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 Organisation

Threads

NEWSLETTER

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DEFENCE CLOTHING AND EQUIPMENT NEWSLETTER FOR INDUSTRY

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Brigadier Mike Phelps, AM
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MERRY CHRISTMAS AND FAREWELL FROM BRIGADIER MIKE PHELPS

This year has been extremely busy and successful and I would like to take this opportunity to pass on my thanks to you, our suppliers, for your part in assisting Integrated Soldier Systems Branch (ISSB) to deliver quality clothing, personal equipment and armaments to the Australian Defence Force (ADF). Your significant involvement in assisting ISSB in delivering this capability is to be commended and I ask that you pass on my thanks to your staff.

We have reason to celebrate with many great successes throughout 2012, with the delivery of ballistic glasses and the F88SA2 variant of the Steyr rifle to units, and the establishment of contracts for the manufacture and supply of Australian Multicam Pattern uniforms and the slouch hat to name just a few. Another significant outcome for the branch was the latest Industry Forum held in October. The forum was a great success and we have

received lots of positive feedback through responses to our survey. Every suggestion from you will help us to focus presentation content for future forums. Of course, we welcome feedback at any time of the year, so keep the suggestions coming.

Hosting the forum in conjunction with the Land Warfare Conference (LWC) enabled my staff and I to view many of the great products on display from industry. The LWC is designed to enable industry to meet, present and exchange ideas with Defence. We certainly saw a lot of new capabilities and products on display.

As we approach a new year I too approach a new beginning. As I advised at the forum, I anticipate leaving the Army early next year. The creation of ISSB and Diggerworks, the strengthened relationship that now exists between my branch and yourselves, and the significantly improved clothing and equipment that is being used by service personnel are things I will reflect upon as key career achievements. I trust that you will continue to engage positively with my successor, Brigadier Simon Welsh, who is returning to the branch after a three year absence.

Once again, I thank you all for your efforts throughout what has been an extremely busy year, and I wish you all a safe and enjoyable holiday season.



DIGGERWORKS INTEGRATED SOLUTIONS



Colonel Jason Blain
Director Integrated Soldier Systems Development Directorate (Diggerworks)

Diggerworks exists to identify options for the delivery of integrated solutions for the ADF. It also helps the Defence Materiel Organisation (DMO) to provide equipment that enhances the capability of the close combatant. Over the last two years, Diggerworks has trialled a range of equipment with our troops on the ground. This includes a new Tiered Body Armour System (TBAS) that is lighter and allows for increased mobility, as well as the Pelvic Protection System that protects troops from the high velocity dirt and fine debris caused by Improvised Explosive Devices.

Diggerworks has a range of other projects in the pipeline. Here's a glimpse of a system that we are currently trialling in Afghanistan.

BLAST GAUGE SYSTEM

In November last year, Diggerworks was requested to investigate a blast sensor capability that could be used to record the severity of exposure and impact during a combat-related blast event or explosion.

This system is made up of three blast gauges designed to be worn on the outside of a soldier's helmet, on their non-firing shoulder and on their chest. These blast gauges are being fitted to soldiers patrolling throughout Afghanistan to

gather data that will help medics to treat soldiers injured by blasts. The system collects data on blast events to build a clearer picture of what actually happened.

Diggerworks is currently conducting an in-theatre trial collecting data for analysis which will assist commanders and medical staff in supporting the treatment of soldiers.

Diggerworks has recently begun the roll-out of blast gauges and plans to issue around 3300 sets to soldiers over the next 12 months.

Diggerworks continues to trial improvements to equipment for close combatant soldiers in order to better inform future requirements for the ADF. Developing the Soldier Combat Ensemble and further soldier support systems remains the team's highest priority.

As for the immediate future, I will be departing Diggerworks and the DMO at the end of 2012 and Colonel Mark Jennings will be taking over as Director Diggerworks. I am sure you will all get the opportunity to meet him at the next Industry Forum, if not before.

To learn more about the activities Diggerworks currently has underway, email diggerworks@defence.gov.au



NEW QUALITY ASSURANCE GIVES YOU MORE CERTAINTY

Clothing Systems Program Office has recently introduced a new set of Quality Assurance (QA) clauses for use in all upcoming standing offers and contracts.

It was recognised that Defence suppliers were already conducting a number of QA processes, including testing and inspection of fabric, components and garments. These processes could provide test reports and other data that was of benefit to Defence without imposing undue cost on those suppliers. After consultation with industry, some suppliers kindly provided examples of the QA processes they have previously followed when supplying to other customers; parts of these processes were incorporated into the final version of the clauses.

These new clauses give Defence suppliers more certainty about what is expected in each standing offer or contract in terms of quality control, and also means that a separate, more time-consuming QA process can be avoided (such as creating a unique Quality Plan for each standing offer or contract). Monitoring costs are also kept to a minimum for both parties. However, tenderers always have the opportunity to offer an alternative QA process within their tender response, for consideration by the Commonwealth. Tenderers are also able to discuss alternatives with the Commonwealth within Deed or Contract negotiations, if they are selected as preferred tenderer.

Comments from Industry Attendees on the October Forum:

"Keep up the great work of engaging with Australian Industry"
– Australian Industry and Defence Network

"This is another area of best practice within Defence, well done. Keep the forum going, it is a great initiative" – DIISR

"I thought the idea of having short presentations from industry and other groups was excellent" – KORD Defence

SOLDIER MODERNISATION SYSTEMS PROGRAM OFFICE (SMSPO)



Mr Marcus Smith
*Director Soldier
Modernisation Systems
Program Office*

2012 has been an extremely busy and challenging year for all in SMSPO. Whilst support for operations has been ongoing, there has also been considerable effort in supporting our personnel in Australia to enable our deployed forces to maintain their high operational tempo. A number of products were re-visited in 2012 and

a range of new generation combat protection systems were rolled out. From the new recruit through to our servicemen and women on active duty, the ADF's equipment needs have been scoped and new requirements met. This is largely through the excellent service and support provided to Defence by you, our industry partners.

A key activity of the year was the release of a number of tenders related to Project Land 125 Phase 3B. These tenders will shape the future of our Load Carriage and Body Armour capabilities, and will take the latest technology to a new level for our next generation of soldiers. Coupled with this has been an extensive

program of helmet refurbishment and upgrades, together with the procurement of a new helmet to be used by our forces in the Middle East.

The revised Defence budget has been a challenge for all and the efforts of industry in working with us to balance the fiscal realities against the operational needs are greatly appreciated.

Australian forces have an enviable reputation throughout the world as some of the most highly trained and best equipped troops, which is only achieved with the support of industry to upgrade and replace ADF equipment. Thank you and see you all in 2013!

SMALL ARMS AND DIRECT FIRE SUPPORT WEAPONS - SAFETY AND SUITABILITY FOR SERVICE TESTING: WHY, WHERE AND WHAT

Product testing is conducted by Defence to support product acceptance activities ensuring equipment meets Army's user requirements. Safety and Suitability for Service testing, commonly called S3 testing, is conducted by Armaments SPO to support the introduction of new weapons, optics and ammunition into service. Testing is an important element of the risk assessment process needed to safeguard the health and safety of operators. It is used to assist in developing the maintenance regime and associated instructions that will establish safe firing limits.

Land Systems Division conducts S3 testing on small arms and direct fire support weapons up to .50 cal and larger calibre weapons including high explosive munitions.

Recent examples of S3 testing include:

- Assessing the safety and reliability of a short barrel on the HK417 Marksman rifle
- Confirming a new stock on the 870P shotgun meets the operator's requirements

- Ensuring operator safety and weapon integrity of the HK416 rifle using Mk262 long range ammunition; and
- Informing maintenance regime and support certification and clearance of the M3M .50 cal machine gun on the Seahawk helicopter.

This rigorous testing identifies the risks and allows warnings to be formulated for all operator manuals and maintenance instructions.

There have been instances where the use of equipment has been restricted or modified due to incidents which occurred during testing. S3 testing ensures these incidents occur in a controlled environment where adverse effects and consequences are limited.

Armaments SPO is always keen to hear from industry about any cost-saving measures, so please feel free to contact myself or another member of the team at any time with suggestions and feedback.

Tim Eftymiou
*Chief Engineer
Armaments Systems Program Office
(Land Engineering Agency)*

