

New generators assure major fuel savings

By Josh Davidson

The U.S. Army will soon produce and deploy its next generation of tactical generators to Afghanistan, a move expected to save 300,000 gallons of fuel each month.

The green light for the Advanced Medium Mobile Power Sources program came in a July 20 full rate production decision by BG N. Lee S. Price, program executive officer for Command, Control and Communications-Tactical coupled with a full materiel release decision by MG Randolph P. Strong, commanding general of the Communications-Electronics Command. Production began immediately, with the first units expected to arrive in Afghanistan in November.

Consuming less fuel on the battlefield will require fewer supply convoys to transport fuel to remote areas. Because these convoys are a frequent target for roadside bombs and other enemy attacks, fewer tankers and fewer trips could reduce the risk faced by Soldiers transporting that fuel.

"Power is the lifeblood of the networked systems our Soldiers rely on to communicate critical information across the battlefield," BG Price said. "As those systems multiply in number and capability, the demand for power follows -- increasing the need for more efficient ways of generating, storing and distributing energy. The AMMPS family of generators answers that call. The most important factor is the number of Soldiers who will not be placed in harm's way having to transport that fuel."

Ranging in size from 5 kilowatts to 60 kW, AMMPS are 21 percent more fuel-efficient on average than the tactical quiet generators currently deployed to Afghanistan. They also feature size and weight reductions. During a wartime operations tempo, a 15 kW AMMPS generator pays for itself in fuel savings alone in nine months.

The new generators, fielded by the Project Manager for Mobile Electric Power, enter the production and deployment phase at a key moment for the Army's operational energy strategy. The service, which accounts for 21 percent of the Department of Defense's fuel and power consumption, is aggressively pursuing ways to reduce its energy footprint while ensuring Soldiers' power needs are met.

The AMMPS program is a highlight of these efforts, Chiarelli said, along with the implementation of microgrids that more efficiently distribute power. The service is also leveraging

energy from fuel cells, wind, solar and other renewable energy sources.

"This is a great day for PM MEP, the Army and our Soldiers," said Paul Richard, acting project manager for Mobile Electric Power. "Not only will AMMPS provide a significant monthly fuel savings, they will also reduce the exposure of our Soldiers to the dangers of improvised explosive device attacks on supply convoys."

AMMPS also feature digital control screens in place of dials, extra cooling fans, and standardization between units of different sizes to simplify maintenance.

"These power sources will significantly improve the quality of life for our Soldiers in the field, as well as the Army's ability to successfully conduct its missions," said LTC Michael E. Foster, PM MEP's product manager for Medium Power Sources.

PM MEP, part of the Army's Program Executive Office Command, Control and Communications - Tactical, provides standardized tactical electric power capabilities to the Department of Defense and environmental control capabilities to the Army. Therefore, Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines deployed worldwide will also receive the fuel and manpower savings associated with the AMMPS generators as they are procured and fielded throughout the other services. In 2009, PM MEP was awarded the David Packard Award for Acquisition Excellence, the highest acquisition award in the DoD.

The PEO C3T provides Soldiers with the computer systems, radios and communications networks they require to succeed in full-spectrum operations. The organization develops, acquires and fields to all Army units a range of products including specialized software applications, generators, radios, computers, servers and communications systems; and integrates these and other systems together so they function seamlessly; while providing on-site training and support for these systems deployed worldwide.

Josh Davidson is a graduate of The College of New Jersey (formerly Trenton State College), in Ewing, N.J. Prior to becoming a government civilian strategic communications representative with PEO C3T, he was an investigative, music, sports and municipal journalist with numerous publications including Gannett Newspapers. He has interviewed GEN (Ret) David Petraeus, GEN Kevin Chilton, and GEN Ann Dunwoody. He has covered numerous tests, exercises and events related to Army satellite communications systems and applications.