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ITV, EFSS achieve initial operational capability

The Marine Corps' newest mortar and vehicle system, designed to be carried to the frontlines aboard fixed-wing aircraft and helicopters, has achieved initial operational capability (IOC).

The Internally Transportable Vehicle (ITV) achieved IOC on June 25 in the 2nd Marine Division. Fifteen ITVs, also known as Light Strike Vehicles, were handed over to 1st Battalion, 9th Marine Regiment in preparation for their deployment with the 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU).

According to the Marine Corps Systems Command's (MCSC) Fire Support Systems (FSS) program office, the ITV is an expeditionary vehicle designed to fly internally in the MV-22 Osprey and CV-22 (Air Force) tilt-rotor aircraft. Also capable of flying in the CH-53 and MH-47 (Army) helicopters, and the C-130 and C-5 aircraft, its mission is to support over-the-horizon amphibious operations, irregular warfare and enhanced company operations. The vehicle provides the Marine Air-Ground Task Force commander with a ground vehicle to serve as a high-mobility weapons-capable platform to support a variety of operations such as reconnaissance, raids, tactical recovery of aircraft and personnel, and airfield seizure.

With speeds in excess of 55 mph, this vehicle transports up to four Marines, carries a 2,000-pound payload, is equipped with two high-powered radios and has the ability to mount crew-served weapons such as the M2 .50 cal or Mk-19. The ITV enhances the unit's mission performance and survivability.

The fielding of the ITV to 1st Battalion, 9th Marines comes on the heels of the initial operational capability for the Expeditionary Fire Support System (EFSS). EFSS was fielded March 17 to Bravo Battery, 1st Battalion, 10th Marines in preparation for deployment with the 24th MEU as well. According to FSS officials, the EFSS provides an indirect fire weapons system designed to support the vertical assault element of the Ship to Objective Maneuver force. It is the final leg of the fires triad (High Mobility Artillery Rocket System, Lightweight 155mm Howitzer and

EFSS) and enhances the artillery community's ability to provide fires to supported maneuver units throughout all phases of amphibious and expeditionary operations.

Also specifically designed to fly internally to the MV-22 and additional aircraft, EFSS is comprised of an ITV Prime Mover vehicle, 120mm rifled towed mortar, a family of insensitive munitions, compliant ammunition and an ammunition trailer.

The FSS program office said the EFSS expands the maneuver commander's choices of available fire support in amphibious and expeditionary operations. With a range of eight kilometers, the rifled mortar provides superior range, accuracy, lethality and mobility. An extended-range precision-guided round is being developed that will provide accuracy of less than 20 meters at ranges in excess of 17 kilometers.

"The EFSS and ITV provide the warfighter platforms that are fast, lethal and reliable, and can fit into a V-22," said John Garner, MCSC's Program Manager for FSS. "Marines can now deploy with a larger range of equipment and employment options, making them a more survivable and potent force."

As conceived, the EFSS and ITV directly support the Commandant of the Marine Corps' published *Vision and Strategy 2025* and the Marines' return to their expeditionary roots.

- USMC -

Editors Note: High resolution photos of the EFSS and ITV are available upon request. Additional questions can be submitted to MCSC's Public Affairs Officer, Capt. Geraldine Carey, 703-432-3288.