

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### Retired military truck gets new lease on life with Hidalgo Fire Department

**April 14, 2016 – HIDALGO, Texas** – A new coat of paint and some feature conversions by the Hidalgo Fire Department have repurposed a 5-ton military truck into a new fire response vehicle.

The Hidalgo FD received the military cargo truck through the Department of Defense Firefighter Property Program, which sends retired military vehicles into the hands of volunteer fire departments. The five-ton 1990 BMY military cargo truck was stripped of its camouflage paint and outfitted with a 300-gallon water tank, pump, 10-gallon foam tank and a fresh coat of bright fire-engine-red paint.

“We painted the vehicle red and black,” explained Chief Robert Rojas of the Hidalgo FD. “The painting was done by one of our firefighters.”

The truck has four-wheel drive, power steering and an automatic transmission. It is expected to bring better safety and efficiency to the department as a multi-purpose unit.

“We have Las Palomas Wildlife Management Area and the Santa Ana National Wildlife Refuge in our service area,” said Chief Rojas. “This vehicle will allow us to get into these wildlife areas in case of a grass fire.”

The truck is also expected to be helpful during hurricane season, when tropical storms bring flooding to the area.

Launched in Texas in 2005, the U.S. Forest Service and Texas A&M Forest Service administer the no-cost program that transfers the military property.

The Texas A&M Forest Service picks up the vehicles from military bases around the country and their in-house mechanics inspect the vehicles for any major issues. Once the department obtains the title to the vehicle, it is theirs and they must use local funds for converting it for firefighting use and maintenance. Fundraising and donations are important to helping the departments make these changes and repairs.

For more information on this and other fire department assistance programs offered by Texas A&M Forest Service, visit <http://texasfd.com>.

