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Bulldog[®]



**Mack[®] Back in
Military Market**

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Mack® Back In Military Market



The Bulldog got its name during a time of war. Now a truck famous for its rugged durability is returning to service.

Mack® trucks has honorably served the armed forces of several countries with dedicated vehicles. In 1955, the Mack M125 model became the Army's 10-ton prime mover, providing decades of support to the military. In 2005, Mack President and CEO Paul L. Vikner suggested the company should re-enter the military-vehicle market, a place it had occupied with acclaim since 1911.

To that end, Mack is continuing the tradition of service by creating the M915 prototype, a new generation of military line-haul vehicles.

Built on the Granite® platform, the M915 features a 480 HP MP8 non-EGR engine. The power unit is compatible with the military's high sulfur jet fuel (JP8) and can produce 1,800 lb.-ft. of torque. The unit is outfitted with a Mack PowerLeash™ engine brake, Allison® HD 4560 6-speed automatic transmission with a Mack 6-rod tandem spring suspension. The cab is welded galvanized steel with an optional armor kit. Safety and communications systems include Hawker® Armasafe Plus batteries with battery disconnect switch, GuardDog® active maintenance monitor system, Mack Road Connect™ communications system with GPS, LED blackout lighting and an Eaton® VORAD® collision warning system. Central Tire Inflation (CTI) system is an option. The truck has a range of 695 miles.

The M915 is the newest member of an all-American family that includes 6x4 vehicles for hauling tankers, flatbed and lowboy trailers and 6x6 versions that can handle large construction equipment. The trucks will be assembled in Macungie, Pennsylvania, with engines manufactured in Hagerstown, Maryland.

While Mack provides the vehicle, its partners, Forschler & Associates and VSE Corporation in Alexandria, Virginia, have provided many of the military adaptations.

Last year Mack built two prototypes of the M915. This year the company intends to bid for an Army contract. The Army's total inventory of these types of vehicles is about 12,000.

With wars in Iraq and Afghanistan generating a need for safe, reliable transportation, Mack is re-entering the market at the right time, according to Ron Rajskey, vice president of government sales with the Mack Military Group.

"We are very excited about the opportunity to support our troops in supplying the military with the best solutions in transportation," he said. "The M915 combines a rugged, durable vehicle with state-of-the-art crew protection and fire suppression systems."



To build a vehicle capable of both on- and off-road use, Mack started with the Granite® model construction chassis, incorporating 46,000 lb. Meritor® tandem rear axles and a Mack 6-rod tandem spring suspension. Despite the extreme temperatures in which the trucks operate, ranging from 135 degrees Fahrenheit in the deserts of Iraq to 20 below in the mountains of Afghanistan, Mack engineers needed only a slight modification for cold climates — a diesel pre-heater for quick starts. Granite's cooling system was already equipped to deal with the stress, since Mack already builds commercial vehicles for South America and the Middle East.

While the M915 rides on a tried-and-true platform, it's the crew protection system that makes it ideal for the military, according to Harold Welsh, director of engineering for government sales at Mack World Headquarters in Allentown, Pennsylvania.

“Historically these kinds of trucks were designed to haul supplies to the front line. They were not designed to go into battle. But now that they are used in places like Iraq where there are improvised explosive devices and no front lines, the Military needs armored line-haul vehicles.”

One of the most important features of the M915 is crew protection. The cab is built from layers of hardened steel and aluminum, special ceramics and fabrics. Even the 3-inch-thick glass is armored. The Military requires a fire

suppression system with heat and infrared detectors that can automatically extinguish a fire while allowing the crew to breathe. Mack also uses fuel tanks that are coated with fire-suppressant material.

The Army has several other requirements that make the Mack product ideal for service, Welsh said. The truck must start on a 20 percent grade and achieve cruising speeds of more than 65 miles an hour. The M915 is compatible with JP8, the same fuel the Military uses to power its jet helicopters.

The vehicle also has to have dual voltage, 12-volt for lighting and 24-volt for operations such as starting the vehicle and running military accessories that include chemical agent alarms and sensors. The Army will mount all security-sensitive equipment like the chemical sensors.

Mack has devised two systems that deal specifically with the harsh conditions soldiers face on the modern battlefield. The first is a front axle with sealed wheel bearings rated at 14,600 lb. The second is a pre-cleaner that blows dust from the air intake before it gets through the ductwork to the filter.

But the biggest advantage of M915 is its ability to get troops out of danger quickly.

“The soldiers say speed equals safety,” Welsh said. “They just put the pedal to the metal and go.”