What's New in the Aerospace/Defense Technology

Written by Administrator
Monday, 03 August 2009 15:16

A periodic update on cool things happening in the A&D world, with an emphasis on technology innovation.

1. **Latest Approach to Vehicle Armor: Install Fabric.** From the United Kingdom, Defense Industry Daily reports that the U.K.'s Ministry of Defense (MoD) Defense Science and Technology Laboratory has finished testing of AmSafe's "Tarian" fabric armor. The Tarian (Welsh for "shield") fabric is applied to vehicles in panels, and offers much the same protection against Rocket-Propelled Grenades (RPGs) as either reactive armor tiles or cage armor, at a weight savings of 50% compared to aluminum cages or 85% compared to steel cage armor. The fabric armor has been called "revolutionary"
and, reportedly, is flame retardant and available in camouflage patterns. DID reports that the Tarian armor is already seeing service on
Britain
's HET heavy trucks (manufactured by
Oshkosh
).

AmSafe website :

MoD DSTL website :

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1. **Air to Ground Lasers: Protect the Popcorn.** The U.S. Air Force has reported that a recent test of Boeing's Advanced Tactical Laser (ATL) hit a ground target from a C-130 plane.
The
test weapon
, described as
"

a kilowatt-class chemical oxygen iodine laser
," was developed under a $200 million program and is currently scheduled for more testing at
White
Sands
Missile
Range
in
New Mexico
. According to GlobalSecurity.org, the ATL is designed to
"place a 10-centimeter-wide beam with the heating power of a blowtorch on distant targets for up to 100 shots."

[Boeing website:](#)

[GlobalSecurity.org website](#) :

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1. **IBM Wins Skynet Development Contract.** The U.S. Department of Defense's Advanced Projects Research Agency (DARPA) announced on August 3, 2009 that IBM had won a
$16 million contract to enable
"electronic neuromorphic machine technology that is scalable to biological levels
." I don't know what that means, but it sounds scary.
DARPA's vision for t
he program, called "Systems of N
euromorphic
A
daptive
P
lastic
S
calable
E
lectronics (SyNAPSE)," is "to break the programmable machine paradigm and define a new path forward for creating useful, intelligent machines."
Again, I don't know what that means either, but if the
se
new machines start searching for Sarah Connor, we
all
may be in trouble.

Project details:

DARPA's website: