

THE PUPPET MASTER- HACK THE BOX- ROOM

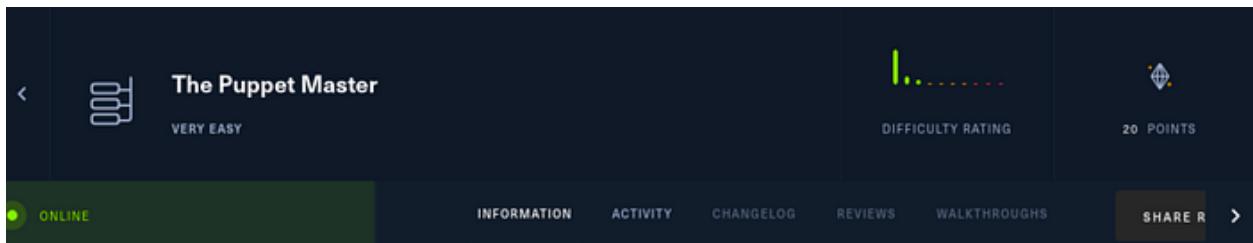


5kullk3r

4 min read

Nov 22, 2025

Press enter or click to view image in full size



Hello everyone! This is a **beginner** rated room from the HackTheBox platform titled “**THE PUPPET MASTER**”

This room is classified as **easy** OSINT type challenge. I hope this write-up helps guide you through the process!

My goal is to help you understand each step and provide clear explanations so that anyone, whether a beginner or experienced, can follow along and understand the reasoning behind each action. I hope this write-up makes the process smoother and easier to grasp.

Enough talk — let's dive right in, and I hope you enjoy the journey! :)



for the people who know lol

Phase 1: Image Analysis and Initial Search

Documenting the Evidence

83.136.255.235:55402

CLASSIFIED

Puppet Master - CLASSIFIED

SCENARIO: You are an OSINT analyst for a defense think tank. An anonymous source has shared a photograph of an unidentified military armored vehicle during field operations.

OBJECTIVE: Using only public-source intelligence techniques, you must identify:

- The military vehicle type and specifications
- The manufacturer and designer of the vehicle
- When the vehicle first entered military service
- The country of origin for this vehicle
- The passenger and crew capacity specifications

RULES OF ENGAGEMENT: Chain evidence logically through verifiable sources. No guessing. All conclusions must be supported by OSINT methodology.

OSINT Investigation Framework

- Evidence Collection**
Analyze provided imagery and metadata for technical indicators
- Technical Analysis**
Employ reverse image search, vehicle databases, and geolocation tools
- Cross-Reference**
Validate findings through multiple independent sources

We start the investigation by observing the webpage and downloading the image provided in the evidence section.

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Evidence Analysis

Primary source material for investigation

Source Image



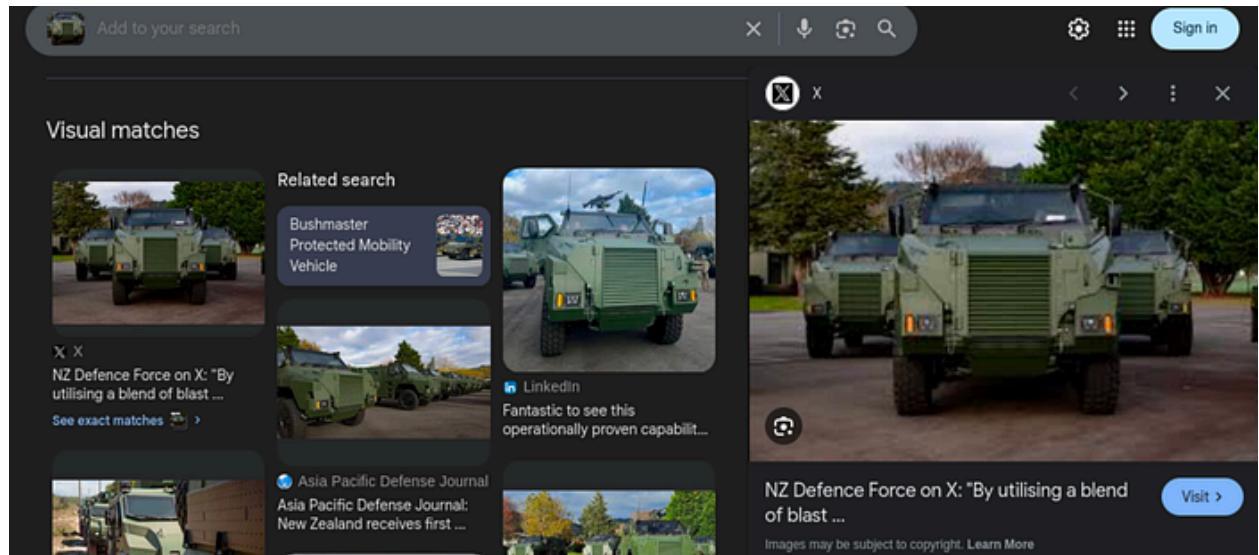
Initial Assessment: Military armored vehicle in field environment. Vehicle appears to be wheeled, not tracked. Desert/tan camouflage pattern visible.

I follow the webpage and in the evidence see the armored vehicle and I download the image

First, a manual inspection of the image is performed, but it doesn't immediately reveal any unique identifiers or text

Since manual inspection was inconclusive, we pivot to a **reverse image search** to find the source and context of the photograph.

The search leads to a Twitter post, which identifies the origin: **It's from NZ Defence Force**. This post is the key to identifying the vehicle.



Phase 2: Intelligence Gathering and Confirmation

Vehicle Identification

Using the information from the Twitter post, we search for the specific model.



NZ Defence Force 
@NZDefenceForce

...

By utilising a blend of blast protection, a larger carrying capacity and broader capabilities, our [@NZArmy](#)'s new armoured **Bushmaster** fleet comes in five variants for a vast mission profile.

More ➡ nzdf.mil.nz/armoured-bushm...

From the Beehive ➡ nzdf.mil.nz/bushmaster-2023

<http://nzdf.mil.nz/bushmaster-2023>



Vehicle Identification: **Bushmaster**

Searching for the manufacturer confirms the origin: **thales
australia.**

The Bushmaster vehicles in the New Zealand Army's fleet are manufactured by [Thales Australia](#), an Australian defense contractor that acquired the original designer, Australian Defence Industries. While the vehicles are built in Australia, the New Zealand government approved the procurement of 43 Bushmasters in 2020, and they are being delivered with variants and configurations specific to the New Zealand Defence Force's needs. 

Operational Details

We now use public sources, like the Wikipedia page and official articles, to gather the required specific data points.

Year of Operation:

Bushmaster Protected Mobility Vehicle	
	
A Royal Netherlands Army Bushmaster fitted with a remote turret	
Type	Infantry mobility vehicle
Place of origin	Australia
Service history	
In service	1997–present
Used by	Users
Wars	INTERFET (East Timor) War in Afghanistan Iraq War

Next to find the year I see articles mentioning 2005 and 2023 but the questions talks about operational year and in the wikipedia page it mentions 1997

Origin and Capacity:

Next the origin is **Australia** and it's even mentioned in the wikipedia

Screenshot of a web browser showing the specifications of the Armoured Bushmaster Vehicle on the NZDF website.

Specifications

Weight	11 tonnes, with a 5 tonne payload
Height	2,650mm
Length	7,180mm
Width	2,480mm
Fuel capacity	319 litres
Steering system	4x4 power assisted
Max speed	100 km/h
Passengers	10 personnel

(9+1)

Armoured Bushmaster Vehicle
Medium and Heavy Operational Vehicle (MHOV)
New Zealand Light Armoured Vehicle (NZLAV)
New Zealand Light Operational Vehicle (NZLOV)
High Mobility Engineer Excavator (Combat Tractor)
MAN Truck and Rapidly Emplaced Bridging System (REBS)
Polaris MRZR

Next to see the passenger capacity -> in the official website embedded in the tweet -> I see 10 personnels -> 9 passengers and 1 driver

Conclusion

By combining evidence from the provided image with external OSINT tools and public resources, we successfully identified all the required details about the armored vehicle.

Investigation Challenge
Progressive OSINT analysis - answer questions in sequence

Progress 5 / 5 completed

Vehicle Identification

💡 Example answer format: Humvee or Bradley or Stryker

What type of military vehicle is shown in the image? Look at the vehicle's characteristics: it's wheeled, armored, and appears to be a personnel carrier. Research similar vehicles online.

Submit

⌚ Correct! Well done.
Your answer: Bushmaster

Manufacturer Identification

💡 Example answer format: General Dynamics or Lockheed Martin or BAE Systems

Who is the manufacturer/designer of this vehicle? Research the company that designed and produces this specific armored vehicle.

Submit

⌚ Correct! Well done.
Your answer: thales australia



Service History

💡 Example answer format: 1985 or 2003 or 2010

When did this vehicle first enter military service? Research the year this specific vehicle type was first deployed operationally.

1997

Submit

⌚ Correct! Well done.

Your answer: 1997



Country of Origin

💡 Example answer format: United States or Germany or United Kingdom

What is the country of origin for this vehicle? Research where this specific vehicle was originally designed and manufactured.

Australia

Submit

⌚ Correct! Well done.

Your answer: Australia



Vehicle Capacity

💡 Example answer format: 8 passengers and 2 crew or 12 passengers and 1 driver

What is the passenger capacity of this vehicle? Research how many passengers plus crew it can carry (format: X passengers and Y driver).

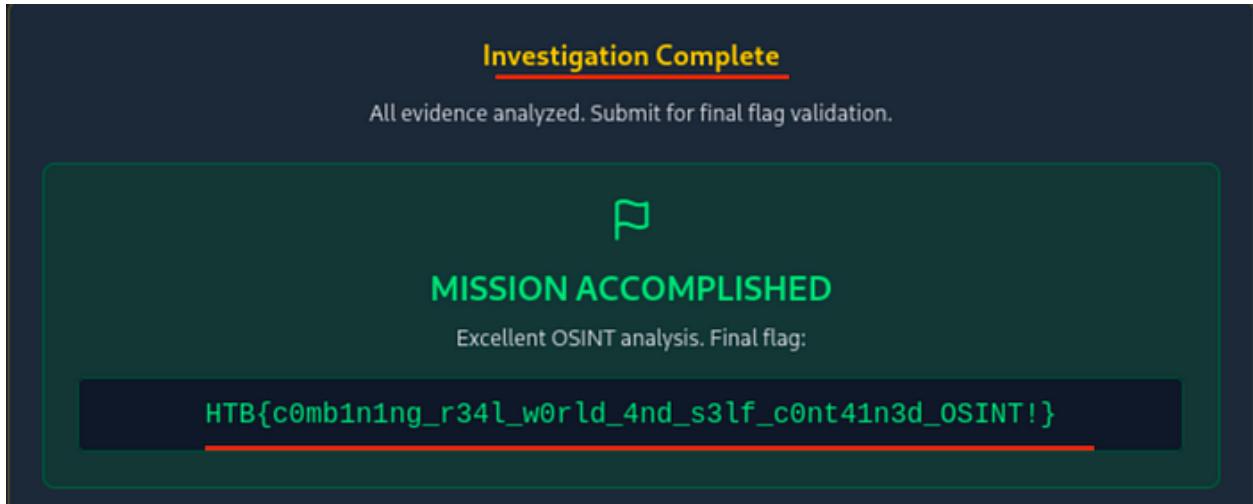
9 passengers and 1 driver

Submit

⌚ Correct! Well done.

Your answer: 9 passengers and 1 driver

Final Flag:



HTB{c0mb1n1ng_r34l_w0rld_4nd_s3lf_c0nt41n3d_OSINT!}

CONCLUSION:

I hope this write-up walkthrough was helpful to you all!

Now that I've gotten through it, I hope it helps you and gets you through the room as well. I plan on putting out more like these in the future!

Imma bounce for now, but I'll catch you all in the next writeup!