Marines tap real-time information like never before

November 21 2013, by Eric Beidel

Marines in Hawaii last week demonstrated that using handheld devices and special software to automatically sift through loads of data can help ease information overload and deliver made-to-order intelligence to the front lines.

The Office of Naval Research (ONR) partnered with U.S. Marine Corps Forces Pacific (MARFORPAC) Experimentation Center and the 3rd Marine Regiment for the third annual Agile Bloodhound demonstration Nov. 13-14 at Marine Corps Base Hawaii.

The demonstration showed how the integration of intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) assets-such as imagery from an unmanned aircraft sensor-and command-and-control (C2) capabilities-such as communications and networking-can be tailored to speed decision-making by expeditionary forces.

"We're trying to create a user-oriented world view for Marines," said Col. William Zamagni, deputy director of ONR's Expeditionary Maneuver Warfare and Combating Terrorism Department. "Whether they're in command centers with PCs, in vehicles with laptops or on foot with smartphones, Marines need access to the most pertinent information possible."

Naval expeditionary operations involve more sensors, radios and computers than ever before. However, the management and dissemination of information has not kept pace with technological

advancements, and Marines on the front lines can be overwhelmed with the amount of raw data coming at them.

"Marines in the heat of battle have more pressing things to worry about than trying to make sense of a lot of different pieces of intelligence," said John Moniz, ONR program manager. "They need the right information at the right time, and Agile Bloodhound is helping us figure out what combination of hardware and software works best to deliver only the most relevant information as quickly as possible."

Some of the many technologies used during Agile Bloodhound include:

- A serverless chat system that allows person-to-person and group communications even for those not connected to the infrastructure network and servers
- A knowledge discovery program that uses smartphones and tablets to streamline ISR data collection and exploitation, as well as create a unified picture of the battlefield through geographically identified imagery and automated force tracking
- ActiveWiki software that allows collaboration for social-networking graphs and real-time updates of pictures and maps to produce unique views and overlays of the battlespace

The Navy and Marine Corps continue to move from a net-centric to a data-centric strategy to enable development of more interoperable and cost-effective solutions. Agile Bloodhound supports the Marine Corps' Information Enterprise Strategy to develop a "knowledge-based force" that uses seamless communications to improve decision-making and mission execution.

The demonstration is the result of partnerships between ONR, MARFORPAC, Marine Corps Systems Command, Marine Corps Warfighting Laboratory, Space and Naval Warfare Center Pacific, Naval

Surface Warfare Center Dahlgren Division and the Naval Research Laboratory, among others.

Provided by Office of Naval Research

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