

Marines seek probe into MRAPs delay

by UPI

WASHINGTON -- The U.S. Marine Corps said it wants another review into allegations troops died because of delays in getting tougher transport vehicles called MRAPs to Iraq. The Marines have asked the Defense Department's Inspector General's Office to examine the allegations made by a civilian corps employee, Franz Gayl, who said in a report last month that a 2005 request for the beefed-up armored vehicles got waylaid, Stars and Stripes reported on its Web site Monday. Gayle charges that corps officials rejected the request for the Mine Resistant Ambush Protected vehicles -- MRAPs -- because of funding concerns and their lack of technical expertise about the equipment. Documents he cites, however -- while referring to funding concerns -- do not state flatly financial considerations were behind the denial, the military newspaper reported. Deaths from roadside bombs could have been reduced by 50 percent had the request been approved, Gayle alleges in his report, using statistics from the Web site www.icasualties.org. A Marine Corps spokesman said the Naval Audit Service has already reviewed the procurement procedure and the corps has started improving the process. Because of the seriousness of the allegations, Maj. Jay Delarosa said, the "additional step" of seeking a DOD inspector general review was requested. The inspector general's office received a letter from the corps dated Feb. 20, said spokesman Gary Comerford.

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