

Laser technology fills gap in force protection



A crew commander uses a virtual warning technology device. This technology provides a non-lethal alternative to warning shots when other tools fail to warn locals to stay back.

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Ottawa, Ontario – This summer, the CF will embed visual warning technology (VWT) devices into training for soldiers deploying to Afghanistan.

A VWT device uses laser technology to project a beam of green light at potential threats. If a soldier shines a VWT device at someone, this person will see dark spots for a few seconds, but still able to see where he is going.

This technology provides a non-lethal alternative to warning shots when cultural signs, hand signals, and other tools fail to warn locals to stay back.

VWT devices are better than conventional lights due to their clear visibility at greater distances, in all weather conditions.

CF to purchase 750 units

"From flash to bang, it took just two years to move this project from an idea to reality," said Project Director Major Stéphane Dufour. "It was just a short time ago that soldiers and commanders in Afghanistan brought forward ideas on how to improve force protection."

"We are getting enough units to cover the training requirements in Canada as well as for every vehicle or section in theatre," said Major Dufour.

The CF will purchase 750 VWT devices, including remote control triggers, protective cases and laser protective lenses..

Soldiers to learn to use devices safely

All soldiers using the devices will get mandatory training. Even those who are not in direct contact with the technology will receive training for basic understanding of how it works.

To ensure soldiers use the devices safely in Afghanistan, the Army has already written Tactics Training and Procedures. As well, the Army is reviewing the procedures on how VWT fits in with the rules of engagement and the escalation of

force. These procedures will be ready in time for delivery.

Soldiers of 2nd Battalion The Royal Canadian Regiment will conduct the final user trials this spring, with full training on VWT to take place in Wainwright this summer before TF 3-09 departs.

Article by Sgt Marco Comisso, Army News, Ottawa

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