

DSEI 2013: Centre Stage for Soldier Modernisation

Defence and Security Equipment International (DSEI) is the largest integrated defence and security exhibition in the world and is becoming increasingly recognised as a unique venue to showcase the latest developments within the soldier modernisation sector. Hosted at London's ExCeL every two years, DSEI continues to serve as the premier meeting place for global defence and military communities.

Organised by Clarion Events, DSEI 2011 attracted 1,391 exhibiting companies representing 46 countries and included 30 national pavilions, with 28,440 international visitors and 1070 global VIPs in attendance.

Growing market

In March 2013, Visiongain published a report based on its analysis of the global soldier modernisation market, the value of which will reach \$892.6m in 2013. As traditional forms of warfare continue to develop and military operations become more complex in both scope and approach, the modernisation of soldiers in order to combat such changes is an important focus point for both established and emerging markets around the world. Despite the effects of global economic stagnation, defence spending cuts and significant operational withdrawal over the next few years, investment is expected to focus on integrated soldier systems and Soldier Modernisation Programmes (SMPs).

"Soldier modernisation has developed significantly over the last 20 years in an attempt to equip military forces with fully mobile, capable, efficient and advanced systems for combat. Despite delays, cancellations and the restructuring of requirements for many SMPs, the necessity for highly developed and interconnected soldier systems remain. Investment in soldier modernisation will therefore remain strong over the next decade, with greater focus upon improving situational awareness, enhancing communications and connectivity and reducing the overall weight burden by developing more efficient sources of energy supply and new weight distribution equipment," said Richard Gale, a defence analyst at Visiongain.

Expanding Land Capability Zone

Visitors at DSEI 2011 were able to view the entire land systems supply chain, with 700 land-focused companies out of a total

1,391, exhibiting a comprehensive range of innovative products and services.

This year will see the largest Land Capability Zone to date which is evolving to provide even more suppliers, content and diversity. It will include more than 70 dedicated stands featuring leading players in the global industry, ranging from prime contractors to niche specialist suppliers such as BAE Systems, Daimler, General Dynamics, Iveco, Jankel Armouring, JCB, Land Rover, Nexter, Patria, Rheinmetall, Streit Group and Supacat.

The Vehicle Display Area, a new feature introduced at DSEI 2011, attracted 71 per cent of visitors and at this year's event, the area is being expanded and will also be located within the Land Capability Zone, providing both visitors and exhibitors with the perfect platform for networking, building relationships and viewing the latest advances in technology.

Situated within the Land Capability Zone, there will be a dedicated seminar theatre which will showcase everything from capability demonstrations to technological innovations. With high-level speakers debating and discussing key topics and issues, it will provide valuable opportunities to gain insight into the future of the international land sector.

Modernisation on display

Some 1,400 international exhibitors will be on view at DSEI 2013, which will include a number of leading companies displaying and promoting the latest advances in soldier modernisation products and systems.

In April 2013, Harris Corporation was awarded a \$29m order to provide an undisclosed customer in Asia with Falcon III® wideband tactical radios. The radios will provide that country's military forces with critical country-wide data communications and improved mission capabilities as part of an overall modernisation effort.

"Our RF-7800H and RF-7800W radios will enable these armed forces to operate with more detailed situational awareness than previous generations of radios," said Brendan O'Connell, president, international business unit at Harris RF Communications.

Harris is supplying their new RF-7800H high-frequency wideband manpack and RF-7800W high-capacity line-of-sight radios. The new RF-7800H is the world's first HF radio with high-speed wideband data capabilities. These advanced capabilities will allow

- ▶ operators to efficiently transmit large data files, such as images, over very long range beyond-line-of-sight links. The radio is 20 percent smaller and lighter and offers data rates that are 10 times greater than other HF radios. In addition to this latest order, Harris' Falcon III is also supporting the next generation of radios for the US military's Joint Tactical Radio System requirements, as well as network-centric operations worldwide.

Front-line capability

The French exhibitor, METRAVIB, is maintaining monthly deliveries of its PILARw systems to front-line Special Forces and mechanised infantry operations in Afghanistan.

The combat proven systems have seen service in Afghanistan with the armed forces of Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Norway, Poland and the USA with more than 1,000 systems sold to date to 25 countries.

The PILARw system uses the sound waves generated by the firing of small arms, rocket propelled grenades and mortars to detect and accurately identify their location in real time. The PILARw screen displays a precise origin of the enemy fire.

Due to its real-time detection and localisation process, the PILARw system can be deployed in a wide variety of assignments, particularly to increase soldier capabilities as well as protecting temporary or permanent zones, such as military bases, checkpoints and borders.

The system has two principal applications: ground-level deployment, and moving vehicles with the mobile on-board version. However, the PILARw system has been adapted and new versions have recently become available for use on other platforms such as ships, helicopters and unmanned aerial vehicles.

MOD partner with industry

In March 2013, the UK's Defence Equipment & Support (DE&S) hosted senior Army officers, technology developers and industry

representatives to evaluate the latest phase of work conducted by DE&S and a Qioptiq-led consortium, including QinetiQ and BAE Systems Advanced Technology Centre (all DSEI exhibitors), to review the potential military use of new digital and optical technology.

The research includes a project known as the Digital Optical Weapons Technology Sight, which aims to provide operators of support weapons with a reliable and up-to-the-second picture of the battlefield. Another element is the Support Weapon Remote View Optic, developed by Qioptiq and Istec. This displays the weapon sight picture on a screen mounted to the side, which allows Commanders to have the same view as the gunner and to rapidly switch from day to night and thermal vision.

Other project capabilities include clip-on thermal imagers for night vision goggles, which allow the dismounted soldier to see in total darkness, with variable brightness for the full range of conditions. Lightweight and waterproof, the imagers can operate for four and a half hours with just a single AA battery.

"Although it's clear that traditional national defence markets continue to face challenges with limited growth potential, it's equally apparent that many emerging markets around the world will be upgrading their armed forces to respond to operational demands. With its international stage, DSEI is able to attract a wide spectrum of industry expertise, ranging from large primes to small enterprises, covering the latest advances in soldier modernisation. With over 1000 global VIPs and some 30,000 visitors expected at DSEI 2013, exhibitors and visitors can network within a true global context and discuss key trends in this fast-changing sector," said DSEI Exhibition Director, Duncan Reid. ■

DSEI will be held at ExCeL London from 10-13 September 2013. www.dsei.co.uk.

