

Research inventors receive design patent

By Randy Siniard, AMRDEC Public Affairs

REDSTONE ARSENAL, Ala. (Aug. 26, 2010) – Christina Blankenship, aerospace engineer, and John Bush, engineering technician, Aviation and Missile Research Development and Engineering Center employees, have received a design patent for their invention: the Boat-Shaped Fork Lift Receiver Hitch.

The invention converts the pintle

sion Technology Function in the Weapons Development and Integration Directorate, are always looking for ways to improve performance of everyday business operations.

“I’ve been inventing things since I was 5,” Bush said. “We invent/develop/research things on a day to day basis.”

One day, the two inventors were out in the field conducting a test and needed a par-



GREAT IDEA-- Christina Blankenship and John Bush, both of AMRDEC, display their newly patented invention, the Boat-Shaped Fork Lift Receiver Hitch.

hook system to a ball receiver, allowing the driver to tow a trailer with a forklift in the standard driving position and improving safety while moving other than palletized materials.

Sometimes, inventions happen out of necessity.

Blankenship and Bush, at the Propul-

ticular type of hitch.

“We had a new trailer and could not back it up using our forklift,” Blankenship said. “It would hit the forklift and prevent a full turning radius.”

They began an exhaustive search through tractor supply catalogs, and the Internet, called the forklift manufacturing company

directly, and called some trailer hitch companies.

“We were told the part we were looking for didn’t exist,” Bush said.

So, the two began tossing ideas around, wrote down a few concepts on paper and then built it.

“We only had to build it once,” Blankenship said.

Blankenship and Bush agreed that it felt great to be recognized with a patent for inventing something that can be used both in the Army’s everyday mission and by commercial companies.

“Most current warehouses use a forklift to move crates and transport items using the forks,” said Cindy Wallace, deputy for the Office of Research and Technology Applications, Advanced Science and Technology Directorate. “Therefore, this hitch converter will allow those forklifts to also be used as towing vehicles.

“Of course there are other conversion tools out there already for forklifts which allow for towing, however none of those allow the driver to still have the forks available for lifting and carrying while also towing,” Wallace said.