

Pentagon orders another 2,400 MRAPs

CHICAGO — The U.S. Defense Department is ordering an additional 2,400 mine-resistant, ambush-protected (MRAP) vehicles from three companies, with the largest order for 1,000 of the heavily armored vehicles going to International Military & Government LLC, Warrenville, Ill., a unit of Navistar International Corp.

The new orders for the V-hulled vehicles, which are being used to protect soldiers in Iraq from roadside bombs, have a combined value of \$1.2 billion. The Pentagon has so far ordered 8,800 of the vehicles, and an official told reporters during a Washington briefing that another 6,600 vehicles are expected to be ordered in December.

Steel industry executives recently said that MRAP production was contributing to what one described as “a significant drain on capacity” at steel plate mills. The vehi-

cles also require large quantities of aluminum armor plate.

Along with Navistar, the latest orders went to Force Protection Industries Inc., Ladson, S.C., for 800 vehicles and the York, Pa.-based ground systems division of BAE Systems & Armaments LP for 600 vehicles.

International’s latest orders, valued at \$509 million and to be delivered by the end of April, bring the company’s total MRAP orders to almost 3,000 vehicles, executives said. In the two months since production started the company has delivered 188 vehicles and is on track to produce 500 vehicles a month by February, they said.

“We are leveraging our manufacturing expertise in the commercial truck and engine industry to provide quality, durable military vehicles as fast as possible,” Archie Massicotte, the company’s president, said.

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