

# The HMMWV Storage Rack

*Lightweight, easy-to-mount rack solves limited cargo capacity problem*

by Captain T. J. Johnson

A challenge that has always faced cavalrymen and tankers is where to store all the items necessary to accomplish their missions. It was this challenge that motivated me and one of my NCOs to create the HMMWV storage rack.

As the Alpha Troop executive officer of 3rd Squadron, 4th Cavalry, I became very familiar with the issues and demands facing our scouts on a daily basis. One issue that always seemed to be at the forefront of discussion was the lack of space in our M1025 and M966 HMMWVs. While a very powerful and versatile vehicle, the HMMWV's limited cargo capacity restricts the amount of ammunition, weapons, and personal belongings that can be carried.

SGT Kenneth Patrick and I were talking about this one day, and decided to tackle the issue. SGT Patrick drew a rough diagram of what a rack should look like. We decided that it should be capable of hauling water cans, ammunition, fuel cans, personal belongings, and other military items.

With SGT Patrick's idea on paper, I called a workshop on post to see if they could build a prototype of our rack. When they told me they could, I went to the unit S4 who freed up funds to build the prototype. We worked with the civilian welder to improve some of the flaws in our original design, increasing the width of the rack to accommodate a bigger payload. The final product, approximately 44-½ inches long, 11-½ inches tall, and 21 inches deep, was fabricated primarily of angle iron and flat bar stock. The upper edge contained three spaced hooks designed for attachment onto the tailgate of the HMMWV.



The left and right ends of the rack contained arms angled downward to support the main horizontal platform. A variety of cargo could be carried on this large deck, which was made of an expanded wire mesh. To secure the racks to the HMMWV, holes were drilled into the left and right hand corners of the rack and the HMMWV tailgate. Bolts, washers, and wingnuts secured the rack to the tailgate. As a further safety precaution, the four cargo straps on the back of the tailgate were threaded around the rack to provide further stability.

The rack proved an instant success. Soldiers were happy to have a product that not only increased their HMMWV's carrying capacity, but more importantly, freed up some interior space for other essential equipment. At only 35-40 pounds, another positive feature of the rack was the ease with which it could be mounted and dismantled from the tailgate.

From gunnery deployments to Pohakuloa Training Area on the big island of Hawaii to Operation Cobra Gold in Thailand, the durability and dependability of the racks were proven again and again. I thought about selling the idea to the U.S. Army, but after seeing how successful the rack has been in various operations, I've decided to share this with everybody in the Armor community. I'm hoping that somebody may see this and improve upon the idea that SGT Patrick and I developed.

I learned two very important lessons while developing this rack. The first one is that a supportive chain of command willing to spend money on soldiers' ideas promotes initiative and esprit de corps. The second lesson was that it pays to listen to NCOs and get their input on issues that affect readiness and mission accomplishment. Many NCOs have a wealth of knowledge and experiences that junior officers must tap into and utilize in order for our Army to be successful in future years.

---

CPT T.J. Johnson was a Distinguished Military Graduate commissioned in Armor in 1994 from Ripon College. He has served as a scout platoon leader in 5/17 Cav (Korea) and as troop executive and squadron maintenance officer in 3/4 Cav (Hawaii). His military education includes AOBC, SPLC, Airborne, Air Assault, and BMOC. He is currently at Ft. Knox for AOAC, CAS3, and CLC. His next assignment is at Ft. Wainwright, Alaska.