

TACTICAL ELECTRONICS

Tactical Electronics aims for safety for police, military

When U.S. soldiers in hostile territory suspect the road ahead is booby-trapped with improvised explosive devices, they can turn to innovative technology developed by an Oklahoma company to ensure their safety.

Broken Arrow's Tactical Electronics created the Sire multifunctional wireless robot for just a situation, said Curtis Sprague, Director of Western U.S. Sales & Mexico.

The Sire robot is designed to carry its own explosive payload, roll up to the suspected device and blow it up. The robot is so light and compact that three of them will fit in a soldier's backpack.

"The military had a very specific need for a robot that they could put explosives in, send downrange and detonate," said Sprague. "It's very cheap compared to other robotic systems because it's designed to be destroyed."



Founded 18 years ago by owner Tim Thornton, Tactical Electronic provides training, tools and equipment to military and law enforcement customers. The company recently opened a 30,000 square foot manufacturing facility here where engineers are constantly developing and testing new technologies.

"This is where the magic happens, where we make everything we put out there in the hands of operators and special operations guys in the military and law enforcement around the world," Sprague said.

In addition to Broken Arrow headquarters and manufacturing operations, the company operates sales offices in Chattanooga, Tenn., Virginia Beach, Va., and in the United Kingdom. It employs 77 people companywide.

As a long-time law enforcement veteran, Sprague knows just how valuable the company's robots, pole-mounted cameras, under-door cameras and even K-9 mounted cameras can be to police and military in dangerous situations.

"These cameras allow tactical operators to see in places where before they had to place themselves, their heads, for example," he said. "It's not safe these days, when we have the technology, for an operator to stick his head up into a crawl space where there may be a suspect or a bad guy hiding."

Sprague cites a very specific instance of police using a Tactical Electronics device during the investigation into the Aurora, Colo., theater shooting in 2012. Tactical unit investigators used a long pole camera to peer into the suspect's second floor apartment to confirm that it had been booby-trapped.

Sprague frequently hears similar success stories.

"Many times they will send us recordings of operations they have been out on where they have successfully used our equipment," Sprague said. "They tell us what's going on and give us feedback on when cameras

have worked for them and kept them from having to go into a place that might have been dangerous for them otherwise.”

In fact, everything in the company’s product line came about because of feedback and specific requests from customers.

“Anything we make comes from a customer request,” Sprague said. “We don’t make anything on spec.”

Sprague escorted me through the company’s spotless production facility where technicians were operating high tech machinery that cut and milled parts to their engineers’ specification.

Tactical Electronics’ operations have been enhanced by a relationship established with the Oklahoma Manufacturing Alliance and its partner, the Oklahoma Center for the Advancement of Science and Technology (OCAST).

“The Oklahoma Manufacturing Alliance has allowed me to meet other manufacturers in the area that we didn’t know existed,” Sprague said. “There are places that make batteries close by, electric motors and all kinds of things we can use in our products.”

Through the OCAST Intern Partnership program, new talent has been recruited to the company.

“We’ve got a very robust internship program here at Tactical Electronics,” Sprague said. “OCAST has been very good about supplying us with interns, and we’ve got a lot good talent that way.”

The company continues to pursue newer and better electronics that can serve law enforcement and military. New advanced technology is scheduled to debut this spring, Sprague said.

Like the Sire disposable robot that can be carried in a soldier’s backpack, the new gadgets can be critical to the survival of their customers.

“I come from a tactical background myself, so I know what the benefits are,” Sprague said.

[See the story in the 4-18-17 Oklahoman](#)

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