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- Rheinmetall Mission Master Dominates European Ground Robotic Systems Competition at ELROB 2018

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Robots

Textron Systems Announces Plans to Acquire Robotics Innovator Howe & Howe Technologies

The Textron Systems segment of Textron Inc. announced that Textron Inc. has entered into a letter of intent to purchase Howe & Howe Technologies, Inc. of Waterboro, Maine. The combined portfolio of Textron Systems and Howe & Howe Technologies will position Textron Systems as a global leader in autonomy across the air, land and sea domains.

Howe & Howe is a leader in advanced robotic land vehicles, built and proven for the most extreme conditions in the world. The small, highly mobile Ripsaw Super Tank has been chosen by U.S. government customers for its speed, mobility and off-road performance. After a grueling 60-mile test through swamp and jungle terrains, its RS2-H1 SMET was down-selected to compete to be the U.S. Army's first platoon load-carrying robot. Howe & Howe also built the world's first and only purpose-built robotic firefighting solution, its Thermite firefighting robot, as well as the Bulldog line of extreme firefighting and medical transport vehicles.

Howe & Howe's advanced robotic ground vehicle solutions and applications are a natural fit alongside Textron Systems' decades of experience in unmanned platforms and control systems, as well as mission-proven combat vehicles. Textron Systems has delivered unmanned platforms, control systems and a full range of operations and support services for more than one million operational hours. Its combat-proven COMMANDO® land vehicles are utilized around the world under several programs of record and are known for their on- and off-road mobility, survivability and reliability.

"Howe & Howe are the original disruptors in the advanced robotic vehicle space, bringing customers the capability they need in a small, fast and mobile footprint to support their critical missions," said Textron Systems' President & CEO Lisa Atherton. "Textron Systems is now positioned to be a global provider of unmanned capabilities across all three domains. We are clear on the U.S. military's vision and their future technology needs for autonomy, robotics and unmanned systems. This planned acquisition demonstrates our commitment to our U.S. military customers and an understanding of their critical work. Not just anyone can build these vehicles. Bringing together Textron Systems' and Howe & Howe's talent, capabilities and proven products will join two of the best, and we are excited at the idea of advancing the industry even further as one team."

"We are extremely pleased at the possibility of joining forces with Textron and continuing to push the laws of physics in ground mobility and robotics," said Michael D. Howe, President of Howe and Howe Technologies, Inc. "The deep experience and forward thinking of Textron Systems, coupled with the innovation and sheer competitiveness of Howe & Howe, will make for a formidable combination. We expect that the whole will be immeasurably greater than the sum of our parts and will be positioned to forge the 21st century world leader in ground robotics and mobility."

This transaction is subject to the execution of a definitive acquisition agreement containing customary closing conditions.

Robots

Rheinmetall Mission Master Dominates European Ground Robotic Systems Competition at ELROB 2018

At the end of September, and for the first time, Rheinmetall took part in ELROB with its unmanned multi-mission "Mission Master" vehicle. At Europe's largest exhibition for military ground robotics, Rheinmetall's Mission Master team entered the fray, taking on a number of competing teams. Made by Rheinmetall Canada, the cargo version of this versatile vehicle turned in a particularly compelling performance in the "Mule" category.

In all, six teams took part in this competition category. Mules are essentially automated pack animals – autonomous transport vehicles capable of carrying heavy loads and equipment. They had to handle two scenarios. The teams each had thirty minutes to cover a 1,400 m-long route with their mule. During the first run, Rheinmetall impressed the crowd with an impressive performance. Then, following the second, came the gratifying result; despite competing for the first time, the Rheinmetall Mission Master clearly dominated the contest, scoring 3,151 points, twice as many as the robotic vehicle that took second place (1,547 points), and way ahead of the one that came in third (167 points).

The cargo version of the Mission Master was exhibited to a large group of defence specialists for the first time at Eurosatory 2018. Rheinmetall developed this variant to reduce the combat load carried by troops in the

field, contributing to faster movement and greater operational efficiency. Rheinmetall's new robotic vehicle can operate in hazardous, difficult-to-reach terrain, in turn contributing to the survivability and protection of troops deployed in harm's way.

Moreover, the Mission Master can be networked with advanced soldier systems such as Future Soldier – Expanded System, Gladius 2.0 or Argus. In Rheinmetall's "System Infanterie", the Mission Master serves as a force multiplier for infantry sections or squads equipped with Rheinmetall's Future Soldier – Expanded System technology. Fully networked with dismounted combat troops, it not only takes a weight not only off the soldiers' shoulders, it also relieves the pressure on military leaders.

Characterized by extreme flexibility, the Rheinmetall Mission Master can be quickly configured for a multitude of different missions thanks to modular, easy-to-install build-ons. Its mission capabilities include logistics, surveillance, force protection, evacuation of wounded personnel, firefighting and CBRN reconnaissance. It can also serve as a radio relay station. Speed, scalable autonomy and proven mobility in all types of terrain make the Mission Master a strong and dependable comrade for small combat units.