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AURORA WINS NAVY CONTRACT TO HELP COUNTER IEDs

CAMBRIDGE, MA, May 2, 2007 – Aurora Flight Sciences announced today that the company has been selected for award of a contract through the Navy Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) Program to develop a low-cost, easily deployed, degradable taggant that can be dispersed over a wide area of interest using an unmanned aerial system, such as the company's next-generation GoldenEye 80 UAS.

The taggant would note suspicious activity in the area, giving Coalition Forces a means to detect the emplacement of improvised explosive devices (IEDs), as well as build activity profiles for areas of operation, providing invaluable military intelligence.

"Aurora is proud to be working on a solution to the IED problem that our troops continue to face," said Dr. Thomas Vaneck, Aurora's Vice President of Research and Development. "IEDs are currently the major cause of Coalition Force combat casualties; any progress that can be made in helping to solve this urgent problem has the potential to save many lives."

Aurora is partnering with Professor Christopher Lambert at the Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI) for this development effort. In addition to developing the degradable taggant itself, the team will also develop a conceptual design for a robust sensor system that can be used to quickly and accurately detect changes in an area of interest that are characteristic of IED emplacement or other asymmetric threat activities. This passive taggant will enable nearly real-time change detection within the treated area using simple optical sensing techniques. Aurora intends to investigate a variety of approaches for dispersing the taggant, such as hand-held devices and from manned and unmanned vehicles.

Due to the urgent need for technologies to counter asymmetric threats, the team will seek to expedite the development to quickly move to field demonstrations, with a fieldable system ready in as little as 18 to 24 months.

Working with Professor Lambert is Chemistry graduate student Jason Cox. Mr. Cox has relevant experience in this area, being a U.S. Marine Corps reservist, who was deployed to Fallujah, Iraq. "The IED threat in Iraq and Afghanistan poses a constant hurdle for Coalition Forces despite the use of existing technologies. The taggant sensing system will not only aid troops in the detection of IEDs but also allow for the collection of real-time intelligence related to IED emplacement.

This type of intelligence is paramount to countering asymmetric threats in today's evolving battlefield," said Cox.

About Aurora Flight Sciences

Aurora Flight Sciences develops and provides robotic aircraft and other advanced aerospace vehicles for scientific and military applications. Aurora is headquartered in Manassas, VA and operates production plants in Clarksburg, WV and Columbus, MS and a Research and Development Center in Cambridge, MA. Please visit our web site at www.aurora.aero.

About Worcester Polytechnic Institute

Founded in 1865 in Worcester, Mass., WPI was one of the nation's first engineering and technology universities. WPI's 18 academic departments offer more than 50 undergraduate and graduate degree programs in science, engineering, technology, management, the social sciences, and the humanities and arts, leading to the BA, BS, MS, ME, MBA and PhD. WPI's world-class faculty work with students in a number of cutting-edge research areas, leading to breakthroughs and innovations in such fields as biotechnology, fuel cells, and information security, materials processing, and nanotechnology.

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