



Darren Bean, an equipment specialist with Product Manager Soldier Clothing and Individual Equipment at Natick Soldier Systems Center, Mass., has been working since November 2012 on the M320GL Holster Soldier Enhancement Program. (photo by NSRDEC photographer David Kamm)

# Natick Develops Holster for M320 Grenade Launcher

*By NCO Journal*

**D**arren Bean, an equipment specialist with Product Manager Soldier Clothing and Individual Equipment, or PM SCIE, has been working on a better way for Soldiers to carry the M320 40mm grenade launcher.

The detachable M320, named one of the Army's top 10 inventions of 2009, comes equipped with a sling to carry it when not mounted to the M4 carbine or M16 rifle, according to Bean. At seven pounds, it provides a lightweight and lethal addition to a Soldier's arsenal. The M320 began replacing the M203 in 2009.

Bean has been at the Natick Soldier Systems Center in Massachusetts since November 2012 collecting data for the M320GL Holster Soldier Enhancement Program, or SEP.

"It was a one-point sling, so (the weapon) was kind of bouncing around," Bean said. "If you went down to the ground, you were dragging it through the dirt. Most people felt that protection was needed at some level because they were just getting dragged in the dirt and pounded on."

Bean said some Soldiers wanted a holster for the M320, which weighs seven pounds with the butt stock.

The SEP allowed the purchase of enough holsters to equip a brigade combat team. He said the "buy-try-decide" concept allows the Army to test the functionality of equipment without spending a lot of time on research and development.

Bean found three commercial vendors who make M320 holsters, so PM SCIE acquired 167 of each.

Bean put the holsters in the hands of a dozen Soldiers from the 75th Ranger Regiment at Fort Benning, Ga., who went through a set of standardized tests in mid May. The Soldiers filled out surveys after the testing.

The testing was to make sure it was realistic to go forward, Bean said.


"Now we can actually test them with an entire brigade," he added.

Soldiers of the 10th Mountain Division (Light Infantry) from Fort Drum, N.Y., the 86th Infantry Brigade Combat Team of the Vermont National Guard, and Soldiers in Afghanistan are currently evaluating the

holsters. The Consumer Research Team at the Natick Soldier Research, Development and Engineering Center will collect data. PM SCIE officials will then make a recommendation to the Maneuver Center of Excellence at Fort Benning by the beginning of fiscal year 2014.

*Army News Service contributed to this report.*

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