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# Inspector General to Investigate Allegations of MRAP Delays

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WASHINGTON, Feb. 27, 2008 – An independent group will investigate allegations that ‘gross mismanagement’ by the Marines Corps deprived its frontline force of blast-resistant vehicles that could have saved troops’ lives.

The Marine Corps has requested the Defense Department Inspector General’s Office take a closer look at claims in a report written by a civilian employee of the Corps who charged, among other allegations, that the Marines delayed an urgent wartime request for mine-resistant ambush-protected vehicles in 2005.

“Because of the serious nature of the allegations, the Marine Corps leadership felt that bringing in an independent third party to hopefully resolve this issue was the best course of action,” Corps Spokesman Marine Col. David Lapan said in an interview today.

The mismanagement claims came to light Feb. 15 when a leaked copy of the report by Franz Gayl, an employee in the Plans, Policies and Operations Department of Headquarters Marine Corps, was published by the Associated Press.

Gayl alleged in the report that an Urgent Universal Needs Statement, an expedited wartime request controlled by the Marine Corps combat development command at Marine Corps Base Quantico, was largely ignored in the thick of acquisition bureaucracy.

“If the mass procurement and fielding of MRAPs had begun in 2005 in response to the known and acknowledged threats at that time, as the USMC is doing today, hundreds of deaths and injuries could have been prevented,” Gayl writes in the report dated Jan. 22. “The urgency of the request to (Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff) was unmistakable.”

Marine officials have said Gayl's 145-page report was conducted without knowledge of leadership at Marine Corps Headquarters.

"(Gayl) had expressed interest in doing this, his supervisors agreed that this might be a good way for to take some of his concerns, put some academic rigor to it, substantiate some of these claims -- if he could -- and then once his supervisors took a look at what he put together, determine, 'OK, does this now rise to a level where we take this outside of our section and alert other parts of the Marine Corps about what he's found?'" Lapan said.

The Corps is awaiting the IG's judgment before making a determination about the findings. In the meantime, Lapan said, the Marine Corps is not dismissing Gayl's report.

"The end result is, are there ways that we can make things better?" Lapan said. "Not saying (Gayl's) work did do that or didn't do that -- that remains to be seen. But we are not dismissing the work at all."