



Mine resistant ambush protected vehicles (MRAP) are offloaded from the Military Sealift Command roll-on/roll-off ship USNS Piliilau (T-AKR 304) onto the pier. More than 200 MRAPs were unloaded from Piliilau and are on their way to Iraq and Afghanistan where they will be used to help protect troops from improvised explosion devices.

Team SPAWAR Marks 5,000 M-ATV Integration Milestone

By Lonnie Cowart and Steve Yuhas, Space and Naval Warfare Systems Command Public Affairs

NORTH CHARLESTON, S.C. (NNS) -- Space and Naval Warfare Systems Center Atlantic marked a milestone June 1 by integrating the 5,000 Mine Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) All Terrain Vehicle.

The SSC Atlantic M-ATV integration team installs command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance equipment into the M-ATVs. These vehicles are then shipped to Afghanistan to aid the Soldiers and Marines on their daily patrols. SSC Atlantic is responsible for the prototyping, testing, integration, installation and quality assurance of all advanced C4I equipment on the M-ATVs.

SSC Atlantic has integrated nearly 16,000 MRAP vehicles and 5,000 M-ATVs. More than 8,000 M-ATVs – the next generation of MRAPs – have been authorized. The M-ATV answers an urgent and compelling requirement to protect warfighters with a highly survivable, off-road capable vehicle. The M-ATV mission is for small unit combat operations in highly restricted rural, mountainous and urban environments that include mounted patrols, reconnaissance, security, convoy protection and communications.

Like the MRAP integration, the M-ATV project is truly a team effort involving the vehicle manufacturers, the Defense Contracting Management Agency, industry partners, Marine Corps Systems Command, Army Joint Program Office, Army 841st Transportation Battalion, Military Sealift Command, Air Force 437th and 315th Airlift Wings, for shipping by air, Army Sustainment Logistics Command, Joint Base Charleston, Naval Weapons Station and the Coast Guard.

Since the M-ATV is within the MRAP family of vehicles, it is managed by the MRAP Joint Program Office, with the Marine Corps executing the joint program on behalf of the Navy (lead service).

"What you are doing here is very important to the warfighter," said Brig. Gen. Michael Brogan, commander, Marine Corps Systems Command and Joint Program executive officer, MRAP. "Every time an M-ATV goes outside the wire, it saves lives. The government furnished equipment being integrated at SPAWAR plays a key role in that."

"Because of what you do, our warfighters can execute their mission with confidence in the protection and capability provided by the MRAP vehicles," Capt. Bruce Urbon, SSC Atlantic commanding officer, told the assembled crowd at the SSC Atlantic integration facility. "For this, you should be very proud. I know that I am proud of the whole team."

Pentagon records indicate that improvised explosive devices, also known as improvised explosive devices (IEDs), are not only the top killer of NATO forces in Afghanistan, but remain the top strategy of Taliban and insurgent forces opposed to the military effort in that country. IEDs are also a favorite with terrorists and resistance fighters in Iraq and it is part of the SPAWAR mission to ensure that America is not only out-fighting, but out-thinking the enemy.

At the start of operations in Iraq and Afghanistan casualties due to IEDs were sufficient to change the tone on the battlefield, according to Gen. George Casey, U.S. Army chief of staff. Today, IED casualties are down more than 65 percent in Iraq and though increasing in Afghanistan due to increased military activity. The addition of SPAWAR technology will make these vehicles not only tough, but smart.

Team SPAWAR is committed to responding to battlefield threats as they develop and to bring the best technology to the nation's warfighters.

The completion of the 5,000th M-ATV just days before the nation honors the sacrifice of all of veterans Memorial Day makes the debut all the more special. It is SPAWAR's mission to develop the best tools for our warfighter and both the MRAP and the M-ATV vehicle modifications go a long way to creating battlefield superiority for Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Coast Guard, and Marines.

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