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INSIDE: Market roundup C2

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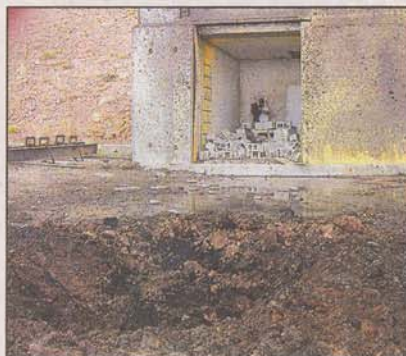


MONEY & THE ECONOMY

Technology Inc. | SPECIALTY COATINGS



Workers made final preparations before detonating a 200-pound bomb (in foreground) to test blast mitigation coating developed by Line-X. The left side of the block wall was untreated.



The untreated wall was demolished in the blast, which created crater about 30 feet away. Coating prevented broken fragments in wall on right from becoming flying projectiles. *Line-x photos*

Truck bed coating reporting for duty

Military finds life-saving applications for spray-on linings

By **Bruce V. Bigelow**
STAFF WRITER

When Russell Lewis founded Rhino Linings in San Diego 18 years ago, the South African entrepreneur envisioned uses for spray-on polyurethane coatings that went far beyond the cargo beds of pickup trucks.

Still, it is unusual when a company with an established business finds an enormous new market for its products. Yet privately held Rhino Linings has done just that — by using its tough polymer materials to help protect U.S. troops in Iraq and elsewhere.

Now the same resilient polymer coating that helps protect truck beds from scratches and dings is going to war:

- Spraying Rhino Linings' proprietary coatings on Humvees and other military vehicles has helped protect them against small-arms fire and roadside bombs.

- Applying the coating to ceramic plates used in bulletproof vests helps the body armor withstand direct hits from small-arms fire.

- Spraying the polyurethane on masonry walls of buildings helps prevent debris or concrete blocks from disintegrating into deadly flying fragments in a bomb blast.

"We're going to solve a whole lot of problems for the military this year," said Lewis, 47, whose company has about \$200 million a year in sales.

"We've gone from saving

SEE **Rhino, C5**



Like Rhino Linings, **Line-X** also has seen strong growth among military customers.

In recent weeks, for example, **Line-X** workers have been spraying polyurethane inside the outer walls of the Pentagon. Field tests have shown the coating helps protect occupants inside masonry buildings because it forms an elastic membrane that keeps bombs from blasting block walls into fragments.

In one test conducted by **Line-X**, 200 pounds of TNT exploded 30 feet from a structure that featured two conventional block walls, with one coated with a **Line-X** polyurethane. The untreated wall was destroyed, and block fragments dismembered a dummy seated behind a desk behind the wall. The blast did not penetrate the coated wall.

Because the application process uses no solvents or volatile compounds, "I can spray in the Pentagon while it's occupied because there are no environmental issues associated with it," **Line-X** Chief Executive Scott Jewett said.

Both companies hope to win more business by spraying their coatings inside buildings used by American personnel in Afghanistan, Iraq and in other trouble spots around the world.

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INSIDE: TECHNOLOGY INC.

People to watch: Bradley J. Little, managing director, technology practice, R.J. Watkins & Co. **C5**

Alexis Espinosa, who works for a Rhino Linings dealership in San Diego, sprayed the polyurethane coating on part of the rooftop cooling system at Scripps Green Hospital in La Jolla. *Peggie Peattie | Union-Tribune*