

ENVG III Allows Soldiers to Accurately Shoot from Hip

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The NVG-III, worn on a helmet like earlier models, can be wirelessly linked to the FWS-I.

New night-vision equipment promises an enhanced image of the battlefield and frees Soldiers from using traditional firing positions.

The Enhanced Night Vision Goggle III (ENVG III) is worn on a helmet in the same way earlier models were worn. The device can be wirelessly linked to the Family of Weapon Sights - Individual (FWS-I), which can be mounted on the M4 carbine, M16A4 rifle, M249 Squad Automatic Weapon, M136 AT4 rifle, or M141 Bunker Defeat Munition, COL Michael Sloane said.

Because the FWS-I wirelessly transmits a video signal of the weapon sight to the ENVG III, a Soldier will be able to accurately fire his weapon without having to bring the weapon up to eye level. Soldiers will be able to point the weapon around a corner, acquire a target wirelessly through the FWS-I, and fire — all while remaining in defilade.

Other variants within the FWS are being developed for sniper rifles and crew-served weapons such as the M240 and M2 machine guns, as well as the MK19 grenade launcher.

The technological compatibility between the two systems provides rapid target acquisition capabilities, allowing Soldiers to much more rapidly acquire targets and clearly see them in their helmet-borne ENVG III without looking through the scope of the weapon.

COL Sloane, who serves as the project manager for Soldier Sensors and Lasers (PM SSL) on Fort Belvoir, Va., and others spoke during a media roundtable at Program Executive Office Soldier on 22 July.

Because the sight picture, from the weapon's point of view, appears in the ENVG III, the Soldier gets the benefit of the 40-degree view provided by the ENVG III. This provides much greater situational awareness than the 18- to 26-degree view, which is provided by the scope of the weapon, COL Sloane said.

Both systems have undergone rigorous scrutiny by Soldiers at a number of installations and training areas during live-fire events. Additionally, Soldier feedback — called "Soldier Touch-Points" — has informed every step of the design and development, said COL Sloane.

Sloane also said that tactics, techniques, and procedures with the new system will continuously be refined by the Maneuver Center of Excellence (MCoE) on Fort Benning, Ga., and the Army Training and Doctrine Command on Fort Eustis, Va. The refinements will ensure safe and effective employment of the new capabilities.

Thermal weapons sights have been around since the 1990s, said LTC Timothy Fuller, who serves as the program manager for Soldier Maneuver Sensors (PM SMS). The difference is that the FWS-I uses just four batteries instead of eight, is much lighter and smaller than earlier thermal weapons sights, and has a more ergonomically friendly set of control buttons. Those controls were designed with Soldier feedback in mind.

Additionally, the FWS-I can resolve images further away than traditional thermal weapons sights, LTC Fuller said, noting that targets can be clearly seen past 1,000 meters. He said the carbine's effective range is about half that distance. The reason it was designed to pull in images from further away is so it could be used with the M249, which has a much greater maximum effective range than the M4.

Read more about the ENVG III at:

http://www.army.mil/article/152691/New_night_vision_gear_allows_Soldiers_to_accurately_shoot_from_hip/.

(David Vergun writes for the Army News Service.)