



MSA Secures \$17 Million Army Contract for Protective Helmets

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Safety Equipment Manufacturer to Add Jobs in Pittsburgh and Vermont

PITTSBURGH, Feb. 18 /PRNewswire-FirstCall/ -- Mine Safety Appliances Company (Amex: MSA) today announced it has secured a \$16.8 million contract from the U.S. Army to produce 50,000 protective helmets that represent the next generation in military head protection. The award follows a \$33.8 million contract with the Army, which was announced in January. Over the past four months, MSA has secured three contracts with the Army totaling more than \$78 million and covering production of more than 230,000 helmets.

With the overall increase in helmet production, MSA said it would be expanding employment at manufacturing sites in Murrysville, Pa. (near Pittsburgh) and in Newport, Vt. Until recently, the company's Newport facility, which has added more than 50 jobs over the past 12 months, had been the only manufacturing site for helmet production. Ronald Herring, vice president and general manager of MSA's Safety Products Division, said the company expects to add up to 70 manufacturing positions in Murrysville and as many as 20 new positions in Vermont.

"We're very proud of and pleased with the confidence the U.S. Army has demonstrated in MSA by once again expanding the scope of our helmet contract business," Mr. Herring said. "What is equally exciting to us is the prospect to being able to bring many new jobs to this region and to Vermont. Throughout our 90 years in business, MSA's mission of protecting people's health and safety has been intertwined with the needs of our nation's military. As a longstanding manufacturer and employer in this region, we welcome the opportunity to help protect America's men and women in uniform."

The helmet to be manufactured under the contract, known as the Advanced Combat Helmet (ACH), incorporates a new, lightweight design that offers soldiers considerably more protection with greater comfort and stability. The ACH has been credited with saving several lives in recent military actions in Iraq and Afghanistan. The increase in helmet production will enable the U.S. armed services to provide the helmets to a broader range of military personnel.

The ACH provides advanced ballistic protection while allowing maximum sensory awareness for the user, which includes unobstructed field of view and ambient hearing capabilities. It also allows mounting of night vision devices and integration with respiratory protective equipment. The helmet's retention and suspension system gives maximum balance, stability and comfort, while providing the proper size, fit and ventilation.

In January, the MSA helmet was judged by the Army to be among the greatest inventions of 2002 based on evaluations conducted by six active Army Divisions and the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command. After reviewing more than 30 nominated products, evaluators provided their ranked list to U.S. Army Research, Development and Engineering Command for consolidation into a list of 10 top inventions, which included the MSA helmet.

Established in 1914, MSA is the world's leading provider of quality products and services that protect people's health and safety and the environment. The company has annual sales of \$650 million, manufacturing operations throughout the United States and Europe and 28 international affiliates. Since the company's founding, MSA products for the military have been used in two world wars, as well as Korea, Vietnam the Gulf War, Afghanistan and Iraq.

SOURCE Mine Safety Appliances Company