



Top-notch ambulances and special-purpose vehicles made in Germany

WAS is a leading manufacturer of ambulances and special-purpose vehicles. While its vehicles impress with innovative engineering, custom-fit ergonomics, as well as high-quality workmanship made in Germany, employees at WAS offer significant know-how and personal customer support throughout the entire manufacturing process.

TEXT: NANE STEINHOFF | PHOTOS: WAS VEHICLES

“A WAS vehicle makes rescuers stronger and operations more efficient,” smiles Andreas Ploeger, one of the two managing directors of WAS. Whether large-scale or low volume productions or single vehicles for national and international clients, developers, technicians, electricians and other specialists work hand in hand so that high-performance base vehicles get turned into very special ones. Since 1991, WAS has managed to remain one of the leading ambulance manufacturers through innovations and constant progress. For example, the company built the first ambulance with

waterproof and disinfectant-resistant furniture material. In 1994, WAS developed a stretcher table with hydraulic suspension so that a patient no longer notices the street’s unevenness. When WAS introduced the quality management system, in accordance with DIN EN ISO 9001 in 1997, the company was able to assert itself as a Europe-wide market leader for special-purpose vehicles in the long term. Additionally, WAS was the only German manufacturer in 2000 that conducted crash tests for their entire vehicle range, launched the first box body for ambulances in 2001 with rollover tests

and impressed the market with new, bright LED lights for warning systems. Today, this innovation is standard in large-volume production vehicles of well-known car manufacturers. “WAS enjoys international acclaim from independent institutions, such as VCA England, UTAC France and TÜV Rheinland in Germany,” adds Andreas Ploeger.

Today, over 350 employees work in Wietmarschen in north-west Germany. Meticulously manufacturing around 1,500 sophisticated ambulances and special-purpose vehicles a year, they manage to generate an annual revenue of 80 million euros. The vehicles are the result of forward-thinking development, 90 per cent of manual labour, diligent processing and an array of very special details. “One of our main strengths is that we are able to build a large quantity of vehicles at short notice. We managed to



produce around 300 vehicles in less than three months for Egypt once," Andreas Ploeger says.

A profound portfolio

The internationally operating company builds custom-made vehicles upon specific customer requests. "The requirements for an ambulance are simply different than 20 years ago. Patients don't simply get driven to a hospital but doctors have to decide where to take them exactly while they get treatment in the vehicle," notes Andreas Ploeger. With their many special details and meticulous testing regime, WAS vehicles are perfect for simplifying work for emergency services and for ensuring the highest possible degree of safety, quality, patient comfort and hygiene. Innovative WAS Assist Systems, such as an electromechanical door closing aid, aerodynamic alarm systems, an individually configurable interior, electro-hydraulic ambulance tables, custom-made roof control centres, adjustable air-conditioning devices, low-vibration floors or holistic ergonomics are only a few of the many special components of WAS vehicles. Putting the environment at the core of its doings, WAS also seeks to make its vehicles as sustainable as possible. While the vehicles' box bodies and their furnishings are entirely demountable, recyclable and CFC free, the aerodynamic and light design reduces fuel consumption.

Whether a dog transport van for the police, an emergency ambulance for Mongolia, an All-Terrain Ambulance for mountain operations, a neonatal transport car, an intensive care unit for Qatar or a special vehicle for water safety divisions, WAS is able to offer a vast portfolio of ambulances and special-purpose vehicles. "We constantly seek to respond to current situations," explains Andreas Ploeger. An example for this is a mobile outpatient clinic for refugees. Andreas Ploeger explains: "The medical care of refugees calls for immediate action and our mobile practice is able to offer this. We have even integrated a separate dressing room to cater for the comfort of Muslims. Another example is our special infection ambulance which was needed in South Korea in times of the MERS-epidemic."

WAS also developed a heavy-duty transport van for adipose patients. "Each of our vehicles is special – whether it's a normal ambulance or a neonatal transporting unit. We put diligence at the core of our doings, whether we build one specimen for a local German committee or produce hundreds of cars for the Gulf region," says Andreas Ploeger. As if manufacturing innovative vehicles would not be enough, WAS also offers national and international maintenance and repairing services and advises international customers and emerging economies. "We discuss what is possible for a specific country and what is needed there," adds Andreas Ploeger. The future of WAS will be coined by the desire to continue innovations, making vehicles more energy efficient, decreasing overall costs and the costs of operating their vehicles. As one of the biggest companies in their field in Europe, WAS is sure to flexibly fulfil individual wishes – from cheap to expensive and from simple to complex.

www.was-vehicles.com

Main image: Processing line of van vehicles.

Left, from top: Ambulance WAS 500 for European markets.

Bariatric / Intensive Care Transport Vehicle.

Interior of Bariatric / Intensive Care Transport Vehicle.

Mobile outpatient clinic for refugees.

V.I.P ambulance for Qatar.

Below: Ambulance for Egypt.

Bottom: All-Terrain Ambulance.

