



Military Medics, First Responders Guided By Simple Light

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By Eric Beidel

Five soldiers lay wounded in a field. Who should receive help first?

A San Antonio businessman has come up with a solution to conducting battlefield triage that already is catching on in the military. Juan Cienfuegos is the founder of Southwest Synergistic Solutions, the company that manufactures a new line of triage technology called E/T Lights.

A single light beams four colors based on the condition of a patient — red, yellow, green and blue. Instead of using four different chemical light sticks, a soldier can carry one device that is slightly larger than bulbs commonly used in Christmas decorations. The technology was developed in conjunction with Air Force medics and also is being used by a Marine battalion and Army medics. They use the lights for triage, equipment marking and indicating emergency landing zones, Cienfuegos said.

A corpsman home from Afghanistan sparked the idea. "He said he was carrying too many bags with different colored chemical light sticks, getting shot at and it was just too much stuff," Cienfuegos said. "He wanted to lighten his load, improve his time per patient and make sure that support was able to distinguish who on the battlefield went on the helicopter first."

The lights are small enough to be controlled by one hand, making it possible for a patient to visually announce his own priority to medical support.

Cienfuegos also envisions the lights being used in mass casualty situations. If a hurricane slams a town full of victims with triage lights, first responders can know even in darkness where to go initially, he explained.