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USAF Live, Virtual, Constructive Readiness

Primary US Air Force themes at I/ITSEC 2013 will include a focus on assuring service readiness through the application of blended Live, Virtual and Constructive (LVC) technologies.

One of the key Air Force organizations supporting this "Readiness Through LVC" vision is the Air Force Agency for Modeling and Simulation (AFAMS), a field operating agency of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations, Plans and Requirements, Headquarters, U.S. Air Force. The agency is located in Orlando's Central Florida Research Park, together with other Department of Defense, Joint Service, contractor, and educational organizations focused on modeling and simulation. AFAMS proximity to these other agencies offers the Air Force the maximum leverage and advantage of the developing programs and technologies to enhance the Air Force's ability to provide ready forces.

As outlined by AFAMS representatives, positioning the United States Air Force for future service to its country and allies has caused senior leadership to focus on the viability of current training regimens/programs/processes to adequately fulfill service readiness requirements. The result has been a growing service embrace of LVC technologies.

The last several years have shown that US Air Force organizations and officials are resolute in their collective determination and vision to implement more LVC platforms and robust, concurrent simulators, supported in part by two underlying factors: fast moving technological improvements – aircraft as well as simulator; and the need for increased fiscal stewardship due to extreme fiscal constraints.

The Air Force is presently investigating enterprise level LVC integration as a potential solution to those current challenges while simultaneously reducing "stove-piped" operations across the entire mission spectrum.

Although much of that examination is still ongoing, the service has made great strides in enhancing the readiness of its airmen and allies across the entire mission spectrum through its LVC implementation across myriad programs.

A few of the many global implementation examples include: the Distributed Mission Operations Center (DMOC), Distributed Mission Operations Center-Space (DMOC-S), Distributed Mission Operations Center – Cyber (DMOC-C), the Air National Guard's Distributed Training Operations Center (DTOC), Pacific Air Force/Korea Air Simulation Center (KASC), and US Air Force Europe/Air Force Africa's Warrior Preparation Center (WPC), a "frontier" Distributed Training Center that continues to forge critical paths toward integrated combat training with coalition partners.

As each of these success stories continues to unfold, AFAMS has also embarked on a "mission," referred to as the Air Force Continuous Operational Training Environment (AFCOTE), which is

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Third Time Still the Charm for Heartwood

After two years of sharing an exhibit with other companies, 2013 marks the third year that Heartwood Inc. (Booth 1807) is exhibiting on its own at I/ITSEC. With a company growth of "approximately 130 percent" over the past year, the company is highlighting its capabilities to deliver 3D operator and maintenance training on a range of mobile and laptop platforms.

"We have specific I/ITSEC successes that have gone from a 'hello' at the booth to a purchase order to an awesome customer testimonial of our capabilities," observed Raj Raheja, Heartwood CEO and co-founder. "In fact, I can point to two recent successes that actually started at I/ITSEC and have now come full circle."

"Last year we met with Oshkosh here at the show," offered Neil Wadhawan, Heartwood VP of marketing and co-founder. "We had some great conversations here and we were under contract with them by March."

"The work involves their HEMTT [Heavy Expanded Mobility Tactical Truck] platform. We started with a pilot program for operator and maintenance training and now it is going to be a series of lessons," Raheja added.

"Three years ago we would hear, 'Do you also do mobile applications? I think I might need that someday,'" he explained. "Now the conversation starts with, 'I hope you're mobile and tablet because we have to have that capability.' And we are. In fact, we have a saying at Heartwood that we are 'mobile and touch first.' Everything we design is designed for touch first and then it can be easily transferred 'backwards' to everything else like PCs."

The company's second recent I/ITSEC success story involves a contract with the U.S. Navy.

"Last year we were just doing a pilot program," Raheja said. "But over the last year it has grown to the point where we have been awarded contracts and are bidding on additional task orders."

"That's just one example of how small businesses can use I/ITSEC to engage directly with the military," Wadhawan added. "It actually happens here. You can actually meet with companies to explore opportunities. They may not be our customers yet but this is a great venue to engage and learn."

"I think that industry in general has moved to a point where there is broad understanding of the need to move beyond traditional training," Raheja concluded. "And we are finding more and more industries coming to I/ITSEC. For example, we had a company come to us about training for electrical safety. I/ITSEC is not just about military and defense. It's a place for all training."

Saab Offers Cohesive Training Solution

Saab Defense and Security (Booth 1939) is using the I/ITSEC 2013 venue for the first ever display of its new Part Task Trainer (PPT) demonstrator simulating a generic Commander and Gunner station mounted on a three degrees of freedom motion system. The PPT is part of Saab's Amoured Fighting Vehicle (AFV) training system.

The system is purpose-designed for individual and collective training of commanders, gunners and drivers, and enables a learning continuum from basic drills up to the transition to limited confirmatory live fire. The system measures a broad range of Key Performance Indicators enabling a training establishment to make informed decisions regarding training progress and also deliver remedial training at the point of need; before minor issues become ingrained training shortcomings that effect more complex scenarios.

"With the need for modularity and open architecture required by most customers today, we have looked at a system that can be assembled to train either individuals or crews by rearranging the parts," explained Pat Wells, program representative at Saab. "So in reality you could take off the handgrips of, for example, a Bradley, and put on the handgrips of an M1 Abrams.

"We have put a lot of effort into this because we have found that we have been delivering bits of training solutions around the world to different customers," he added. "And what we are showing here is that we can bring those pieces together to deliver one integrated cohesive solution that can take a raw recruit – gunner, commander, driver – and be able to train them up to pre-deployment collective training elements.

Saab's development and integration efforts on the new platform reflect the company's down-selection as one of five companies being pushed forward for the UK Ministry of Defence Warrior CSP [Capability Sustainment Program] Training Delivery Program. With a total budget of £80-100 million, it is expected that the "invitation to tender" on the training element will be released in mid-2014 with responses required around the end of next year.

"The delivery for the training part of the Warrior program is around 2018 or 2019 for full capability," Wells said. With the training capability expected to remain in service beyond 2030, he added that the most significant challenges involve software obsolescence and that the company is still working on its software strategy.

"Our key message is about cohesive training," he concluded. "Saab is well known for quality in live fire training and in laser training. We have now added a virtual capability, positioning us to address the full training cycle."