U.S. Marine Corps Selects Lockheed Martin To Build Lightweight Prime Mover Truck For New Howitzer

The United States Marine Corps has awarded Lockheed Martin [NYSE: LMT] a contract to manufacture Lightweight Prime Mover (LWPM) trucks to tow the new M777 155-mm lightweight artillery howitzer.

The $2.1 million Low-Rate Initial Production (LRIP) contract is for four vehicles. Under the contract, the Marine Corps has the option for full-rate production of 120 LWPM vehicles, which represents a potential value of approximately $30 million.

"Lockheed Martin will provide the Marines with a safe, proven and survivable truck that will support the Corps' high mobility needs and meet their demanding expeditionary requirements," said Louis J. DeSantis, vice president and general manager, Integrated Products at Lockheed Martin Systems Integration -- Owego. "Our LWPM assembly line will start work immediately so we can deliver these stronger, safer trucks as quickly as possible."

Lockheed Martin's LM4x4 truck will serve as the LWPM. Built on the proven High Mobility Transport (HMT) design, the LM4x4 provides a superior weight-to- payload ratio, enabling the approximately 9,000-pound vehicle to easily tow the 10,000-pound M777 howitzer. The LM4x4's all-terrain capability allows it to keep pace with armored vehicles and it is air-transportable inside the C- 130 Hercules tactical transport aircraft. The vehicle also can be externally carried by CH-53 and CH-47 helicopters, and the V-22 tilt-rotor aircraft.

The LM4x4 has been engineered to accept applique armor, significantly improving troop safety and survivability. The vehicle also features rollover protection and fording capabilities, and a central tire inflation system that automatically adjusts air pressure to terrain and payload needs.

The Marine Corps contract is Lockheed Martin's third significant achievement in the military truck market this year. The company announced in late January that it had acquired HMT Vehicles Limited, a United Kingdom-based developer of designs for military vehicles and the designers of the platform the LM4x4 is based on. Lockheed Martin plans on incorporating HMT's designs into its U.S. programs such as the LWPM and the Army's Future Tactical Truck System (FTTS).

Lockheed Martin also announced in early February that it had been selected to build an LM4x4 technology demonstration utility vehicle for the second phase of the U.S. Army's FTTS Advanced Concept Technology Demonstration. The company will deliver the vehicle to the Army this fall and the truck will then undergo a Platform Systems Demonstration and a Military User Assessment. The results of these evaluations will be used to refine the requirements for the next generation of tactical wheeled vehicles.

Headquartered in Bethesda, Md., Lockheed Martin employs about 135,000 people worldwide and is principally engaged in the research, design, development, manufacture, integration and sustainment of advanced technology systems, products and services.

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