Q: Can you describe Strategic Operations’ history and evolution?

A: Strategic Operations Inc. (STOPS), on the lot of Stu Segall Productions, at one time among the largest independent TV/movie studios in the United States, provides “Hyper-Realistic” training services and products for military, law enforcement and other organizations responsible for homeland security. (Hyper-Realistic, a trademark of STOPS, is defined as “such a high degree of fidelity in the replication of real-world conditions in a simulation environment that participants so willingly suspend disbelief that they become totally immersed and eventually stress-inoculated in a way that can be quantifiably and qualitatively verified.”) For the last 13 years, STOPS has employed state-of-the-art Hollywood battlefield special effects, combat wound effects, medical simulation systems like the Cut Suit, role players, foreign-language speakers and immersive, interactive scenarios to create training and educational environments that are unique in the industry.

Q: What are some of your key products in the Department of Defense training and simulation market?

A: STOPS manufactures a wide range of innovative products for medical simulation: a mobile, scalable building system that can replicate the look of any area of the world, ship simulators, specialized, custom-made mission-rehearsal sites, replica weapons, 3-D live-fire targets, ballistic unmanned ground vehicle targets and props of all kinds.

Q: How are you positioned for the future within the U.S. military?

A: The lessons learned from STOPS’ immersive-style training environment have shaped the way training is conducted today. The need for mastering the human domain in military training became clear on the road to war in Iraq and Afghanistan. STOPS will continue to develop cultural training models with an emphasis on decisive action training exercises (U.S. Army) and future character of conflict (U.K. Ministry of Defence) supporting the British Army Training Unit Suffield.

STOPS will continue to create complex training environments simulating internally displaced populations, hybrid threats, malign actors and stability operations to meet future challenges. These hyper-realistic training environments combine live and classroom support for OSINT, cyber, human- and counter-intelligence training. STOPS will continue to be a premier vendor for design and construction of mission rehearsal facilities and complex target sites supporting direct action training. STOPS’ live-fire shoot house enhancements, using ballistic-safe movie-style props and furniture, convert sterile shoot houses into tactically challenging facilities for advanced critical skill development.

Q: What is Strategic Operations’ connection with the defense community?

A: Over the last 13 years, Strategic Operations has provided hyper-realistic training support to more than 750,000 military and law enforcement in the United States and Canada. From 2004 to 2009, STOPS was the only non-military facility (an alternative training venue) for Marine Corps pre-deployment training.

Q: What is an example of your success in the military, and what are some of your goals (specific to the training/simulation industry) over the next year?

A: Using all of our movie industry capabilities helped us create novel, immersive, interactive, hyper-realistic, evidence-based training systems and scenarios that have changed the training world. Numerous peer-reviewed scientific papers demonstrate the value of this type of training and its “stress inoculation” effect. STOPS is involved in research and development with the Naval Health Research Center under its Simulated Ambulant Laboratory Technology contract, as well as with the Army Research Lab, Office of Naval Research and other organizations. Under a Cooperative Research and Development Agreement with Naval Medical Center San Diego, STOPS will soon receive the only non-flyable MV-22 Osprey to help conduct R&D en-route surgical resuscitation.

Q: How do customers benefit from Strategic Operations’ varied resources and expertise?

A: Whether at its unique training facilities or with its mobile MOUT and mobile training support teams, STOPS delivers hyper-realistic, immersive, interactive training scenarios to support any training objectives. Training support may include after-action review capabilities and a range of objective assessment tools and metrics, including biometrics, to validate results. Individual and team performance can be assessed with quantitative and qualitative scientific methods. In an era of dwindling military budgets, proven scientific methods to determine the return on investment of training dollars help ensure those dollars are wisely spent. 

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