Light Vehicles and Armored Cars (Eastern Bloc)

This article is a part of Arma 3 Asset Guides.

Beyond the heavy armor of tanks and the troop-carrying capacity of IFVs and APCs, Eastern Bloc forces rely heavily on a diverse range of light vehicles and armored cars for essential battlefield roles. Armored cars, such as the BRDM-2 and GAZ Tigr, provide reconnaissance, scouting, and light fire support capabilities, often featuring amphibious or high-mobility designs. Light utility vehicles like the ubiquitous UAZ-469 serve critical transport, liaison, and command functions, while robust trucks like the Ural-375D form the backbone of logistics and troop movement behind the lines. This guide covers some of the most common examples found in Eastern Bloc inventories.

Armored/Scout Cars

BRDM-2

A BRDM-2 conducting reconnaissance. Note the central belly wheels, often retracted.

The BRDM-2 (Boyevaya Razvedyvatelnaya Dozornaya Mashina, Боевая Разведывательная Дозорная Машина, literally “Combat Reconnaissance/Patrol Vehicle”) is a classic Soviet-era amphibious armored scout car, introduced in the early 1960s as a successor to the BRDM-1. Known for its distinctive boat-like hull and conical turret, it became one of the most widely produced and exported vehicles of its type. Its primary role is reconnaissance and scouting, leveraging its amphibious capability and central tire inflation system for mobility across varied terrain. It features thin armor, providing protection against small arms fire and shell splinters. A unique feature is a set of four small, chain-driven belly wheels that can be lowered to improve trench-crossing ability. While aging, the BRDM-2 and its numerous variants (including anti-tank missile carriers) remain in service with many nations.

The standard armament consists of a 14.5mm KPVT heavy machine gun and a coaxial 7.62mm PKT machine gun in a small, manually operated turret identical to the one used on the BTR-60PB APC. The crew typically consists of four: commander, driver, gunner, and co-driver/scout. Its combination of mobility, reconnaissance equipment (including chemical/radiological detection gear in some versions), and basic armament made it a valuable asset for Soviet and Warsaw Pact reconnaissance units for decades.

Variant(s)	BRDM-2 (Base), numerous specialized variants (e.g., 9P148 Konkurs ATGM carrier)
Description	Soviet-era 4×4 amphibious armored scout car.
Amphibious?	Yes
Primary Armament(s)	14.5mm KPVT HMG
Secondary Armament(s)	7.62mm PKT machine gun (coaxial)
Armor	Welded steel, 5-14mm; protects against small arms/splinters.
Countermeasures	None standard (some variants add smoke launchers)
Crew	4 (Commander, Driver, Gunner, Co-Driver)
Passengers	0
Special Features	Amphibious, Central Tire Inflation System (CTIS), Retractable belly wheels for trench crossing.
Application	Reconnaissance, scouting, patrol, light fire support.

A BRDM-2 utilizing its amphibious capability.

GAZ-2330 Tigr

A GAZ Tigr armored car on patrol.

The GAZ-2330 Tigr (Тигр, Tiger) is a modern Russian 4×4 multi-purpose, all-terrain infantry mobility vehicle, often compared to the American HMMWV (Humvee). Introduced in the early 2000s, it serves a variety of roles within the Russian military, Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD), and other security forces, including patrol, reconnaissance, troop transport, convoy escort, and as a platform for various weapon systems. Designed for high mobility over rough terrain, the Tigr features independent suspension and significant ground clearance. Unlike many earlier Soviet designs, it is not typically amphibious in its standard configurations.

Interior view showing the driver and commander positions in a Tigr.

The Tigr exists in numerous variants, both armored and unarmored, with differing levels of protection (up to STANAG 4569 Level 2 or GOST Class 5). Armament is modular and depends on the specific variant and role, commonly including roof-mounted 7.62mm PKP Pecheneg or 12.7mm Kord machine guns, or 30mm AGS-17/30 automatic grenade launchers, often in remotely operated weapon stations. Crew typically consists of a driver and commander, with seating for varying numbers of passengers (from 4 up to 9 depending on the configuration). Its modern design offers better crew comfort and ergonomics compared to older Soviet-era

vehicles.

Variant(s)	GAZ-2330 (Base), SPM-1, SPM-2, Tigr-M, numerous others.
Description	Modern Russian 4×4 high-mobility armored car / infantry mobility vehicle.
Amphibious?	No (Standard variants)
Primary Armament(s)	Variable: Typically roof-mounted MG (7.62mm or 12.7mm) or AGL (30mm).
Secondary Armament(s)	None standard.
Armor	Variable depending on variant; typically protects against small arms fire and shell splinters (up to GOST Class 5 / STANAG Level 2).
Countermeasures	Smoke launchers (optional/variant specific)
Crew	2 (Driver, Commander)
Passengers	4-9 (depending on variant)
Special Features	High off-road mobility, modular design, modern ergonomics, Central Tire Inflation System (CTIS).
Application	Patrol, reconnaissance, troop transport, special forces insertion, weapon platform.

GAZ-3937 Vodnik

A GAZ-3937 Vodnik displaying its distinctive modular design.

The GAZ-3937 Vodnik (Водник, Waterman) is a unique Russian high-mobility multipurpose military vehicle based on the GAZ-2330 Tigr chassis components but featuring a distinct, sealed hull for amphibious capability and a modular design. Introduced in the late 1990s / early 2000s, it consists of separate front and rear modules that can be swapped out to configure the vehicle for different roles, such as personnel transport, cargo hauling, or mounting specific equipment or weapon systems. The front module contains the power plant and driver/commander compartment, while the rear module defines the vehicle's function.

Its light armor provides protection against small arms fire. The Vodnik's primary advantage is its combination of high off-road mobility, derived from the Tigr's suspension system, and its inherent amphibious capability, allowing it to traverse water obstacles without preparation. While not as widely adopted as the Tigr, it serves with Russian Ministry of Internal Affairs troops and some export customers. Armament, if fitted, typically involves a machine gun turret (similar to BTR-80's BPPU turret with a 14.5mm KPVT or other options) mounted on the rear module.

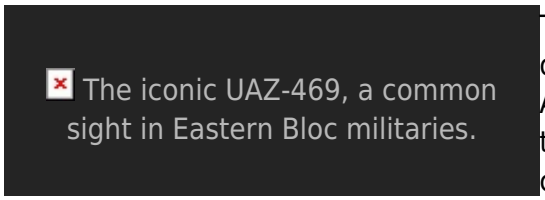
Illustration showing the separation of front and rear modules on the Vodnik.

Variant(s)	GAZ-3937 (Base), GAZ-39371 (Modified)
Description	Russian 4×4 high-mobility amphibious vehicle with a modular design.
Amphibious?	Yes
Primary Armament(s)	Variable/Optional: Can mount turrets (e.g., 14.5mm KPVT) or MGs depending on rear module.
Secondary Armament(s)	Variable/Optional: Coaxial MG if turret fitted.
Armor	Light; protects against small arms fire and splinters.

Countermeasures	Smoke launchers (optional/variant specific)
Crew	2 (Driver, Commander)
Passengers	Up to 9 (depending on rear module)
Special Features	Amphibious, Modular design (swappable rear sections), High off-road mobility, Central Tire Inflation System (CTIS).
Application	Patrol, reconnaissance, troop/cargo transport in difficult terrain, special forces operations.

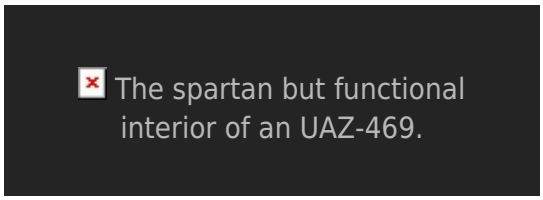
Light Vehicles

UAZ-469



The iconic UAZ-469, a common sight in Eastern Bloc militaries.

The UAZ-469 is arguably the most iconic light utility vehicle of the Soviet Union and the Eastern Bloc, analogous to the American Jeep or British Land Rover. Introduced in 1971 to replace the earlier GAZ-69, this simple, rugged, and highly capable 4×4 off-road vehicle became ubiquitous in military, police, and civilian roles across the Warsaw Pact and numerous client states. Designed for reliability and ease of maintenance in harsh conditions, it features high ground clearance (further increased in the UAZ-469B variant with portal axles removed, later designated UAZ-3151) and a robust chassis.



The spartan but functional interior of an UAZ-469.

Primarily used for transporting personnel (typically up to 7 including driver) and light cargo, liaison duties, and as a command vehicle, the UAZ-469 is typically unarmored in its standard configuration, though field modifications or specialized variants sometimes added light protection. Its simple construction, excellent off-road performance, and sheer numbers made it an indispensable part of military logistics and operations for decades. It remains in widespread use globally, with modernized versions (like the UAZ Hunter) still being produced.

Variant(s)	UAZ-469, UAZ-469B, UAZ-3151, numerous specialized versions (ambulance, radio van, etc.)
Description	Iconic Soviet/Russian 4×4 light off-road utility vehicle.
Amphibious?	No
Primary Armament(s)	None standard (can be field-mounted)
Secondary Armament(s)	None standard
Armor	None standard
Countermeasures	None standard
Crew	1-2 (Driver, Co-Driver/Commander)
Passengers	5-6

Special Features	Excellent off-road capability, Simple and rugged design, High reliability, Easy maintenance.
Application	Personnel transport, Light cargo, Liaison, Command vehicle, Patrol.

Ural-375D

A Ural-375D general purpose truck, the workhorse of Soviet logistics.

The Ural-375D is a heavy-duty, general-purpose 6×6 off-road truck that became a cornerstone of Soviet military logistics following its introduction in the early 1960s. Designed to operate in extreme conditions and over difficult terrain, it features high ground clearance, a powerful (though notoriously thirsty) gasoline V8 engine, and a central tire inflation system. Its primary role was the transport of cargo (up to 5 tonnes), personnel (in the rear cargo bed), and towing artillery pieces and trailers.

A BM-21 Grad multiple rocket launcher system mounted on a Ural-375D chassis.

The Ural-375D's robust chassis also served as the platform for numerous specialized military systems, most famously the BM-21 Grad multiple rocket launcher. Other variants included fuel tankers, command posts, workshops, and radar carriers. While largely superseded in front-line Russian service by the more fuel-efficient diesel-powered Ural-4320 series (which shares a similar appearance), the sheer number produced means the Ural-375D remains in service with many armed forces around the world and in reserve units. Its unarmored cab offers no protection to the crew.

Variant(s)	Ural-375D (Base), numerous specialized chassis variants (e.g., BM-21 Grad, tankers, command vans)
Description	Soviet-era 6×6 heavy-duty off-road military truck.
Amphibious?	No
Primary Armament(s)	None standard (Chassis for weapon systems like BM-21)
Secondary Armament(s)	None standard
Armor	None (Unarmored cab)
Countermeasures	None standard
Crew	1-3 (Driver + passengers in cab)
Passengers	Typically 18-27 troops in rear cargo bed, depending on seating.
Special Features	Excellent 6×6 off-road capability, Central Tire Inflation System (CTIS), Robust chassis used for many systems.
Application	Cargo transport, Troop transport, Artillery towing, Platform for specialized equipment/weapon systems (e.g., MLRS).