

## DENEL OPTRONICS AWARDED R200 MILLION ORDER FOR EUROFIGHTER- TYPHOON

by Sam J Basch

**BAE Systems, the global defence and aerospace group, has awarded Denel Optronics a production order for optical helmet tracker systems (HTS) for the Eurofighter-Typhoon fighter aircraft.**

The order follows a 2003 design and development contract for the system. The production order, worth more than R200 million for some 450 high-technology pilot helmet tracking systems for installation on NATO's newest jet fighter, will be executed over the next four to five years.

"We are particularly pleased with this large contract from BAE Systems, as it confirms Denel Optronics' position as a world leader in helmet tracking systems for pilots," said Shaun Liebenberg, Group CEO of Denel (Pty) Ltd. "Importantly, it sets Denel Optronics on a firm footing within the global defence environment as part of Carl Zeiss Optronics. This is exactly what we'd hoped to achieve with Denel's turnaround strategy and are grateful our partnerships are benefiting all those involved. As design authority of the HTS, Denel Optronics is also playing an important role in supporting the high technology supplier base in South Africa including such strategic suppliers as Parsec and Ansys."

German company Carl Zeiss Optronics GmbH signed an agreement with Denel in March 2007 to acquire a majority stake in Denel Optronics as part of the Denel's restructuring process. Final competition authority and PFMA approval of the Zeiss transaction is imminent.

The unique Denel designed optical HTS continuously monitors the position of the pilot's head and where he is looking. In this manner it is able to aim the aircraft's weapons, reconnaissance and self-



graphic by Howard Thacker

protection systems towards 'points of interest' at which the pilot is looking.

"Eurofighter-Typhoon pilots will appreciate the design ingenuity and reliability of the Denel Optronics head-tracker system. It is a testament to the valuable engineering skills that reside within South Africa's defence and aerospace industry. BAE Systems is committed to supporting South Africa in growing its high-technology industry," explained Mr. Jonathan Walton, Executive Vice President, South Africa for BAE Systems."

In February this year, BAE Systems placed a US\$3.4 million (approximately R24 million) order on Denel Optronics to complete the industrialisation of the optical head tracker system. Evaluations have shown the system to be superior to any similar system available in the world.

### Did You Know?

Denel Optronics pioneered helmet-tracking systems and produced operational units in the early 1970s.

The current design comprises three cockpit sensors that track helmet movement, and a processor unit that calculates the angle and position of the pilot's head.

Denel Optronics developed this unique world-leading optical tracking technology entirely in South Africa. This latest version of the system, for Eurofighter-Typhoon, tracks and processes data three times faster than predecessor versions, making it ideally suited to the latest generation of fighters.

### Like to know more?

#### Contact:

Kobus Viljoen  
CEO (designate) : Zeiss Optronics (Pty) Ltd.  
Phone: (+27) 12 674-0215  
Fax: (+27) 12 674-0198  
k.viljoen@zeiss.de