Lockheed Martin Demonstrates New Ambush-Thwarting Push-Vehicle Capability For Automated Convoy Program

Lockheed Martin has developed a new push-vehicle capability for its automated convoy program that will save lives in the fight against convoy ambush and IED attacks. The Convoy Active Safety Technology system, which enables convoy vehicles to autonomously follow each other, demonstrated the push-vehicle feature recently. It allows the first vehicle to be driven autonomously, as compared to past system designs where the lead had to be under human control.

"CAST's push-vehicle capability directly responds to real life dangers that our troops are facing. It will prevent injury and loss of life in the forward vehicle, which most frequently bears the brunt of deadly ambushes and IED attacks," said Glenn Miller, vice president of Technical Operations and Applied Research at Lockheed Martin Missiles and Fire Control. "CAST already improves the safety, security, survivability and sustainment of tactical wheeled vehicles. Our proven push-vehicle feature takes that to another level."

The autonomous push-vehicle was developed to lead a convoy of semi-autonomous follower vehicles into hazardous areas without a human operator on board. Using the AutoMate(TM) sensor, actuator and processing kit, any tactical wheeled vehicle can quickly and easily convert into the push-vehicle or perform as part of the convoy. Even in this role, the vehicle can maintain safe trajectories and interval distances on both developed and undeveloped roadways, avoid dynamic obstacles and operate at full speed in visually obstructed conditions such as dust or blackout night operations.

Lockheed Martin tested CAST's new capability this month in internal tests and is ready to demonstrate its life-saving features to Warfighters during user assessments. Notably, CAST demonstrated its precision system during the Army's Robotics Rodeo held last year at Fort Hood, TX.

CAST is a development program for the U.S. Army Tank Automotive Research, Development and Engineering Center. The affordable, simple, kit-based technology is not dependent on any platform and has logged more than 10,000 miles of operation. Tests have proved CAST-enabled trucks can follow roads and other vehicles to eliminate rear-end collisions, reduce road departures and enable soldiers to respond to 25 percent more hostile threats and from greater distances.

Headquartered in Bethesda, Md., Lockheed Martin is a global security company that employs about 136,000 people worldwide and is principally engaged in the research, design, development, manufacture, integration and sustainment of advanced technology systems, products and services. The Corporation reported 2009 sales of $45.2 billion.

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