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Military, Industry, Academia Form National Small Arms Center

Picatinny and 30 small arms representatives from the military, industry and academia have formed a national small arms consortium focused on curbing the shrinking of the U.S. small arms technology base.

The National Small Arms Center, the name given to the venture, includes domestic and foreign manufacturers, government military and civilian laboratories and several NJ universities. The participants inked an agreement on Feb. 5 to pool their resources.



To be based at Picatinny, the center seeks to respond to a decline in small arms research, development and procurement since the fall of the Soviet Union. It plans to meet the need for advances in small arms technology, weight reduction, increased firepower and the integration of electronics.

Armament Technical Director Michael P. Devine said that the consortium will mean quick progress in research and development.

"We're going to get a whole lot more out of it than if we all do our own little piece."

"It is our job to keep working at the future. What will our enemies have 10 years from now? What will we need to defeat them?"

Jean-Louis Vanderstraeten, who heads FN Manufacturing Inc., one of the military's largest small arms suppliers, said that while collaboration among competing firms is rare, it is vital.

"We cannot work on developing lightweight weapons, for example, unless we partner with other companies that are specialized," he said.

Among those signing the agreement was Stevens Institute of Technology of Hoboken which is working on the use of composite materials for more light weight weapons. New Jersey Institute, which is developing "smart-gun" technology with a special gun grip recognition system, also agreed to collaborate.