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Honegger, Barbara

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NPS Stands Up New All-Platform Center for Survivability and Lethality

Friday, February 02, 2007

by *Barbara Honegger, Senior Military Affairs Journalist*

On Jan. 30, the Naval Postgraduate School (NPS) announced the creation of the Center for Survivability and Lethality. The new research and education enterprise is the first interdisciplinary center dedicated to making the broad range of U.S. and allied military, homeland security and critical infrastructure platforms more survivable to attack and more lethal to hostile platforms and systems.

Twenty NPS faculty members from the departments of Mechanical and Astronautical Engineering (MAE), Physics and Electrical Engineering have already agreed to participate in the research and education activities of the new center.

"This is the start of something we expect to be huge," said center Co-Director and Associate Dean of the NPS Graduate School of Engineering and Applied Sciences Cmdr. Chris Adams. "The goal is to significantly expand survivability and lethality engineering as a formalized scientific discipline, and become a conduit for research and education funding focused on developing innovative survivability and lethality applications for industry, government and the military."

The new center builds upon the pioneering work of Distinguished Professor Emeritus Robert Ball, who founded the first and only course on all aspects of aircraft combat survivability at NPS in the 1970s and wrote the field's 'bible,' *The Fundamentals of Aircraft Combat Survivability Analysis and Design*.

"In standing up this center, we stand on the shoulders of Bob Ball who is truly the 'Father of Aircraft Combat Survivability Education' and the world's foremost authority in the field," said Adams, a former thesis student of Ball's at NPS. "We're extremely fortunate that Professor Ball has worked on both the aircraft and ship survivability aspects of our new MAE platform survivability course and generously agreed to help with the center."

Adams emphasized the value of extending survivability and lethality research across all platforms.

"Everything that can be built can be built better," said Adams, "and expanding the focus of the engineering discipline from aircraft to all platforms -- ships, missiles, submarines, satellites, tanks, trucks -- will enable us to move our military expertise out to the civilian automobile and aircraft industries."

"The center will support the ongoing NPS missile systems engineering track," said center Co-Director



Co-Director of the new Naval Postgraduate School (NPS) Center for Survivability and Lethality and Associate Dean of the Graduate School of Engineering and Applied Sciences Cmdr. Chris Adams (second from left) with officer students in his Winter course in platform survivability and systems reliability. The new interdisciplinary research and education center, the first of its kind in the world, is dedicated to making the broad range of U.S. and allied military, homeland security and critical infrastructure platforms more survivable to attack from sea mines (center) and other weapons, as well as more lethal to hostile platforms and systems. The mine was dedicated during a "Technology and the Mine Problem" conference held at NPS.

and Associate Chairman of the Department of Mechanical and Astronautical Engineering Knox Millsaps, "as well as pursue critical homeland security and military and civilian infrastructure issues that can benefit from the same analytical framework."

"In the post 9/11 world, a lot of people are clamoring for survivability education," stressed Adams, who is currently teaching an NPS course on platform survivability and systems reliability, ME 4751. "We knew we were really onto something when this course became the most heavily subscribed ME 4000-level course here at NPS over the last two years. And there are a lot of air combat groups and civilian industry experts who also want to take it via distributed learning."

Just some of the other courses which will be taught under the auspices of the center are platform signatures, ship systems, satellites, warheads, weapon engineering, directed energy weapons, electronic warfare, and modeling and simulation.

According to Millsaps, the NPS Center on Survivability and Lethality will also include an industrial consortium through which industry representatives can support its research efforts, take short courses and receive up-to-date publications in the field.

Ball recently won the American Association of Aeronautics and Astronautics Summerfield Book Award for his *The Fundamentals of Aircraft Combat Survivability Analysis and Design, Second Edition*, judged the best book recently published by the professional association (see story at <http://www.nps.edu/News/ReadNews.aspx?id=3118&role=pao&area=media>).

For more information on the Naval Postgraduate School Center for Survivability and Lethality, contact Adams at caadams@nps.edu, (831) 656-2682; or Millsaps at millsaps@nps.edu, (831) 656-3382.

To learn more about aircraft combat survivability, visit Prof. Ball's Aircraft Combat Survivability Education Web Site at <http://www.aircraft-survivability.com/>. For detailed information about all Naval Postgraduate School programs, go to www.nps.edu.

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