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Think-A-Move Awarded US Army Commercialization Pilot Program Contract

The U.S. Army awarded Think-A-Move, Ltd., a Beachwood, Ohio based company, a Commercialization Pilot Program contract totaling \$600,000 on March 18, 2008. Under this contract, Think-A-Move will develop a field-deployable system of its hands-free and heads-up system for controlling a military robot, the iRobot PackBot®, with speech commands. The U.S. Army currently utilizes military robots, also known as Unmanned Ground Vehicles, for Improvised Explosive Device (IED) detection and surveillance. Over 1,400 PackBots have been deployed, mainly in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Think-A-Move was one of 25 companies selected for the Army's Commercialization Pilot Program, from over 425 applicants. Think-A-Move was previously awarded by the U.S. Army a Phase I Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) grant, a subsequent Phase II SBIR, and an expansion Phase III contract totaling over \$1.1 million. These awards demonstrated the feasibility of Think-A-Move's technology, and enabled Think-A-Move to begin and continue its product development.

Jim Harris, Think-A-Move's President, commented: "This demonstrates the value the Army places on developing a hands-free and heads-up control system for military robots. The continued interest by the U.S. Army shows how important this technology is for the soldier. We are very pleased to receive this Commercialization Pilot Program contract from the U.S. Army." Think-A-Move anticipates that the work under the contract will be completed by September 2008.

Currently, no systems use speech commands to control military robots because of their inability to work well in noisy environments. Think-A-Move addresses this problem by capturing speech in the ear canal and through its algorithms for ambient noise cancellation, enabling a soldier to effectively use speech commands for robot control.

Today, soldiers control military robots by using joysticks or video game controllers connected to ruggedized personal computers. These methods have several drawbacks, including limiting a soldier's situational awareness of his environment. In addition, a soldier does not have his hands free to hold a weapon, if necessary, and also requires a security detail to stand guard. Think-A-Move's technology helps overcome these limitations on using military robots, and increases the effectiveness of the soldiers operating them.

In addition to the application of its technology for military purposes, Think-A-Move is in the process of entering into licensing agreements with strategic partners for other markets including medical devices, voice communications, and enterprise systems.

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