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**Four Wheel Drive History Willys Jeep**

**By John Davison**

Most early motor vehicles had a basic set up with the engine mounted in the front with a gearbox

attached to it driving the rear wheels only and this became the normal design of most vehicles for many years. As design progressed engine position and transmission (gearbox) position was experimented with to help with traction and handling. Rear engine and mid-engine vehicles became available as did front and all wheel drive. Four wheel drive vehicles began life early in the twentieth century and a number of companies had their own designs for supplying off road trucks for business and commercial use. The importance of having load carrying vehicles that could transverse harsh terrain was important due to the lack of roads. Both the British and American armies during World War One had four wheel drive trucks for heavy terrain use for carrying troops and equipment. However the need for a true multi purpose on and off road vehicle became apparent.

With the onset of World War Two the need for off road vehicles that could literally drive over any terrain became a necessity of the military and with any technology war tends to drive designs forward quickly. In the early days of the war the United States Military required a light-weight four wheel drive vehicle that could transverse almost any terrain. A number of companies came forward with designs including Bantam, Ford and Willys. The result of this was the world famous Willys Jeep. The jeep proved to be both very rugged and dependable through out the war and by the close it had become well known for its on and off road ability and its durability.

After the war the potential within the civilian market for jeeps was clearly apparent and Willys filed for the trademark registration of the name Jeep and began production for the public sector. The first models named Civillian Jeeps (CJ) began production in 1945 and the name Jeep became an icon of tough go anywhere vehicles soon to become a legend to future four wheel drive owners. The history of the Jeep and production models are as follows:

1945 – 1949 CJ-2A 1946 – 1953 CJ-3A 1947 – 1965 Willys Jeep Truck 1948 – 1950 Willys Jeepster  
1952 – 1968 CJ-3B 1954 – 1983 CJ-5 1955 – 1981 CJ-6 1976 – 1986 CJ-7 1981 – 1986 CJ-8  
1953 Kaiser buys Willys Overland. 1970 American Motors Corporation AMC takes over Kaiser-Jeep.  
1987 Chrysler Corporation buys American Motors Corporation. 1998 Daimler-Benz merges with  
Chrysler Corporation.

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The modern day Chrysler Jeep has many models and incorporates all the benefits of modern technology and comfort but it has tried to retain some of the old Willys features as the front grill shows. Back in the United Kingdom the Land Rover project was first born and the legend began.

John is a director of numerous Internet companies and is a published author. Many articles have been produced on a variety of subjects with excellent content and depth. All his articles may be reproduced provided that an active link is included to

<http://www.4x4-suv.com>

### **Jeep Gladiator – History**

**By Greg Lucas**

Where does the Jeep Gladiator fit into the great history of the Jeep line of vehicles. Jeep from its lowly beginnings has risen to the level of a status vehicle for many in the market today.

The Jeep vehicle name started out in the bare bones military unit. Simply designed to meet the rigors of being in the field.

The original JEEP as it was known back in February of 1941 was so named because the vehicle actually did not have a name. In a test drive of the Willys-Overland scout car took a demonstration ride up the Capital steps. When the reporter asked the driver Irving "Red" Haussman the name of the vehicle he said "It's a jeep". The name was then published across the nation in the review article and a new automotive brand was borne.

Willys-Overland inc was awarded the name as it owned the manufacture rights of the first military vehicles. The Jeep went on to nobally serve in World War II. When the soldiers arrived back from the fronts they wanted the Jeeps they had driven during the war.

Willys-Overland was more than willing to produce this grand little car for the common market. The Jeep CJ-2 was the first commercially available vehicle and stayed in basic production through the Jeep CJ-7.

The Jeep CJ-7 was the last military variant of the great Jeep nomenclature. The final Jeep CJ-7 rolled off the production line in the United States in 1987. It was subplanted with the Jeep brand Wrangler or YJ. The YJ for many was designated as the Yuppie Jeep as it had a lower running height and more supple suspension. This Jeep remained in production for 10 years.

In 1997 the YJ was replaced by the current TJ production unit. This unit along with many small tweaks went back to the original Jeeps round headlights. In 2007 the Jeep YJ is slated to be replaced by the Jeep JK model vehicle.

The JK model of vehicles will include three separate variants. The first Jeep variant will be a short wheelbase two door model that will be the direct replacement to the Jeep YJ and hold true to the

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original form of this model line.

The second model will be a four door variant with a slightly increased wheelbase for those wanting more functionality out of the Jeep. This vehicle should also be better equipped for the less outdoor slanted owner.

The final version will be a pick-up variant Nicknamed the Gladiator. The Jeep Gladiator will feature a slightly extended cab. This will not feature a jump-seat for the kids but allow for storage of small items such as laptops, book-bags, overnight bags, and the like.

The bed of this truck will be 7 foot and perfectly square. This vehicle will be rugged and ready for the trails or a quick camping trip with the buds.

The Jeep has come a long way in the last 60 plus years. This great brand is planning on moving into the future with more memorable vehicles at its back.

Charles Cater is a writer and avid fan of Jeeps, for more information about the Jeep Gladiator go to:

<http://www.jeepgladiator.net>



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