

America's Defenders

ATVs Roll From The Farm Field To The Battlefield

(NAPSA)—Since the 1980s, millions of Americans have used all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) for all kinds of work and recreational activities. From planting to plowing and hauling to towing, ATVs have been a steady companion to farmers, hunters, landscapers and anyone else who needs to move people or supplies from point A to point B.

Likewise, millions of people have found the fun and freedom that go hand-in-hand with riding ATVs. As a recreational vehicle, they're great for trail riding and getting away from the stresses of everyday life.

In addition to all their current uses, ATVs recently took on a whole new role. The search-and-destroy missions being carried out in the mountains of Afghanistan have caused Allied Forces to adapt their transportation systems to some of the world's most rugged and unpredictable terrain. Now, the same ATVs Americans have used for decades are being used in the war on terrorism.

"The ATV has taken us off the roads and out of the deserts and enabled us to get into the mountains where the enemy in Afghanistan is hiding," said Special Operations expert and former Airborne Ranger, Gary Linderer. "The Army has always looked for ways to enable troops to cover a lot of ground and open terrain."

ATVs are practically tailor-made for navigating the rugged terrain of Afghanistan, giving American troops quicker and more reliable ways to search for Taliban and Al Qaeda forces from cave to cave. Nearly 100 Polaris ATVs have been shipped overseas for military use since the Sept. 11 attacks. The latest Polaris machine to be tapped by the U.S. military for support in Operation Enduring Freedom is the Sportsman 700 Twin. Each vehicle is outfitted with military gear at a central staging area in the U.S. before being deployed to Afghanistan.

Compared to mules and horses, which are commonly used to climb the narrow, rocky mountain trails of Afghanistan, the Polaris Sportsman 700 Twin, *ATV Magazine's* "ATV of the Year," is a powerhouse, able to cover the harsh terrain with speed and agility. With the largest



The U.S. military now uses all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) in Operation Enduring Freedom.

displacement engine of any 4x4, its suspension and high ground clearance make it an ideal vehicle for the unforgiving topography.

"We've been developing better and stronger ATVs since 1985, and it's good to know our machines are contributing to the war effort," said Bennett Morgan, general manager, Polaris ATV division. "Our products have always been ideal for hunters and farmers, but we're very proud to know the military is using them with great success in Afghanistan."

Throughout time, armies have constantly strived to find the best, most versatile vehicles for battlefields, reconnaissance missions and transporting troops and supplies where they're needed, and U.S. war vehicles have undergone a drastic evolution. Pack animals were used in the Spanish American War, bicycles in World War I and motorcycles in World War II.

"The military likes ATVs because of the vehicle's durability and its ability to negotiate rough terrain and get around in narrow areas. The ATV is probably the ultimate step in the military's evolving options for one-man transportation vehicles," Linderer said. "Outside of individual flying machines, I can't imagine anything better for going where man was not designed to go."

The ATVs being used by the military are the same models millions of Americans ride at home, on the farm and out on the trail. Beyond ATVs, the U.S. government also has used Polaris watercraft and snowmobiles for military training exercises and homeland security initiatives since the September 11 attacks.