

Paratroopers 2.0: The Bundeswehr Drops Armored Vehicles Directly from the Sky

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The Bundeswehr is close to a significant technological breakthrough for its airborne capabilities. Although the tracked vehicle **Wiesel** has been the backbone of the paratroopers since the 1990s, a crucial element has always been missing: the ability to drop vehicles directly into the operational area via parachute.

As revealed in a video recently published by the German Army, the Military Technical Center **WTD 61**, in collaboration with the BAAINBw, the Army Development Office, and the Airborne Brigade 1, is testing a new **heavy load airdrop system**.



Vehicle drop – The Bundeswehr tests a new capability for airborne troops

Bridging the Tactical Gap

Until now, after the drop, paratroopers had to first capture and secure landing strips so that vehicles could be unloaded from aircraft. In this critical phase, the troops were lacking:

- **Mobility:** Rapid ground movement immediately after landing.
- **Firepower:** Direct tactical support (e.g., 20 mm cannons or anti-tank missiles).
- **Protection:** Absence of armored platforms in the immediate airhead.

With the introduction of the new system, combat vehicles can be dropped simultaneously with the paratroopers, regardless of infrastructure presence.

Technology: IrvinGQ's ATAX System

The solution tested is the modular **ATAX Rapid-Rig/De-Rig** system from the British manufacturer **IrvinGQ**. This system stands out for several technological innovations:

Feature	Advantage
Soft Landing Airbags	Significantly reduce impact forces upon landing, preventing damage to the vehicle.
Reusability	Unlike traditional cushioning materials (EDM), the airbags can be reused.
Efficiency	Reduction in preparation and packing times by eliminating unnecessary components.
Drive-On-Drive-Off	The vehicle is automatically unlocked after impact, allowing the crew to depart immediately.

Future Prospects and Compatibility

The adoption of ATAX would represent a consistent evolution for Special Forces and airborne troops. The system is not only intended for the current **Wiesel** but will support a wide range of platforms:

- **Airborne Platform Caracal:** The new standard vehicle for paratrooper troops.
- **Special Forces Vehicles:** Light combat and support vehicles.
- **Unmanned Ground Systems (UGV):** Future robotic platforms for reconnaissance and attack.
- **Successor to the Wiesel:** The future "Airborne Weapon Carrier," currently in the design phase, will directly benefit from the ATAX system.

Thanks to this new capability, the Bundeswehr regains a high degree of strategic flexibility and striking power in national and allied defense scenarios.