

Army official sees cost-conscious focus at HRL Laboratories



On his visit to HRL Laboratories in Malibu, Calif., U.S. Army Maj. Gen. Nick Justice, commanding general of the Aberdeen Proving Ground and the Army Research, Development and Engineering Command, located in Maryland, inspects samples of extremely lightweight "micro-truss" materials that can absorb the shock of an impact or blast. With him are (from left) HRL's Toby Schaedler and William Carter. (Dan Little photo)

HRL Laboratories LLC, the corporate research and development laboratory jointly owned by Boeing and General Motors, showcased a wide range of emerging technologies during a recent visit by U.S. Army Maj. Gen. Nick Justice, commanding general of Maryland's Aberdeen Proving Ground and the Army Research, Development and Engineering Command.

Justice visited several laboratories and saw demonstrations of technologies with direct relevance to his command's mission to empower, unburden and protect American soldiers.

"Boeing, in collaboration with HRL, has the ability to bring to bear exceptional technologies that can meet the Army's needs in a very cost-conscious fashion," said Rick Baily, vice president of Engineering and Mission Assurance for Boeing Defense, Space & Security. "Through tours like these, we are able to demonstrate just that."



In an HRL lab devoted to research in antennas made of non-traditional materials, HRL's Joseph Colburn, right, shows U.S. Army Maj. Gen. Nick Justice a prototype antenna. (Dan Little photo)

HRL, located in Malibu, Calif., specializes in researching sensors and materials, information and systems sciences, applied electromagnetics, and microelectronics. The laboratory provides custom research and development as well as performs additional R&D contract services for Boeing and GM, the U.S. government, and other commercial companies.

Bill Jeffrey, HRL president and CEO, outlined innovations in materials, antennas and microelectronics that HRL continues to pioneer. "HRL is enabling performance that was not possible just a few years ago," said Jeffrey. "We don't break the laws of physics, we find loopholes."

Innovations on display during the tour ranged from highly portable antennas made of non-traditional materials, to state-of-the-art high-power microelectronics, to near-real-time 3D images scanned by laser-powered LIDAR (light detection and ranging) systems that can be mounted on small unmanned aerial vehicles such as the ScanEagle.

Daryl Pelc, Phantom Works vice president of Engineering and Technology, was on hand for the tour and expressed the importance of the Boeing partnership with GM. "Boeing and HRL have investments in technology that are vertical in content, which demonstrates to our customers that we're not

just a large-scale systems integrator," he said. "This joint venture with GM is an example of how we develop and mature technologies and gain synergy with the auto industry."

Justice expressed his positive impressions of the tour and what cost-conscious technologies could mean for customers. "I need to be able to equip a soldier for \$10,000, not \$1 million," Justice said. "If you can help us solve this problem, it should help industry, too."

By Richard Esposito

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