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Industry responds to challenge

Marine Corps Systems Command issues orders for life-saving armored vehicles

QUANTICO, Va. – Using an innovative and unprecedented business process, Marine Corps Systems Command (MCSC) issued orders today to produce and field life-saving armored vehicles faster than most thought possible. MCSC simultaneously awarded Low Rate Initial Production (LRIP) orders to two manufacturers for 215 Mine Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) vehicles. These orders, which have a total dollar amount of more than \$122 million, were issued to accelerate the production of lower risk vehicle material solutions in advance of testing and production orders.

It was just 19 days ago that MCSC challenged industry by awarding nine separate Indefinite Delivery, Indefinite Quantity (IDIQ) contracts for 36 initial MRAP test vehicles. The IDIQ contracts required these initial vehicles to be produced within 60 days. However, in less than two weeks, two of the vendors demonstrated their reliability to produce vehicles meeting Marine Corps survivability requirements, production numbers and delivery timelines. This resulted in LRIP orders being issued to: BAE Systems, Ground Systems Division and Force Protection Industries, Inc. It is anticipated that more LRIP orders will be issued in the near future.

“All nine manufacturers originally receiving IDIQ contracts are still active and competitive in this program,” said Paul Mann, MCSC’s program manager for MRAP. “The vendors that did not receive LRIP contracts today have been afforded the opportunity to prove their capabilities in these areas and are still very much a player in this program.”

More than 60 MRAP vehicles are currently being used by Marine forces in Iraq. These armored vehicles have a proven record of saving lives by augmenting the current level of mine, rocket propelled grenades and improvised explosive devices (IED) protection with a V-shaped hull and raised chassis.

"These vehicles provide the best available protection for our warfighters," said Brig. Gen. Michael Brogan, MCSC commander. "Awarding multiple contracts simultaneously creates full and open competition so we can expand the production base and more rapidly put these life-saving vehicles into the hands of our warfighters."

The contracts and orders cover two categories of MRAP vehicles. Category I is the smaller, lighter Mine Resistant Utility Vehicle (MRUV) for urban combat operations. Category II is the larger, medium-sized Joint Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) Rapid Response Vehicle (JERRV) for multi-mission operations such as convoy lead, troop transport, ambulance, explosive ordnance disposal and combat engineering. The two defense contractors receiving LRIP orders are required to produce 80 MRUVs and 135 JERRVs with delivery commencing in April.

"Success is in the hands of industry," said Barry Dillon, MCSC's executive director. "The vehicles need to have adequate survivability, need to be produced at a high rate and need to be fielded as soon as possible. We are depending on industry to fulfill their contracts on time. We are encouraging them to produce vehicles faster. The faster we can field quality, safe MRAP vehicles, the more lives we can save."