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BUSINESS DIARY

## A Combat Boot Created to Resist Land Mines

**S**pecial helmets and armored vests have given American troops in Iraq and Afghanistan some protection against enemy bullets, but there has been no reliable defense against exploding land mines.

BFR Holdings of Hong Kong is selling what it calls the answer: a boot based on the technology behind bulletproof vests. The BFR ("blast and fragment resistant") boot is made with a woven protective fabric called Twaron, and corrugated strips of aluminum and stainless steel that absorb the shock of a mine blast.

Lee Fook Kiong, BFR's chief executive, said the boots do not eliminate the risk of mine injuries. "I'm not going to say that with this you can walk on water," he said. Still, the company received a flurry of orders before the Iraq war, many from American troops in Kuwait — and journalists traveling with them. At \$198 a pair, BFR's cost about the same as conventional combat boots.

Wayne Arnold

### Fighting Germs in Style

A radiology professor in Ohio says he has designed products that could protect people from severe acute respiratory syndrome, or SARS, and maybe even a chemical attack. At the very least, they look stylish with a business suit. The products are a silk tie (for men) and a silk scarf (for women) that include material designed to filter a "high percentage" of germs, particles and debris from the air, based on independent testing, according to the professor, John Haaga, at University Hospitals of Cleveland. He said the ties and scarves, at \$40 apiece, provide the same type of protection as an N95 respirator, a commonly used face mask.

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