

# Outlook

## The Right Place at the Right Time

Over twenty years ago, by my count, Glenair worked with an outfit called Booz Allen and Hamilton on a dismantled soldier project called the Joint Expeditionary Digital Information System, or JEDI. Our role was to provide Glenair-made junction box assemblies equipped with early versions of our Series 80 Mighty Mouse connector. Over the next many years we played similar roles on any number of Dismounted Soldier System (DSS) projects—especially for Land Warrior and ultimately Nett Warrior—a program named in honor of Robert B. Nett, a WWII Medal of Honor recipient (thanks for your service and RIP, Colonel Nett).

Much of this work came our way due to problems with existing connectors and cables that were simply too big and heavy for soldier applications or, in other cases, suffered from durability issues.

The first Mighty Mouse connectors used on soldier systems had threaded coupling mechanisms. But what soldier gear really needed was a connector that would snap-to-mate and then de-mate with a calibrated tug on the cable. In 2001, we started work on a new push-pull design that actually saw its first use on a pilot headset for Eurocopter. It wasn't until 2003 that this quick-disconnect version of the Mighty Mouse was in full use on the major soldier program of the day, Land Warrior. Forever a salesman, I can't help but crow that we supplied tens of thousands of connectors and cables to Land Warrior. And as many of you are no doubt aware, this work was instrumental in establishing our six-pin Mighty Mouse Push-Pull as the de facto standard on soldier hubs, EUDs, batteries, as well as many of the critical C4ISR devices now used in Dismounted Soldier Systems.

Fun story, I was at a trade show a few years back and was chatting with a competitor, a manufacturer of soldier power and data hubs (a system in close competition with our STAR-PAN series). Now, we were both going out of our way to be polite and cordial, but at one point this fellow commented on what a shame it was that we (Glenair) felt compelled to "get into their business" with STAR-PAN. You could have knocked me over with a feather! And I admit I was none too shy in explaining that we had been in the soldier systems business for decades, and had absolutely helped shape it into what it had become with our innovative connector designs and years of effective customer service.

They say business success is a little bit of skill, combined with fair share of courage, and a whole lot of luck. Did we enjoy some luck in our now 20-year-plus ride with Mighty Mouse? You bet we did. To this day it surprises me that our principal competitors have always (and somewhat patronizingly) thought of Mighty Mouse as a "nice little product line," and largely left us alone to grow the market for small form-factor mil-grade circulars. What else can you call that besides luck? Or perhaps it's better to say we were just in the right place at the right time—all tooled up and perfectly positioned to serve a growing, mission-critical market that desperately needed a partner just like Glenair.

*Chris Toomey*

# QwikConnect

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