U.S. Navy To Test And Evaluate Lockheed Martin Industrial Exoskeletons

ORLANDO, Fla., Aug. 18, 2014 /PRNewswire/ -- Lockheed Martin (NYSE: LMT) has received a contract through the National Center for Manufacturing Sciences (NCMS) for the U.S. Navy to evaluate and test two FORTIS exoskeletons. This marks the first procurement of Lockheed Martin's exoskeletons for industrial use. Terms of the contract were not disclosed.

The FORTIS exoskeleton is an unpowered, lightweight exoskeleton that increases an operator's strength and endurance by transferring the weight of heavy loads from the user's body directly to the ground.

The objective of this effort is to mature and transition exoskeleton technology to the Department of Defense industrial base and perform testing and evaluation for industrial hand-tool applications at Navy shipyards.

"Ship maintenance often requires use of heavy tools, such as grinders, riveters or sandblasters," saidAdam Miller, director of new initiatives at Lockheed Martin Missiles and Fire Control. "Those tools take a toll on operators due to the tools' weight and the tight areas where they are sometimes used. By wearing the FORTIS exoskeleton, operators can hold the weight of those heavy tools for extended periods of time with reduced fatigue."

The FORTIS exoskeleton augments the strength and endurance of maintenance personnel in the physically demanding shipyard environment. Because its ergonomic design moves naturally with the body and allows operators to maintain flexibility, operators are not hindered by the exoskeleton. This means operators can work longer and more effectively with reduced fatigue from overuse.

Lockheed Martin has been investing in exoskeleton research and development for more than five years, most recently through the NCMS Commercial Technologies for Maintenance Activities (CTMA) program. These investments have led to advancements in powered and unpowered exoskeleton systems for applications ranging from military to industrial.

"We are pleased that once again a technology advanced through our highly successful CTMA program will be put into commercialization," said Rick Jarman, president and chief executive officer of NCMS. "The Lockheed Martin FORTIS exoskeleton contract is just another example of how collaboration around research and development speeds the time to market for these important innovations. We applaud Lockheed Martin for seeing the value in our CTMA program."

Headquartered in Bethesda, Maryland, Lockheed Martin is a global security and aerospace company that employs approximately 113,000 people worldwide and is principally engaged in the research, design, development, manufacture, integration and sustainment of advanced technology systems, products and services. The Corporation's net sales for 2013 were $45.4 billion.

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