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New high-tech weapon being built in Shelby Twp.

BY DAN CORTEZ • FREE PRESS STAFF WRITER • JUNE 19, 2008

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Standing in front of a new gun turret Wednesday at General Dynamics in Shelby Township, Gen. George Casey Jr., U.S. Army chief of staff, had one question about the product, which is still in development.

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"How soon can we mount this thing?" he quipped. "It's been a long time coming."

General Dynamics, which has operations also in Sterling Heights and other parts of the country, is working on a \$2-billion contract to help develop combat systems being built over the next five years.

The goal: Make everything more agile, more lethal and less reliant on manpower by 2015, when the Army's 14-part Future Combat Systems is to be integrated.

"It's a new way of fighting," said Paul Mehney, associate director of communications for the program.

The turret that was on display Wednesday for the first time has been in development for about a year and eventually is to be attached to a manned combat vehicle intended to replace the Abrams tank.

The goal is to have the turret integrated by 2010.



WILLIAM ARCHIE/DFP

Gen. George Casey Jr., U.S. Army chief of staff, talks Wednesday about a new combat system and new turrets that are being built for it at General Dynamics in Shelby Township. The turrets are self-loading and are a fraction of the weight of turrets used on the Abrams tank.

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The new turret is self-loading, capable of firing any of the ammunition the Army uses and a fraction of the weight of the turret used on the Abrams. The turret also has the ability to shoot at a target about 8 miles away -- four times the distance of the Abrams.

"We're going to be able to hit what we can't see," Mehney said.

Casey said all those improvements are based on information gleaned from soldiers returning from fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Casey said soldiers fighting the enemy in streets and alleyways need a combination of technology and the appropriate equipment to win.

"Our soldiers grew up doing this," he said, mimicking the use of a video game controller. "We're going to let technology lead us."

The Army will test the turret next year at its facilities in Warren and then at proving grounds in Maryland before using it in battle.

Meanwhile, the Army is using some lessons from the auto industry to develop the vehicles to which that the turret will be attached.

Future combat vehicles will have a common chassis that will allow for mass production and simpler repairs.

Contact **DAN CORTEZ** at 586-826-7264

or dcortez@freepress.com.

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buka2 wrote:

[QUOTE>

Actually...I'm pretty sure its more like embeded controls and electronics. FYI industrial controls = PLC's, factory automation. Also when I said power systems I'm meaning more like building power and what not. Being an Engineer is like being a Doctor, the degree is just a degree, its the different specialties that make your job. [/QUOTE]

I hear you. Speaking of attention to detail, I see (now) that my last post had some typos. :(

6/19/2008 8:14:53 AM

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OpinionatedArse wrote:

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Replying to buka2:

Replying to OpinionatedArse:

Ever since I drove by the plant on Mound Rd and saw tanks sitting next to the building I've wanted to work for General Dynamics. I'm an electrical engineer...but my background is more in industrial controls and power systems...nothing related to building tanks :(

Suggest you read the article again. This SOB is fully automated. Chock full of "industrial controls and powere systems".

Then again, attention to details is important to a good designer, so maybe not.

Actually...I'm pretty sure its more like embeded controls and electronics. FYI industrial controls = PLC's, factory automation. Also when I said power systems I'm meaning more like building power and what not. Being an Engineer is like being a Doctor, the degree is just a degree, its the different specialties that make your job.

6/19/2008 7:56:54 AM

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MFL777 wrote:

Being built in Shelby Township?! Great...can we attach a map to show everyone in the world how to get there too?! Nothing like a flashing neon sign to get us higher on the "target" list!

6/19/2008 7:50:11 AM

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Raoul1958 wrote:

You just won't see anything beyond the FCS program, now that's secrecy!

6/19/2008 7:35:31 AM

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buka2 wrote:

Replying to OpinionatedArse:

Ever since I drove by the plant on Mound Rd and saw tanks sitting next to the building I've wanted to work for General Dynamics. I'm an electrical engineer...but my background is more in industrial controls and power systems...nothing related to building tanks :(

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Then again, attention to details is important to a good designer, so maybe not.
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