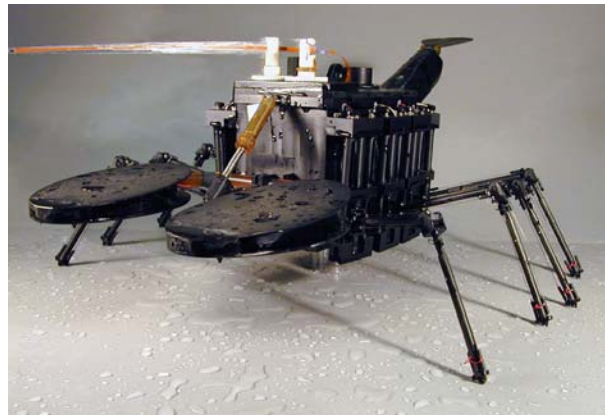


PRESS RELEASE**Massa Products Awarded Navy Contract
Robo-Lobster to Hunt Mines**

Hingham April 23, 2003 Massa Products Corporation of Hingham, Massachusetts was awarded a \$1.3 million contract this week by the Office of Naval Research (ONR) to continue development of an underwater robot to find mines in the shallow water in-shore areas of harbors and coastlines. Teamed with the Marine Science Center of Northeastern University at Nahant, MA, Massa Products (www.massa.com) has been working on development of the underlying technology for several years.

Dubbed "Robo-Lobster" by the *Wall Street Journal* and its Congressional supporters (<http://www.neurotechnology.neu.edu/ws.html>) the robot moves in the fashion of a real lobster. Several prototype robots have been built resembling the American lobster, with eight legs, claws and antennae on the front of the vehicle.



Donald P. Massa of Massa Products Corporation has been collaborating for several years with Professor Joseph Ayers of Northeastern University's Marine Science Center to develop a true biomimetic robot based on the American Lobster. The Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) provided early funding for this project and the Office of Naval Research (ONR) has taken over funding for the project due to the Navy's interest in mine countermeasures technologies. Professor Ayers worked for years to essentially "reverse engineer" how a lobster walks and how it searches the sea floor looking for food. Massa Products, with decades of expertise in designing and building complex mechanical structures, provided much of the expertise for constructing the robot.

The effort addresses an acute operational challenge facing the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps. According to a senior ONR official: "The shallow water surf zone is one of the most difficult areas to conduct mine hunting due to the surge of waves and the lack of visibility. However, it is in the shallow water approaching the shore where mines can do the most damage to amphibious forces coming ashore. This program will help us address this challenge."

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The Navy is funding this next research effort in order to build several working robots that can be tested in real-world conditions leading to the development of an operational mine-hunting system. Specifically, this new contract will result in the Massa/Northeastern Team developing a next generation production design of a cost effective, rugged Lobster Robot that will be capable of being mass-produced to carry out specific anti-mine search missions to meet fleet objectives.

Funding for this contract was provided due to the initiatives of Senator Ted Kennedy and the Massachusetts Congressional Delegation. Senator Kennedy, who has been a tireless advocate for solutions to address mine warfare challenges, included funding in the Fiscal Year 2003 Defense Authorization and Defense Appropriations bills last year. Massa Products and Northeastern University are hopeful that Senator Kennedy will be able to provide additional funds in this year's defense bills to continue the project.

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