

LAKWOOD INDUSTRIAL COMMISSION

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MILSPRAY™ – Finding Solutions in Lakewood

Founded in a garage 15 years ago by Todd Bullivant who used baby food jars while experimenting with ways to apply small containers of touch-paint to military vehicles, MILSPRAY Military Technologies™ (www.milspray.com) today is a thriving business with an international reach and a growing client base.

The privately held company currently employs about 60 people deployed in such far-flung places as Guam as well as Camp Pendleton in San Diego and the Fort Irwin U.S. Army National Training Center in the Mojave Desert, both in California, and Camp LeJeune, N.C.

Ten years ago MILSPRAY™ moved to Lakewood from Asbury Park and now occupies a 20,000 square-foot building, its headquarters, on Towbin Avenue in Lakewood's Industrial Park. Here, it develops and delivers products, systems, and services for the Department of Defense (DOD), government agencies, law enforcement and commercial businesses domestically and internationally to include corrosion prevention services for vehicles and equipment, renewable energy systems, portable vehicle wash systems, touch-up paints, and specialty coatings.

Chantel Robinson, who joined the company in 2011 and is vice president of Administrative Operations, said, "We started with touch-up paints that were well-received by the military all over the globe. But our military customers wanted us to service the entire vehicle, which led to our mobile corrosion prevention and control services."

Robinson earned a B.S. in Chemical Engineering from the Georgia Institute of Technology, and her MBA and a M.S.(Master of Science) degrees in International Business from Seton Hall University. As the daughter of a career U.S. Air Force officer, Robinson not only works for Milspray™, but also has a background and understanding of the military and its needs.

The Lakewood location also provides support services for the Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, all of which are within a 30-mile drive. But what about vehicles in remote environments, such as war zones or at military installations? MILSPRAY™ developed a portable shelter system for technicians to travel anywhere in the U.S. and abroad to repair, sand blast, prime, paint and service military vehicles and equipment.

"Service on site eliminates transportation costs to military depots and reduces turn-around time. Instead of weeks or months, it takes days to service an asset," Robinson explained. "Base commanders are rated for performance, including readiness numbers. This mobile service enables them to account for every vehicle in their fleet at any given time." MILSPRAY's creative solution to this problem helped it earn "multi-year contracts with the U.S. Marine Corps, the U.S. Army and the U.S. Air Force around the globe, including highly corrosive environments, such as Japan and Guam," Robinson said.

While working with military personnel globally, MILSPRAY™ saw a need to wash vehicles to help fight against corrosion as well as passing U.S. Department of Agriculture inspections. As a result, MILSPRAY's Expeditionary Vehicle Wash System was introduced. It is environmentally friendly and reclaims, recycles, and re-uses the wash water. They offer another system called their Above Ground Vehicle Wash System. Both systems are above ground and there is no discharge or waste stream.

Another problem in the field is having dependable energy. An idea developed on the back of a napkin and turned over to an engineer to design became known as the Scorpion Energy Hunter™. With solar harvesting capabilities and a backup generator with a 100 gallon fuel tank, the Scorpion Energy Hunter™ is completely containerized and used to supply power when a power grid is not available. It saves lives by reducing the number of fuel convoys traveling dangerous supply routes in war zones. The other benefits include a reduction in fuel consumption, maintenance costs and pollution.

But MILSPRAY™ also realized, Robinson said, “We had 99 percent of our eggs in the military basket.” Although the American military response to 9/11 was a boon for the fledgling company in 2001, with recent cuts in defense spending and the end of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, MILSPRAY™ realized it needed to diversify its products for a broader customer base.

Two years ago MILSPRAY'S founder — a serial entrepreneur, Robinson said — left the company. Brian Feser, a retired U.S. Army Lieutenant Colonel with 28 years of service, was hired as the new CEO and president. Feser previously served as vice president of International Business Operations for Textron Systems. Before being promoted, he served as vice president of Business Development and Strategy at Textron Marine & Land Systems and concurrently served as the director of Afghanistan Operations, fielding the mobile strike force armored vehicle for the Afghan National Army. He holds a M.S. in Human Resources and Business Administration from Central Michigan University, and a M.A. in National Security and Strategic Studies from the Naval War College.

“What we are doing now is repurposing our products for the commercial, industrial, and automotive markets. What’s great for the military is great for other applications,” Robinson said. “If our products are used by soldiers and the military, they will be a great product for the commercial and industrial customers.”

The Vehicle Wash Systems are used by the commercial, agricultural and mining industries. For instance, in some states trucks leaving job sites are required by law to be cleaned to prevent spreading debris and chemicals onto public roadways.

The Scorpion Energy Hunter™ can be used by hospitals, construction sites, municipalities and for disaster relief. The exV-1™, a stealth, all-terrain hybrid utility vehicle, is quiet, has blackout capability, infrared lighting avoidance and lithium batteries — great for operations that require silent mobility. Robinson said there has been interest for its use for border patrols and the wild game rangers industry in Botswana.

MILSPRAY's Tough Coat™, a lightweight leak-proof coating system, is used by the military for corrosion protection and as a bed liner on trucks. Since it adheres to any surface, it can be used on basements and foundations, garages, decks, ornamental ponds, pools — anywhere that water leakage is a problem.

MILSPRAY™ also has introduced PAINTABLES™, a line of paint applicators for the arts and crafts market with a universal adapter that fits popular bottles of craft paint sold by companies, including Martha Stewart Crafts™, Mod Podge®, and Tulip® to be sold at Michael’s®, AC Moore® and other craft stores. The PAINTABLES™ product line is sold through its website www.paintables.us, and will be in brick and mortar retail stores later this year.

MILSPRAY™ developed its Ballistic Resistant System™ for the Standard Issue Police Vehicles (SIPVs) and partnered with the Lakewood Police Department. All systems were donated at no cost to the police department. “They mentioned they were working on bullet-proofing car doors and asked if they could install some in one of our cruisers,” explained Lakewood Chief Greg Meyer.

The department dropped off the car and MILSPRAY™ took apart the door, inserted the panels within the door cavity, and returned the car. After a couple of weeks of routine patrols and use, the car went back to MILSPRAY™ so they could make any adjustments needed. Currently eight police cars have the Ballistic Resistant System™ installed.

Using doors for protection during a gun fight is pure Hollywood, Meyer said. “Bullets open them up like a can opener. They go right through them.” Bullet proof doors sounded good, though. “It worked out great. They do a nice job. You can’t even tell they’re there,” he said, adding MILSPRAY™ inspects the doors to make sure everything is where it should be. “We have a good relationship with them. They are always prompt, always on time, and good to work and deal with.”

MILSPRAY’s philanthropic arm, the In The Spirit of Giving™ Foundation is sponsoring a GoFundMe Crowdfunding Campaign, “*Protecting Those * Protecting Us™*” (gofundme.com/protecting those) to raise funds to install over 5,000 Ballistic Resistant Systems™ for law enforcement agencies.

This July, Robinson and Peder Cox, vice president of Strategic Initiatives and Sales, were interviewed by Kathy Ireland, business mogul and former supermodel, at CBS Television Studios in Los Angeles, California. “We are looking at airing on the Fox Business News (domestically) and Bloomberg Television (internationally),” Robinson said.

Finding solutions to problems is a business practice of which MILSPRAY™ is proud. It encourages its employees to use their talents and experience. “We’re very intentional about having a diverse organization. We want to represent the community where we live, work, and learn,” she said. Its workforce is 56 percent minorities, 19 percent women and 19 percent veterans. “We have women in key executive leadership positions (50 percent).

“We promote our company at local colleges and universities like Rutgers, Seton Hall University, Monmouth University and NJIT (New Jersey Institute of Technology), to name a few,” said Robinson. “We have formed partnerships with the N.J. Department of Labor’s Veterans Affairs office. Our veterans served us, and we serve them with employment opportunities.”

Anyone interested in employment opportunities, should visit MILSPRAY’s™ website for job postings. (www.milspray.com)

To learn more about MILSPRAY™, visit its website www.milspray.com. Also, visit “S®,” sponsored programming that airs on networks, such as Fox Business Network and Bloomberg, as well as YouTube and the show’s website <http://www.twwwb.com>.

by Frances A. Kirschner | Frantasy Enterprises
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