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• Dow Jones Newswires

HK BFR's Singapore Unit Makes Mine-Resistant Combat Boot

SINGAPORE (AP)--A Singapore factory has begun producing a locally designed military combat boot designed to protect against injuries from anti-personnel land mines.

Samples of the boot have been sold for "evaluations and trials" to defense agencies in about a dozen countries including the U.S., Spain, Turkey, Sri Lanka and Saudi Arabia, said Ashley Vaz, business development manager for BFR Singapore.

The "blast and fragment resistant", or BFR, boot differs from other anti-mine boots currently in use in that is light enough for combat, Vaz said.

Other anti-mine boots, used mainly for de-mining work, "are like a boot plus an overboot," Vaz said. "They're huge and heavy. You can't run in them."

The BFR boots weigh about 900 grams each and are light enough for running, he said.

The boots are reinforced with woven synthetic material similar to that used in bulletproof vests, Vaz said. The soles have a "sandwich" of corrugated stainless steel and alloy plates which "collapse on impact," partially absorbing the force of the explosion and protecting the foot, he said.

The boots will initially be priced around \$168 a pair, Vaz said.

BFR Singapore expects to manufacture about 15,000 pairs of boots by the end of this year, and is capable of putting out about 120,000 pairs a year, Vaz added.

Vaz's brother Andrew, now a shareholder in the company, invented the boot in Singapore in 1995.

BFR Singapore, the factory producing the boot, is a unit of Hong Kong company BFR Holdings Ltd., Ashley Vaz said.

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