

News Release

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ASSISTED ENGAGEMENT FOR SOLDIERS COULD BE A GAME CHANGER

A four-year research programme carried out by Cohort plc company SEA has shown that the effectiveness of future soldiers in defeating targets could be significantly increased through the use of technologies which enhance detection, acquisition (knowing where to aim) and engagement of targets.

A study conducted using a synthetic environment exploring how technologies such as Augmented Reality (AR) can be used to enhance performance was undertaken as part of the Delivering Dismounted Effect (DDE) Research Programme. SEA was prime contractor to the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (DSTL) on the DDE Research Programme, leading a team from industry and academia looking into the future capability of weapons, helmets, torso protection and night vision systems.

The findings of the study are now being presented by SEA Human Factors lead Russell Bond at a human factors integration symposium organised by the Defence Human Capability Science and Technology Centre (DHCSTC) at the Abbey Wood headquarters of the Defence Equipment and Support organisation on 22 June.

The research focused on a range of technology concepts which may help soldiers to defeat a target more effectively, acting either as an individual or as a team. 'Assisted' and 'Collaborative' engagement concepts involved provision of AR overlays onto the sight picture and/or Head Up Display (HUD). The aim was to help cue the soldier onto targets more effectively, and to provide support for identification and acquisition of targets. Support for the engage task was investigated using a technology known as 'Coincident Firing', which suppresses shot release until the soldier's weapon system is on target.

Overall, the findings of the research indicated that the technology concepts have the potential to significantly enhance engagement performance. However, Bond explained: "Ensuring that information presentation is optimally aligned with the needs of the soldier at any given time within a highly dynamic operational situation is a significant challenge. It is essential that the user retains a degree of control over what is presented and when, and that they understand any technical limitations the system may have."

He added: “Our conclusion was that utilising these kind of technologies could be a potential game changer but there are still a range of outstanding questions. These can only be addressed by exploring the use of these technology concepts under more representative conditions.”

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Notes to Editors:

Cohort plc is an independent technology company and the parent company of four innovative, agile and responsive businesses, EID, MASS, MCL and SEA, providing a wide range of services and products for UK, Portugal and international customers in defence, security and related markets.

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SEA was acquired by Cohort plc in 2007 and today is a major supplier of applied research, technology development, systems integration, specialist electronic systems, engineering and software design services to the defence and security markets. Its engineering and project management skills include naval communications systems, maritime combat systems, through-life support, dismounted soldier systems, subsea engineering and traffic enforcement. Complementing its work for the UK Ministry of Defence, SEA is growing its business overseas and extending its expertise into adjacent markets, including offshore, railways and roads.

SEA employs circa 300 high-calibre staff and has offices in Beckington, Bristol, Barnstaple and Aberdeen.

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