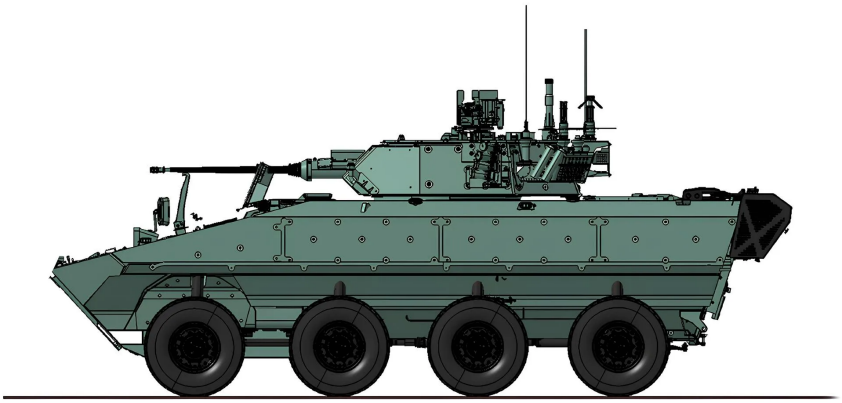

The VBM 30 NG: the new generation of FRECCIA for the Italian Army

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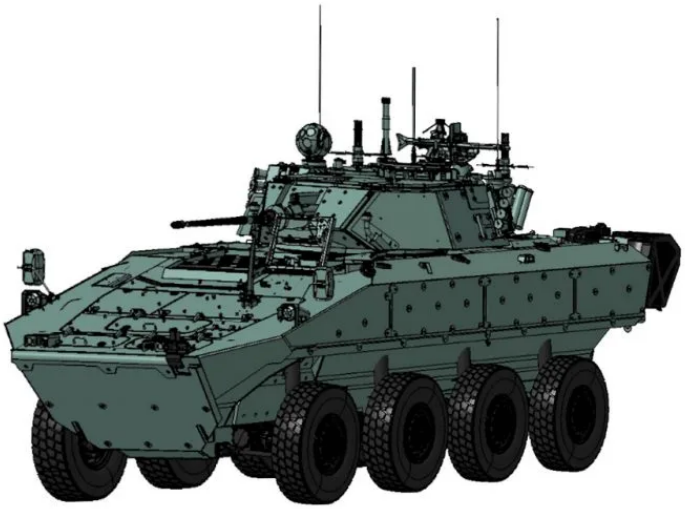
With the signing of the contract between the Direzione Armamenti Terrestri (TERRARM) and the CIO (Consorzio Iveco-Oto Melara, equally composed of IDV and Leonardo), the program for the new **Veicolo Blindato Medio 30 New Generation** (VBM 30 NG) has started. This program involves a profound evolution of the FRECCIA, the 8x8 wheeled vehicle in service with the "Pinerolo" and "Aosta" brigades, already operational in theaters like Afghanistan.

The contract provides for the supply of 76 vehicles: 60 in the Combat variant, armed with the X-GUN 30 mm cannon, and 16 in the Anti-Tank version, equipped with the same cannon and SPIKE LR2 anti-tank missiles. With a total value of 1.039 billion euros, the contract also includes the development of a prototype, validation, and homologation of the new vehicle, with the first deliveries expected starting from 2028.

Compared to the original FRECCIA, the VBM 30 NG introduces radical improvements: reinforced ballistic and anti-mine protections, new electronic architecture compliant with NATO NGVA

standard, more lethal weapon systems, and an increase in operational capabilities in line with the latest technological and doctrinal developments of Western armed forces.



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Evolution from VBM Plus to VBM 30 NG

To fully understand the VBM 30 NG, it is necessary to recall the previous update known as **VBM Plus**, initiated with the "contract 2128" signed in 2021. This program primarily aimed to resolve obsolescences and extend the operational life of the FRECCIA without profoundly altering its performance.

However, the changed geopolitical and operational scenario from 2022 onwards prompted the Italian Army to revise its standards: mobility, protection, and firepower became priorities. Thus, the project evolved from a simple MLU (Mid Life Update) to the **VBM 30 New Generation**, capable of responding to the new challenges of the modern battlefield.

The innovations introduced include a new hull designed to improve resistance to mine and IED explosions thanks to the "V" shape, the adoption of new materials developed for the Centauro II and VBA programs, increased engine power brought to 720 hp, and the introduction of improved suspensions to maintain agility despite the increase in mass up to 35 tons.

The turret, developed by Leonardo, also represents a generational leap. The new X-GUN 30 mm cannon, capable of using airburst ammunition with counter-UAS capability, replaces the previous 25 mm armament, while the JANUS-D and LOTHAR SD digital optronic systems ensure

better target acquisition and engagement. Additionally, the C2D/N EVO command system and the communication suite based on the SWave VQ1 radio complete a top-tier technological package.

Operational characteristics and future prospects

From an operational standpoint, the **VBM 30 NG** maintains the excellent on-road and off-road performance of the original FRECCIA: a maximum speed of over 105 km/h, a range of 800 km, and the ability to overcome slopes greater than 60%. The dimensions have slightly increased, with a length of 8.64 meters and a width of 3 meters, while the new configuration ensures greater internal protection for the crew.

One of the most significant innovations is the predisposition for future integration of systems based on artificial intelligence, both for automatic target acquisition and for decision-making assistance to vehicle commanders. CIO and IDV are also studying hybrid propulsion solutions, which could be adopted in the future, in line with sustainability trends and the reduction of thermal and acoustic signatures on modern battlefields.

The coexistence between the current FRECCIA and the new VBM 30 NG will be managed through common logistics, facilitated by the high level of compatibility between the two generations. In the long run, all combat vehicles should converge on the 30 mm armament, while older hulls could be converted for specialized roles.

With the **VBM 30 New Generation**, the Italian Army thus equips itself with a modern, flexible tool ready to face the operational challenges of the future, while maintaining a strong continuity with the tradition and experience gained in the field.

News link: https://www.edrmagazine.eu/exclusive-the-cio-consortium-details-the-vbm-30-new-generation-the-new-aifv-for-the-italian-army