On Assignment in Iraq: HF/E in the Trenches
by Pamela Savage-Knepshield, HFES Bulletin Features Editor

When I started working for the Army Research Laboratory – Human Research and Engineering Directorate (ARL-HRED) at Fort Monmouth, New Jersey, I knew very little about the Army or its soldiers, having spent most of my career focused on the needs of small business owners while working for AT&T and Lucent Technologies/Bell Laboratories. One thing I did know was that without this knowledge, I was not going to be able to do a very good job supporting the design of equipment for soldiers’ use. “Know thy user” is one of the fundamental tenets of HF/E. Without this understanding, it is unlikely that the equipment designed for their use will meet their needs.

If you think you know your user, then you’d better think again, because they are not static entities; they evolve to adapt to their environments and the changing contexts in which they work. As changes occur, so do their needs and their requirements for the equipment and systems that they use.

One program that all new ARL-HRED hires are encouraged to take is the Greening Course, which provides a basic understanding of the Army through a mix of classroom lectures led by seasoned soldiers and hands-on experience with Army equipment. I took the course and learned a lot, but in the end I found my appetite only whetted for more. While at Fort Monmouth supporting Joint Service programs at the Communications-Electronic Command, I did what any HF/E practitioner typically does during the course of user interface and system design and evaluation: I performed task analyses; conducted semistructured interviews and focus groups with soldiers, Marines, and airmen; watched as they demonstrated how they used their equipment during missions; and conducted usability studies with low- to high-fidelity system simulations and prototypes. Still, I felt a nagging void and a growing sense that I needed to understand my users even better than I did.

Then, a broadcast e-mail arrived from the Army’s Research, Development and Engineering Command (RDECOM, which is ARL’s parent organization) seeking Army civilians interested in deployment to Iraq to gain better insight into the needs of soldiers in combat. This was exactly what I was looking for! It took some time to persuade my family that this opportunity was something they should support. My son, a soldier in the Individual Ready Reserves who had been deployed to Iraq with the 1st Armored Division from 2005 to 2006, convinced the rest of the family that it would be safer for a civilian to deploy than it was for a soldier. My nephew, a Virginia National Guard soldier who had been deployed twice to Iraq, wished he could accompany me as a civilian to provide overwatch and see what it was like to be a civilian in theater.
Preparation and Deployment

Prior to deploying, civilian and military personnel attend three weeks of RDECOM training specifically designed by the Field Assistance in Science and Technology (FAST) Program to provide its deploying personnel with a solid understanding of the capabilities and technology focus areas of its labs and centers. This training helps prepare Science & Technology Assistance Teams (STAT) for their mission, which includes providing operational commands with immediate access to RDECOM labs and centers, expediting the delivery of critical technology solutions to soldiers, and providing direct support to the soldier. Just prior to deployment, an additional week is spent at Fort Benning, Georgia, to complete predeployment training and in-processing.

As members of STAT 22, which was the 22nd team to deploy to Iraq, we gathered feedback directly from soldiers to learn how well fielded equipment was meeting mission needs and to identify capability and technology gaps that remained unmet. During our 179-day deployment, our four-person team (one civilian and three military personnel) identified more than 75 soldier issues, which we documented and funneled to the FAST headquarters. From there, they were forwarded to the RDECOM labs and centers, whose personnel were standing by to design and fabricate solutions rapidly. Issues covered a broad range of topics, from the clothing and gear worn by soldiers to the vehicles and equipment they use. Issues also spanned the entire range of the risk-exposure severity scale, from minor inconveniences with little likelihood of detrimental impact on the soldier or his mission to catastrophic with a great likelihood of injury, loss of life, or mission failure.

We began our mission stationed in Tikrit at Contingency Operating Base Speicher. A change of mission moved us to Victory Base Camp in Baghdad, and from there we traveled to forward-operating bases (FOB) to meet with soldiers at these more remote sites. We used a variety of techniques to uncover issues and capability gaps. We met with soldiers one on one or in small groups, and in some cases we directly observed modifications they had made to their equipment to mitigate issues. These issues prompted me to conduct contextual interviews with them to identify the requirements that drove the need for their modifications. Contextual interviews, a type of ethnographic research, were conducted in soldiers’ work environments with their actual equipment. This technique proved effective in identifying system design issues, underlying system requirements, and changes necessary to better meet mission needs.

Pamela Savage-Knepshield and soldiers (names withheld for security purposes) from the 573rd Clearance Company. The soldiers took part in discussions about searching roads for improvised explosive devices and training the Iraqi Army to do likewise.

Our stateside colleagues sent a solution, which we issued to the unit, provided training, and, following one month of use, gathered feedback regarding its effectiveness. Feedback was collected using questionnaires and interviews to ensure that we understood the root cause of any issues
encountered while using the rapidly fielded solution and to enable us to accurately convey the feedback to those who had supplied the solutions. After receiving several weapon-mounted light kits in response to an earlier team’s request, we located a combat engineering unit that was conducting route clearance operations at night and whose gunners needed the lights to see greater distances in conditions with little or no visibility. We asked if they would like to use the kits and assess their combat effectiveness. We then assisted with installation and setup and found resolution of initial operational issues. We periodically checked in with the unit to ensure that the kits remained fully mission capable and then, after one month of use, collected soldiers’ feedback.

Combat engineers completed questionnaires designed by the team to capture feedback on critical system attributes (e.g., battery runtime, weight, strobe capability, and infrared and white-light distance). They were then interviewed to gather critical qualitative data that would enable the team to understand which attributes were the most important and why, as well as what was working well and what was not. We analyzed the data collected and prepared a report, which was later shared with each kit’s manufacturer so they could understand how best to modify their designs to better meet our soldiers’ mission needs.

Some Surprises and Reflections

During my tour, I encountered many situations that did not match my expectations. For example, I was surprised when I met my first female gunner (I, like many others, had not realized that women were performing this vital mission role). Another surprise was discovering how many field service representatives (defense contractors) are in theater maintaining equipment. One soldier explained, “Stuff should be designed so the operator can do all of the maintenance. Make it simple so we can get it and do it ourselves without contractors … it isn’t going to do anyone good if only one guy on the FOB can fix it.”

Another surprise was the massive infrastructure required to provide sustenance and support to our deployed troops, including food, water, shelter, transportation, trash disposal, communications and medical, religious, and physical fitness facilities. I had never fully appreciated the sheer magnitude of the logistics footprint required for an Army during combat. This was truly an adventure of a lifetime and one that I hope to have the opportunity to participate in again.

When I look back and think about all the issues we uncovered and all that I learned during my time in Iraq working side by side with soldiers on the front line, I marvel at how simple their needs appear to be and yet how difficult those needs have been to address through design. In part, I believe this is because many designers have not included recently deployed soldiers in the design process. Obtaining feedback from soldiers during official acquisition test events or after equipment has been deployed to a combat zone is simply too late in the process to effect cost-effective design change for systems that have been fielded in volume.

HF/E practitioners and their users need more hands-on involvement in design. Mock-ups, simulations, and prototype equipment can be used earlier in the process to gather critical feedback from soldiers. Incremental acquisition provides an inherent opportunity to conduct usability tests with users and iterate/improve designs between increments.

Granted, this is not a novel concept—it is what HF/E practitioners preach about all the time. Clearly, it is time that all those who design, fabricate, and manufacture defense equipment start doing it. When I asked soldiers what advice I should take home to those who design their equipment, they responded, “The solutions are not designed for what we do. They need to understand what we do.” And when it comes to vehicles, “You should build the vehicle around the kitted-up soldier.” They realize the importance of being involved in the process.

GMU Student Chapter Highlights Dangers of Distracted Driving

by Haneen Saqer, President, & Nicole Werner, Vice President

Last October, the Federation of Associations in Behavioral & Brain Sciences (FABBS) partnered with the George Mason University (GMU) Student Chapter to highlight the human factors/ergonomics profession at the USA Science and Engineering Festival. GMU Student Chapter members, with FABBS, wanted to develop a demonstration that would be interactive enough to draw a crowd while highlighting the HF/E science. Because the festival’s target audience was school-age children and their parents, we chose to use a simple driving simulation video game to draw in the crowd and illustrate the cognitive principles involved as well as the dangers of distracted driving.

In this simulation, children of all ages—and some parents too—sat in the simulator and drove a simple course. Once the child was comfortable with driving, a GMU student running the simulator handed him or her an actual cell phone and asked the child to text a parent to say he or she would be late coming home. Onlookers could watch from the projection screen as children attempted to take their attention away from driving and send a text message. Almost immediately, each child veered from the lane, and most of them crashed into the side wall. Judging from the reaction of the crowd, it was clear that both participants and onlookers were getting the message about the dangers of text messaging while driving. This provided GMU Student Chapter members with the opportunity to explain why distracted driving is dangerous and to tie in current research in this area.

With the two-day festival attracting more than 500,000 people, the distracted driving demonstration was never without a crowd. Even former National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) Human Factors Division Chief Michael Perel took notice of our booth. Since retiring from NHTSA, Perel has been working as a volunteer with the Fairfax County Police Department to educate teen drivers about traffic safety. After seeing the success of the driving demo at the festival first-hand, he introduced the idea to the traffic safety officers in Fairfax. In February 2011, the officers included Perel and GMU Student Chapter members in their Department of Motor Vehicles education class at Westfield High School in McLean, VA. It was a one-hour presentation focusing on distraction and attention using the driving simulator. The session was covered by the local ABC affiliate and can be seen at http://www.fabbs.org/news/abc-news-highlights-human-factors-research/.

Left to right: Bill Kennedy, Christian Gonzales, Haneen Saqer, and Nicole Werner.

The experience was very rewarding for participating GMU faculty and student volunteers. It was an opportunity to encourage young adults to think about science, educate them about basic
HF/E principles, and share with them the many research and professional opportunities available. It was also inspiring to be part of a historic event that included 1,500 booths of science and engineering-related sponsors. As a result of the success of the first festival, another USA Science and Engineering Festival is planned for Spring 2012.

For more details, pictures, and video of the festival, please visit http://www.fabbs.org/fabbs-foundation/foundation-events/usa-science-and-engineering-festival/. Details about the GMU Human Factors & Applied Cognition graduate program can be found at http://archlab.gmu.edu/.

Haneen Saqer is a second-year doctoral student from Houston, Texas. She works with Raja Parasuraman and Matthew Peterson on projects related to automation, situation awareness, and attention. Nicole Werner is a second-year doctoral student native to the DC metropolitan area. She works with Deborah Boehm-Davis on research related to interrupted task performance and applying human factors to health care.

WEBINARS

Q&A With March Webinar Speaker

Edmond Israelski

Edmond W. Israelski, director of human factors at Abbott, a medical device and pharmaceutical company, is the featured speaker for the free March 16 members-only webinar (details at http://www.hfes.org/web/webinars/MarIsraelski.html). In his presentation, Human Factors Design for Medical Devices—Overview of the Latest Standard: AAMI HE 75, Israelski will cover the background and an overview of the comprehensive human factors standard for medical devices, ANSI/AAMI HE-75:2009. Examples of medical devices affected by the FDA-recognized standard will also be addressed.

HFES asked Israelski for some additional context about his upcoming webinar, and his responses are included here.

Q: Why is the subject of your webinar, human factors design for medical devices, important knowledge for HF/E practitioners?

A: Standards for the process of incorporating human factors engineering into the development of medical devices are essential to get devices approved by regulators. This is particularly true for HF/E standards that are officially recognized by regulators around the world. Being in conformance with recognized standards can expedite the approval process. It is also important in the process of increasing the likelihood that medical devices will be safer for patients and clinicians to use with less chance of medical accidents.

Q: Who would most benefit from attending your webinar?

A: Anyone involved in medical product development will benefit, including HF/E professionals, engineers, and those involved in regulatory, quality, and medical affairs. It would also be beneficial for any HF/E professionals who are considering moving into the health care field to understand the unique requirements for medical product design.

Q: What are some of the challenges for HF/E professionals in applying standards in this area?

A: A significant challenge is convincing development and marketing staff that human factors engineering is a distinct discipline that offers a systematic and scientific approach to user interface design and is different from clinical and marketing research. Other challenges are how to measure compliance with the HF/E standards.
Q: What, if any, other areas of health care ergonomics do you think should be addressed in future standards development efforts?

A: There are ongoing efforts in the area of health care ergonomics to develop additional standards in the following areas:

- Health-care-related informatics such as electronic health care records and clinical decision support systems,
- methods for manufactures and users to collect postmarket surveillance data regarding usability related safety issues, and
- medical device–specific human factors standards.

New Membership Benefit for Educators

HFES is pleased to announce the launch of *Reviews of Human Factors and Ergonomics Custom Collections for Education*. HFES members who teach undergraduate or graduate courses in human factors/ergonomics and related disciplines and need to provide high-quality overviews of a broad range of topics within HF/E now have that capability. As a benefit to members who are educators, rather than purchasing one or more complete *Reviews* volumes, you can select only the chapters that pertain to your courses—at low, educators-only prices.

All 41 chapters included in the six *Reviews* volumes are available for custom collections and can be viewed at [http://www.hfes.org/web/PubPages/Reviews_fullchapterlist.html](http://www.hfes.org/web/PubPages/Reviews_publisherlist.html). When you’re ready to order, go to [http://www.hfes.org/Publications/ProductList.aspx?CategoryId=15](http://www.hfes.org/Publications/ProductList.aspx?CategoryId=15) and log in with your member ID number. (Forgot your ID number? Contact the Member Services Department at 310/394-1811, membership@hfes.org.)

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The Consultants Directory is freely available to anyone who visits the HFES Web site. The fees for an annual listing are $150 for individuals and $250 for companies; renewal rates for those already in the system are $100 for individuals and $200 for companies.

If you are a current HFES member and you’d like to place or renew a listing, go to [hfes.org](http://www.hfes.org), log in, and select the option “Create a Consultant Directory listing” on the Welcome page. If you have any questions, please contact the Member Services Department at 310/394-1811, membership@hfes.org.
ELECTIONS

Nomination Ballots To Be Mailed

Nomination ballots for the 2011 election of HFES officers and at-large Executive Council members will be mailed to Full and Emeritus Members and Fellows on April 11. Completed nomination ballots are due May 11.

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

Executive Council Midyear Meeting

The 2011 Midyear Meeting of the HFES Executive Council will be held April 1–3 at the Red Rock Hotel, Las Vegas. For additional information, contact HFES Executive Director Lynn Strother at 310/394-1811 or lynn@hfes.org.

COMMITTEES

Accreditation Committee: Solicitation for Applications and Reviewers
by Patricia R. DeLucia, Accreditation Committee Chair

The HFES Accreditation Committee is in the process of revitalization. A revised version of the HFES Accreditation Self-Study Report Guide is available at http://www.hfes.org/web/Students/HFES_Accreditation_Guide.pdf and will be used to evaluate programs that apply now for accreditation. The main changes pertain to the minimum requirements for the nonemphasized area (pp. 12—13), quantitative and computer skills (p. 14), and teamwork experience (p. 15). The application process has been streamlined, and all materials must now be sent electronically.

The Accreditation Committee is ready to accept applications and seeks volunteers to help review the applications. For questions about the accreditation program or application process, or to volunteer as a reviewer, please contact me at pat.delucia@ttu.edu.

PUBLICATIONS

Seeking Missing Copies for HFES Library

HFES welcomes donations of certain printed copies of various publications that are missing from the central office library. Donated copies should be free of marginal notations or underlining or highlighting of text.

HFES will reimburse the postage cost of UPS ground or USPS flat rate and provide you with a receipt for the value of your donations based on the last price at which the printed volumes were sold.

Please contact HFES Administrative Assistant Susan Marschner (susan@hfes.org, 310/394-1811) if you have the following materials available for donation to HFES. Thank you!
CALL FOR PROPOSALS

UK MoD Call for Research Proposals

The Ministry of Defence (MoD) Centre for Defence Enterprise (CDE) and Counter-Terrorism Science & Technology Centre in Oxfordshire invite research proposals that can enhance the awareness of soldiers on foot to the cues associated with improvised explosive devices (IEDs).

The CDE is seeking new and innovative ways to increase the ability of soldiers on foot to identify the cues associated with local human behavior, atmospheric (situational) indicators, and the human-made changes to the environment that directly or indirectly occur when IEDs are concealed.


GRADUATE DIRECTORY

HFES Online Graduate Directory Update

Did you know that students make up about 15% of the overall HFES membership and are critical to the current and future vitality of the Society and the human factors/ergonomics profession? To continue fostering this special relationship, HFES provides a number of free resources for students, in addition to regular membership benefits (complimentary subscriptions, discounts on other publications and annual meeting registration fees, and free résumé posting). One of these resources is the online Directory of Human Factors/Ergonomics Graduate Programs in the United States and Canada. The online graduate directory assists prospective graduate students by providing detailed information to make a preliminary selection of graduate programs for further consideration.

If you have a graduate program listing in the directory, or one you’d like to list, please provide entries and updates to HFES Assistant Managing Editor Cameron Wile (cameron@hfes.org). To submit a new program for consideration, download the listing form template (Word document) from http://www.hfes.org/web/Students/grad_programs.html. Updates will be completed by the end of March, so please send details as soon as possible.

MEMBER MILESTONES

Last fall, HFES Student Members Piyush Bareria, Nicolette McGeorge, Yijun Liu, and Michael Jenkins, along with teammate Xinhui Zhu, were awarded the eTools Prize in the Ergonomics Design Competition for Student Teams by Auburn Engineers, Inc. “Team CogitoErgoSumians” consists of five members from the University at Buffalo, SUNY, Industrial & Systems Engineering Department. The team’s faculty adviser is Gwanseob Shin.
The preliminary competition was held in October and culminated with a 48-hour project in early November. In the preliminaries, students were challenged with analyzing the job of a wedding photographer, a task requiring them to address postural considerations and repetitive motions of photographers working long days. The team also considered office ergonomics during photo editing. The final project involved analyzing preparations for a major collegiate football field before a home game and developing a presentation to pitch proposed improvements and explain ergonomics to the field manager.

Team CogitoErgoSumians will be recognized during the Applied Ergonomics Conference, March 21-24.

Left to right: Nicolette McGeorge, Xinhui Zhu, Yijun Liu, Michael Jenkins, and Piyush Bareria.

HFES member Robert C. Haygood died on January 10, 2011, at the age of 83. Upon release from the Air Force in 1957, Bob drove off to graduate school, not stopping until he was west of the Mississippi. He enrolled to work under Lyle Bourne and Calvin Taylor at the University of Utah, taking courses in computer programming, advanced statistics, and industrial psychology. These classes provided the foundation for his subsequent career in human factors psychology.

After receiving his MS, Bob went to Autonetics, a division of North American Aviation, where he worked on automatic flight control systems and inertial guidance for small submarines. He was also active in the Bay Area Chapter. His mentor at Autonetics, Ken Teel, recognized his potential and encouraged him to return to graduate studies. This recognition led to Bob’s next stint, in the Bourne’s Lab, initiating his classic work on concept learning. His dissertation on attribution and rule learning, published in *Psychological Review*, has received almost 200 citations.

Following the tradition of the footloose academic, Bob and his wife, Danielle, took positions at Long Beach State, Autonetics (again), Kansas State University, and finally at Arizona State University, where he developed the cognitive psychology program and founded a local human factors group.

Bob spent the remainder of his career at ASU. While there, he applied his experimental psychology skills to help improve the training of jet pilots at local Air Force bases. Bob always went out of his way to encourage and assist graduate students in thinking about different ways to employ their training in experimental psychology.

Bob remained intellectually active until the end. One of us received a letter a month before his passing in which he said he was worried about the pernicious effects on our field of null-hypothesis testing and its attendant file drawer problem.

Bob was also a professional-level pianist. “Doc” Haygood played solo and with many groups, from U.S. Air Force bands in the early years, to jazz bands in Phoenix during his retirement. It is fitting that as a memorial, his wife and family arranged a tribute jam session. Many of the finest musicians in the Valley of the Sun will honor Bob’s memory in the best way possible, making music, as Bob did both in his profession of psychology and in his avocation as a musician.

—Peter Killeen & Jim Eubanks
SHORT COURSES

Harvard School of Public Health, Center for Continuing Professional Education
Measurement, Design, and Analysis Methods for Health Outcomes Research, August 17–19, 2011, Boston, MA.
Ergonomics and Human Factors: Strategic Solutions for Workplace Safety and Health, September 19–22, 2011, Boston, MA.

Ohio State University, Institute for Ergonomics
Putting Ergonomics Into Practice, May 10–13, 2011, Columbus, OH.

University of Michigan, Center for Occupational Health & Safety Engineering

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Assistant Professor in Industrial Engineering

The Department of Industrial Engineering at Clemson University is now accepting applications for a tenure track faculty position at the assistant professor to begin in August 2011. Applicants of higher rank will also be considered.

The individual selected for this position will be expected to develop and sustain a funded research program and to contribute to the graduate and undergraduate teaching missions of the department. Successful candidates are expected to complement the faculty’s research interests in one of three areas: 1) Human Factors and Safety in Healthcare and other Complex Environments, 2) Supply Chain, Optimization, and Logistics. More information on department activities within these areas is available at http://www.ces.clemson.edu/ie. Applicants must have an earned doctorate in industrial engineering or a closely related field, or be candidates for the degree with expected completion prior to assuming the position.

Clemson University is the land-grant university of South Carolina. It has been featured by Time Magazine as Public College of the Year in 2000, among Kaplan-Newsweek’s top schools for education value, and was recently ranked as the 23rd best national public university by US News and World Report. The industrial engineering department offers the B.S., M.Eng., M.S. and Ph.D. degrees, has twelve faculty members, and serves a full-time student body of approximately 180 undergraduates, 100 M.Engr. (distance), 40 M.S. (on-campus), and 35 doctoral students.

As a faculty member within the Department of Industrial Engineering, the successful candidate must:

• teach undergraduate and graduate courses at the level that is consistent with Clemson’s high standards
• develop a significant funded research program
• perform services in support of the Department, College and University’s mission

Applicants should submit a letter stating interest in the position that cites experience relevant to the above-noted candidate qualities, a curriculum vitae, and names and contact information for three references. Informal inquiries, applications, and nominations should be directed to Dr. Scott A. Shappell, Chair of the Search Committee, 110 Freeman Hall, Clemson University, Box 340920, Clemson, SC 29634-0920; Phone: 864-656-4662; Email: HFEng@clemson.edu.

All application materials received by April 15, 2011 will receive full consideration; however, the search will remain open until the position is filled.

_Clemson University is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity employer and does not discriminate against any individual or group of individuals on the basis of age, color, disability, gender, national origin, race, religion, sexual orientation, veteran status or genetic information._
HFES Invites Your Health Care Ergonomics Research

The Human Factors and Ergonomics Society is proud to announce the first **Human Factors Prize**, which recognizes excellence in HF/E research.

Authors are invited to join the competition and submit their best research on this year’s chosen topic. The prize winner will receive a $10,000 cash reward and publication in the Society’s flagship journal, *Human Factors*.

The topic for the 2011 Prize is **health care ergonomics**, broadly defined to include research at the intersection of health care and human factors/ergonomics.

**Eligibility:**

- Any researcher is eligible to submit relevant work; **membership in HFES is not required**.

- Submissions must cover original (unpublished) research in the topical area and comply with the requirements in the Human Factors *Instructions for Authors*.

- Review articles and brief reports are not eligible.

The submission deadline is June 1, 2011. The winner will be announced on August 15, 2011, and the award presentation will take place at the HFES 55th Annual Meeting, held September 19–23, 2011 at the Red Rock Hotel in Las Vegas, Nevada. The winner will also present his/her work during the Annual Meeting.

For details about submission and the evaluation process, visit the Human Factors Prize Web page at [http://www.hfes.org/web/pubpages/hfprize.html](http://www.hfes.org/web/pubpages/hfprize.html).

**We look forward to receiving your submissions.**