchased 168 BMP-3 vehicles for more than 14 billion rubles with a delivery scheduled for 2021. The agreement is already being fulfilled. This year the troops will receive 53 combat vehicles. And another 115 in the next year. This is sufficient to reequip five to six motorized rifle battalions....*

*The BMP-3 contract became part of a large-scale plan of the military department for the rearmament of the ground troops with modern equipment. According to the Defense Ministry's information, thanks to mass procurements from 2012 through 2019, the share of new and upgraded weapons in the ground forces has risen from 15 to 51.6 percent. The [State Armaments Plan 2020 signed in 2010] plans to bring this share to 70 percent by this year's end.*

*According to military expert Viktor Murakhovskiy, the Southern Military District traditionally is the first to receive all the most modern models of weapons. “The district is considered to be one of the most important in terms of the threats near Russia's borders. Suffice it to recall the famous events in Ukraine, an increase in the intensity and scale of NATO exercises in the Black Sea waters and on the territories of neighboring countries, events in Syria, an increase in tensions between Azerbaijan and Armenia, and significant efforts by Turkey to develop its armed forces. This is a strategically important area, where it is necessary to ensure the security of our country.*

*The Ground Forces have been updated more slowly in recent years, compared to the aviation and the Navy. But now the process of rearmament with the latest equipment has reached them as well Murakhovskiy noted.*

*The BMP-3 vehicles that will be delivered to the troops have a significantly different configuration than the base model. The vehicles will receive additional protection against antitank missiles and the latest optronic surveillance devices with a laser spotlight.*

*According to Murakhovskiy, “The BMP-3 is a fairly modern vehicle. And if we implement existing ideas to increase firepower and protection, this equipment will reach quite a modern level. It will seriously strengthen the potential of the Southern Military District. We must realize that when the district troops have modern T-90A and T-72B3 tanks, but the BMP vehicles remain obsolete, it does not contribute to the effective use of other models of equipment. Everything has to be balanced. Even with the most modern artillery systems and other weapons, the lag in the development of the BMP will put the entire grouping at disadvantage.”*

*Mounted hinged protection will be the most striking change on the new BMP. The vehicles are equipped with a set of removable screens and slat armor. Developed by the Steel Research Institute, they should reliably cover not only the hull, but also the turret. Such “transparent armor” destroys antitank grenades and missiles that strike the vehicle before they can explode and harm it.*

*Additional reactive armor can also be installed on the BMP-3. The manufacturer previously demonstrated a version of the vehicle with hinged “soft” armor for operations in the cities. It makes it possible to destroy the cumulative jet by detonating the explosives housed in soft covers on the armored vehicles.*

*The machines produced under the state contract will also receive updated optics and electronics, compared to the original version. Not only the gunner, but also the commander will have modern night vision thermal imaging devices.*

*The nighttime combat capability will also be increased thanks to the PL-1-01 laser spotlight. It highlights targets in the infrared range for night-vision devices. At the same time, its emission remains almost invisible to the naked eye from a distance of 100 m.*

*The Ministry of Defense received around 200 new BMP-3 vehicles for Ground Forces re-equipment in 2015-2017. In the following two years, a contract was executed for the production of a comparable batch. They had improvements in comparison with the Soviet models, but were purchased without additional protection kits.*

*Equipping the older BMP-3 model upgrades with a fundamentally different combat module is being developed. The existing turret can be replaced with the Epokha universal combat module. Its armament includes a 57-mm caliber automatic cannon and the Kornet antitank long-range guided missile. In terms of their armor penetration, they are nearly twice as good as the standard Arkan antitank guided missile, launched through a 100-mm cannon. There are also effective modern observation devices in the module.*

*The serial production of the heavily armored BMP began in 1987. In the post-Soviet period, the latest and most powerful BMP-3 vehicles of the time quickly became the most popular export commodity. Over 1,500 of these vehicles were exported abroad. In the 1990s, the United Arab Emirates received 815 units via several contracts. Kuwait acquired another 122 vehicles. This armored equipment was also purchased by Cyprus and South Korea.*

*Later, in the 2000s, BMP-3 sales contracts were concluded with Azerbaijan, Venezuela, and Indonesia. Yet Iraq holds the record, having ordered 500 combat vehicles at once, in order to revive the national army and to combat terrorists.*