SSH Profiles in Simulation: Bill Lewandowski
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Completely Hooked

When U.S. troops deployed in response to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in the first Gulf War, many active duty and National Guard army officers needed extensive and fast training in armor (tank) combat operations.

Many of them came to Bill Lewandowski at Fort Stewart in Georgia. Lewandowski had a background in simulated training of tank weapons firing and maneuvering, having served in several capacities as an active duty officer in Germany. For many of those young officers and sergeants preparing to go to war, it was also the first time that they had met each other.

The training proved so effective, that when members of the South Carolina National Guard returned from the Middle East, they said, “it was just like being in SIMNET (the tank simulator they had used).” Lewandowski would be recognized for his efforts by the South Carolina legislature.

He then went on to work in aviation simulation where he managed an airline flight simulation center and a curriculum development division and was later offered a job in medical simulation, a position that he was reluctant to take.

But as part of the interview process, in 2000, he participated in a simulation in which he inserted a catheter subcutaneously into the head of a newborn. It was all virtual, using equipment with a simulator; but so real, he says, that you could feel the skin pop when the catheter went in.

“I was completely hooked,” he said.

Today, Lewandowski serves as Vice President, Surgical Products Business Development for 3D Systems Healthcare.
While many other industry trade shows he attends view him solely as a vendor, at IMSH, and within SSH, he said, his company, as well as the other companies who attend IMSH, are viewed as true partners.

One example is that as Chair of the Society’s Corporate Roundtable, he also serves on the Society’s Board of Directors.

“We’re all part of the same team, and we all want to make simulation in healthcare better,” he said. “It’s a very unique and, I think, important relationship. Simulation has grown tremendously in the last 17 years, and ultimately the people who really benefit from that are patients.”