



Military experience providing tactical armour solutions

Soldier Modernisation talks to Jason Beck, founder of TYR Tactical about their tactical armour product supplied globally to both military and law enforcement

When Jason Beck founded TYR Tactical in 2010, he had a simple aim, to design tactical armour products that would push the boundaries of innovation, focusing on quality rather than cost and ultimately changing the industry that he has been involved in for more than 20 years.

Since then, the company has won contracts with Units and Agencies across the world, from the Danish Military to Australian Special Operations, Canadian Special Forces, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and more. The jewel in the company's crown when it comes to customers came last year, when it won contracts to provide both concealable and tactical armour to the FBI, alongside other federal agencies including the DEA, providing them with the most state-of-the-art Level II soft armour package both for ballistics and fragmentation. The contract says it all, in Beck's mind, "Everybody knows across the globe that ballistically the gold standard in body armour is the FBI requirement. We did a fantastic job with the design, but the testing and everything else that they require, there's literally nothing that compares to it anywhere around the world. Our ultra-concealable male

and female designs, and our tactical EPIC-FED male and female are the gold standard for tactical outer vests for law enforcement. We're very proud of it - we're proud to be able to provide the best body armour both at Level II and Level IIIA versions to the FBI, but also to other agencies around the globe."

TYR Tactical's success stems from a drive for excellence that Beck says is at the heart of the company's values. A former U.S. Marine himself and Gracie Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu and DSC Combative Instructor, he went on to found Diamondback Tactical in 2001 before selling it in 2008. When he founded TYR Tactical in 2010 it was with the aim of combining his passion for design and his own experience training end users when it comes to tactical armour to create the best products on the market. "I love the aspect of designing a product, I love the aspect of manufacturing a product and taking that to market. I really try to focus on the end user, more so than trying to make a dollar every single time. I didn't want the focus to be all about how much money the company was making. I want it to be about the quality of product that I was making." Beck's

Female Epic Assault Carrier



TYR Tactical's Female EPIC vest is the first female ergonomically designed body armor vest to enhance female soldiers.

Male Epic Assault Carrier



TYR Tactical's Male EPIC vest is the most ergonomic full coverage vest ever developed.

HA3/7 Level III plate



TYR Tactical's plates are lightweight and high performing due to innovative manufacturing processes, pushing industry standards.

focus is on innovation is summed up in the company's mantra 'Innovate or Die'. That mantra runs through all three of its arms – its body armour and accessories line, TYR Tactical, its clothing and backpack line Huron, and its canine armour and accessories line, Revere Canine. Each brand focuses on quality rather than cost which appeals to specialist units where product quality is key to survival.

"What we have done is try to stay in touch with more specialised units that are focused on higher quality, developing products specifically to their needs. I think those customers typically appreciate talent or creativity in the innovation of the product. If you look at the Danish Military, the products that we have developed year by year all work in conjunction with the existing product we sold them in 2011. What we have created is a modular, scalable, more tailorable system approach to how we develop body armour and equipment. Through planned product improvements we constantly innovate existing products to be better year after year. Every single product scales up and either gives you more capability, helps the end user biomechanically or gives you more ballistic protection or a higher level of ballistic protection than it currently has. That's what we built the brand around - trying to focus on enhancing the end user instead of just trying to make a dollar every month."

In Beck's view, that focus on quality and innovation cannot just come down to one person. While he thinks CEOs should lead from the front when it comes to a company vision, he also recognises that without the people he employs to make his products, TYR Tactical wouldn't exist. "For me my first priority is not the customer, it's my employees. If you ask anyone at TYR Tactical who I think is the most important person in our company it's certainly not me, it's the person on the sewing machine." That means those people should be looked after, says Beck, who employs people whose parents and grandparents also worked for TYR Tactical. The company runs programs to employ refugees and provides training and a career paths for those without any prior experience.

PICO-DSX



TYR Tactical's PICO-DSX is built with lightweight and grit.

Ballistic Shield Dolly System



TYR Tactical's Shields are lightweight and outperform the industry standard. The Dolly System solves crucial mobility difficulties regarding shield usage.

Beck's focus on quality over cost extends to the standards he and TYR Tactical apply to their products. Designing products that aim to surpass threshold requirements rather than just meeting them. "I can't live my life that way. I have six kids, and I must constantly focus on how I'm going to better perform for a soldier and protect their life so they are able to come to his or her kids. That's how I've always designed products and I can't do it any other way. I'm not going to produce a product that barely meets the requirement - I'm going to design a product that has to really beat or destroy that requirement. Ultimately, over a period of time, that's what that soldier's life depends on. The team and I are always looking at how we can do better than what the requirement is. That means we're not going to win every single time because a lot of these are based on price, they're simply looking for lowest cost and they have a set of minimums that they have accepted, and we can't accept that."

Beck cites the work TYR Tactical has done for the Danish Military, for whom he has had the contract since 2011, as an example. When they set Beck the challenge of cutting 10% off the weight of the vest in ten years, he didn't just meet their challenge, he far surpassed it. "We did it in two years and cut 14% of the weight off their vest. Not only did we do that - we also advanced their ballistics. It is far higher performing for fragmentation and ballistic protection than anything else that's out there." The NFA2/DK package that was built for Denmark is now being used by other militaries and special operations groups around the world, said Beck. It was used as the base to create the FBI package. "If you ask anybody in the Danish Military why they buy TYR Tactical products, it's because we're the highest performer. We are not the cheapest and that's okay. In a lot of cases, we're a much higher price than the next competitor and we either win based on performance or we lose based on price. That's just how it works and I'm okay with that."

In Beck's view, TYR Tactical is already ahead of the game, but he has spent the past few years focusing on how he can continue to change the industry in terms of body armour. Over the last year he has reinvested \$22M back into the company to focus on hard armour ballistics, including developing a Shield & Dolly system for the U.S. Military, as well as, building a brand new Tactical Hard Armor facility at its headquarters in Arizona. "We have the two largest ballistic presses in the world at our new facility - and we built an entire building around the process. What that allows us to do is really take the next step ballistically and further reduce weight and deliver much higher performing ballistic plates, ballistic shields and vehicle and aircraft armour and that's really the next big step for TYR Tactical." ■

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