

Daily Mail

Arkansas police department loses Humvee for more than a week after failing to notice it had been stolen and wrecked - and they're now using it for spare parts for their SECOND Humvee

- **An ex-military Humvee was stolen from an Arkansas police department**
- **It was missing a week before anyone noticed it was gone**
- **The police chief in Palestine, Arkansas, said 'it never crossed [his] mind' that someone could take it**
- **It was found wrecked and is now used for spare parts**
- **183 police departments have been suspended from the Department of Defense Excess Property Program for losing military equipment**
- **Of the \$4.2 billion worth of property distributed since 1990, assault rifles, pistols, shotguns and Humvees have all gone missing**
- **The lack of accountability for the gear and the events in Ferguson, Missouri recently have prompted a review of the program**

By Alex Greg
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Officers at an Arkansas police department failed to notice their ex-military Humvee had been stolen from the parking lot for more than a week.

Palestine Police Chief Stanley Barnes says 'it never crossed [his] mind' that anyone could take the 5,000lb Humvee - it doesn't even have a set of keys.

However, last December a young man climbed into the Humvee, given to the Palestine Police Department as part of a controversial government program, and headed off on a joyride that concluded when he drove it into a tree and completely wrecked the vehicle.

It was such an unlikely event that the department didn't notice the military armored vehicle - which cost up to \$350,000 new - was missing from the parking lot for more than a week.

Once Barnes noticed it was gone, the department swung into action.

'We just do what police officers do - we find out who done it,' Barnes told **Yahoo! News**. 'People talk.'

Eventually the vehicle in some woods one county over and is now being used for spare parts for the department's other Humvee.

That a tiny town such as Palestine (population 700) could possibly need such a vehicle is the basis of criticism of the Department of Defense Excess Property Program (DOD 1033), which gives used military equipment to U.S. police departments to help fight crime.

Almost 200 police departments in the United States have already been suspended from the program for losing military-grade equipment, including assault rifles, pistols, shotguns and Humvees.

An Associated Press investigation of the Defense Department military surplus program this year found that a disproportionate share of the \$4.2 billion worth of property distributed since 1990 has been obtained by police and sheriff's departments in rural areas with few officers and little crime.

Think-tank the Cato Institute is running a project on criminal justice. Director of the project Tim Lynch called on Congress to revisit the program 'promptly.'

'We don't know where these weapons are going, whether they are really lost, or whether there is corruption involved,' he told **Fusion**, adding that the lack of accountability is very 'unsettling.'

The militarized response by police in Ferguson, Missouri to protests following the death of teenager Michael Brown at the hands of a police officer drew sharp criticism and prompted President Obama to announce a review of the 1033 program.

'I am deeply concerned that the deployment of military equipment and vehicles sends a conflicting message,' Attorney General Eric Holder said.

A report by the American Civil Liberties Union in June said police agencies had become 'excessively militarized,' with officers using training and equipment designed for the battlefield on city streets.

Senator Claire McCaskill, D-Mo., said police responses like that in Ferguson have 'become the problem instead of the solution.' Representative Hank Johnson, D-Ga., said he will introduce legislation to curb the trend of police militarization.