

U.S. Orders 1,200 MRAPs

By KRIS OSBORN

The U.S. Marines have ordered 1,200 Mine Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) vehicles from International Military and Government, company officials said. The \$623 million purchase is the largest to date in a joint program that has since 2003 ordered roughly 1,700 of the armored vehicles and is slated to order a total of 23,200 by 2010.

The firm, a subsidiary of Navistar International, was one of nine vehicle makers asked by Marine Corps Systems Command to deliver test vehicles in January.

Navistar officials say they heard of the deal from the offices of Mississippi members of Congress, including Sen. Trent Lott, R-Miss, and Rep. Roger Wicker, R-Miss.

“We have not been officially notified yet, but congressional delegations are rarely wrong on these matters,” said Roy Wiley, spokesman for Navistar International. “We did extremely well during the tests, and we are extremely pleased.”

The engines will be made in Melrose Park, Ill., the chassis in Garland, Texas, and final assembly with armor in West Point, Miss., Wiley said.

Systems Command officials declined to comment.