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Armored Vehicle Designed to Aid CERT

By [Michelle Gaseau](#), Managing Editor

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Every emergency response team is structured a little differently. But there are still common needs and requirements for these types of specialized teams. One of those needs is to safely transport team members and their weapons into emergency situations. The Colorado Department of Corrections Special Operations Response Team worked with Lenco Armored Vehicles of Pittsfield, Mass. To create a specialized vehicle that will help the team not only store its weapons securely, but also enter any situation with the protection of a ballistic vehicle.

'The vehicle was designed to support the special operations response team. One of the problems we have is when they get a call out, we don't know the weapons we might need or gas we might need to quell the situation. The vehicle is a rolling armory,' said **Jim Romanski**, Special Operations Response Team Commander.

The Colorado DOC's SORT is required to respond to situations in facilities across the state. With this new vehicle, called the C.U.B. - Correctional Use Ballistic vehicle, the team can transport 10 to 12 team members, plus weapons and equipment and plan their response strategy on the road.

'It was designed with a command center in the vehicle with a desk that has the capabilities to plug in laptops and GPS systems. We can pull up facility blueprints and design a tactical plan on the way to the emergency prior to getting there,' said Romanski.

The vehicle was a joint creation by Romanski and the SORT team and Lenco's Business development manager **Jim Massery**.

'We put our heads together with the design team and put together some rough drawings,' said Massery. 'We were careful to incorporate

a sophisticated locking system to keep the vehicle secure.'

The C.U.B. is a spin-off of Lenco's B.E.A.R. Ballistic Engineer Armored Response vehicle, which was introduced to SWAT teams two years ago.

According to Massery, the B.E.A.R. was designed for police and sheriff's response teams, for rescue in heavily armed situations and it can be used in multiple evacuations. Much of the design of the B.E.A.R. was incorporated to help deal with situations such as the Columbine school shooting or an office building shooting, Massery said. 'It is heavily armored and can defeat high powered assault rifles. The price is \$139,000, which for some agencies, is affordable. Unfortunately in the budget of some agencies in corrections, they couldn't afford it and corrections needs are different.'

'When we designed the C.U.B., we put cabinets and lockable storage inside. All we have to do is get our driver to grab the key and go. It is mission loaded. It reduces our response time tremendously,' said Romanski.

According to **Don Hansen**, Colorado DOC's SORT Range Master and Transportation Specialist, the lower-priced C.U.B (\$75,000) can be loaded with gas, weapons, and equipment needed by the unit. It is an armored vehicle like the B.E.A.R. with a roof hatch and rear doors for deployment as well as a more sophisticated locking system. 'When you shut the door. It is classified as a locked-up armory,' said Hansen.

According to Romanski, the vehicle is made out of a Level 3 ballistic material that will stop up to a 44-magnum round. Every door and window has a gun port so officers can slide open a piece of the door to have 360-degree coverage from the vehicle. Chemical agents and less lethal weapons can also be deployed this way. There is an optional ballistic material that can be used on the tires as well.

'When we are in a situation where people need to drive into the middle of a disturbance, you can deploy people out of the top of the vehicle, it has been an asset to the unit,' said Romanski.

Hansen believes that vehicles for CERT response, protection and deployment will be more prominent in the future. 'You'll see more of them. In the past we have had to use other kinds of vehicles for these things. They've used pick up trucks, but nothing you'd classify as a ballistic vehicle,' he said.

According to Massery, some of the major changes between the B.E.A.R. and the C.U.B. is the storage and the locking system. In the C.U.B., the driver has a separate locking system and from the command seat, the locking system doors can be opened by making visual confirmation.

'We're still not finished with the C.U.B.; we think there is more that needs to be done. We need feedback from experts in the field in CERT and corrections. We're looking for feedback about what their actual needs are,' said Massery.

For more information, visit the Lenco website at
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