

FOLLOW YOUR TEAM ALL WEEK LONG **Naperville Sun**

YOURSEASON.COM

YOUR ULTIMATE SOURCE FOR CHICAGOLAND HIGH SCHOOL BASKETBALL

- [Subscribe](#)
- [Customer service](#)
- [Place an ad](#)
- [Buy photos](#)
- [Where to buy](#)

SOUTHTOWNSTAR
southtownstar.com Member of the Sun-Times News Group

29°F
Mostly Sunny
[Weather](#)

Search »

Site STNG

BECOME A MEMBER!
[What's this?](#)

Become a member of our community!

Business
Business Archive
Columnists
Bob Bong
Jim Harming
Joseph Walczak
The Fixer

BUSINESS ::

Print Article Email Article Share / Bookmark Buzz up!

Tinley company helps keep troops out of harm's way

Comments Recommend

February 24, 2009

BY **MIKE NOLAN** Staff writer

Strands of glass thinner than a human hair and being made in Tinley Park are helping protect U.S. troops stationed overseas.

They're used in fiber-optic gyroscopes that already are standard navigation equipment in thousands of military vehicles around the world. But a new type of gyroscope from KVH Industries Inc., which makes components for military applications at its Tinley Park plant, is being employed in remote weapon stations.

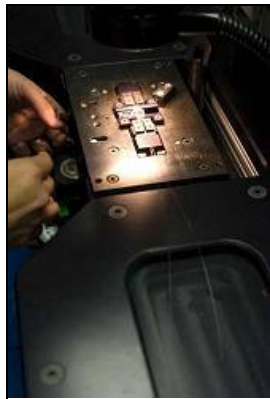
» [Click to enlarge image](#)



KVH Industries Inc., in Tinley Park, is helping protect American soldiers in combat situations with gyroscopes that allow troops to fire weapons by remote control.

(Matthew Grotto/SouthtownStar)

PHOTO GALLERY



• [KVH Industries](#)

RELATED STORIES

• [Read more of today's news](#)

Demand for the devices has prompted KVH to nearly double its manufacturing space in Tinley Park and hire 60 employees in the past four months.

"It's (the new gyroscope) a major growth driver for us," Chris Watson, spokesman for Rhode Island-based KVH, said.

Remote weapon stations protect troops from hostile fire by enabling gunners to aim and fire weapons from inside the relative safety of their vehicle. The U.S. military is retrofitting many nontank vehicles, including Humvees, with remote weapon stations to take gunners out of turret positions.


Fiber-optic gyroscopes - each about the size of a deck of playing cards - help in aiming and stabilizing the weapon, regardless of whether the vehicle its mounted on is sitting still or moving, according to KVH.

Last year, KVH recorded \$12 million worth of orders for fiber-optic gyroscopes used in remote weapon stations. That included \$8 million in orders from Kongsberg Defence & Aerospace, a Norwegian company supplying remote weapon stations, called the Protector, to U.S. military forces.

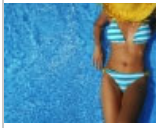
Kongsberg signed a \$1.35 billion agreement with the Army in the summer of 2007 to supply up to 6,500 Protector units through 2012. The remote weapon stations are being assembled at

Ads by **Adblade**

"Do Wrinkle Creams Work?"
We reviewed the top wrinkle creams. You'll be "shocked" at what we found! [Learn more](#)



1 flat stomach rule: obey
I cut out 2 lbs of stomach fat per week by obeying this 1 old rule. [Learn more](#)



Top Jobs

- Quality Control Clerks - Aurora, IL
 - Custodian - Palos Heights, IL
 - Seasonal Job Fair - Glencoe, IL
 - Inside Sales - Chicago, IL
 - Clinical Nurse Liaison - Dolton, IL
 - Hotel and Restaurant Positions - Tinley Park, IL
 - Residential Maintenance Supervisor - Zion, IL
 - Administrative Assistant - Gurnee, IL
 - DENTAL ASSISTANT - OSWEGO, IL
 - Estimating Assistant - Joliet, IL
 - Transmission Rebuilder - Aurora, IL
 - Dry Cleaner - Libertyville, IL
 - ELECTRICIAN & INDUSTRIAL MAINTENANCE - Bourbonnais, IL
 - Career Advisor - Joliet, IL
 - Billing Assistant - Tinley Woods, IL
- [View all](#)

Loading Videos...

TOP STORIES ::

NEWS

[4 held in cracking elderly](#)

Kongsberg's plant in Johnstown, Pa.

To ramp up production at its Tinley Park plant, 8412 W. 185th St., KVH took over adjacent space and now occupies 41,000 square feet. Recent hiring has boosted employment to 126, and in November the company added a second shift for component assembly and optical glass fiber production, Jeff Brunner, a KVH vice president who oversees the Tinley operations, said.

Unlike a mechanical gyroscope, fiber-optic versions have no moving parts and instead use a beam of light fired by a laser along a coiled strand of optical fiber to measure angular rotation.

To ensure quality and quantity, KVH doesn't farm out the job of making the fiber it uses, instead creating it on site.

Glass rods are heated so they soften, and then are "drawn like taffy," Brunner said. The result is strands of fiber 85 microns in diameter - a human hair is about 100 microns.

A section of glass two feet long and slightly thicker than a pencil will yield nearly two miles of fiber.

The strands are coated with plastic and are pretty sturdy. They can be looped, although not tightly, and handling the fiber requires a fine touch.

Fiber and electronics are packed together, then completed units undergo testing to simulate field conditions, including chilling them to minus 50 degrees Fahrenheit and heating them to nearly 170 degrees.

KVH's fiber-optic gyroscopes originally were developed by Andrew Corp. and were part of the company's sensor products group, which KVH bought in 1997. Brunner was Andrew's operations manager for fiber optics, and KVH opened the Tinley plant in May 1998.

Mike Nolan can be reached at mnolan@southtownstar.com or (708) 633-5952.

RELATED BLOG POSTS

- [American Troops Getting Fat!](#)
From Disease Proof
- [American Troops Getting Fat!](#)
From Disease Proof

POWERED BY  **BlogBurst**

The views expressed in these blog posts are those of the author and not of the SouthtownStar.

POWERED BY  **Pluck**

[southtownstar.com: Feedback](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [About Us](#) | [Advertise With Us](#) | [Media Kit](#)
[SouthtownStar: Customer service](#) | [Subscribe](#) | [Online Photo Store](#) | [Keepsakes](#)
 Affiliates: [YourSeason.com](#) | [RogerEbert.com](#) | [SearchChicago - Autos](#) | [SearchChicago - Homes](#) | [Local Area Jobs](#) | [Centerstage](#) Partner: [nbcchicago.com](#)
 Express Links: [TV Listings](#) | [Video](#) | [Yellow Pages](#) | [Submissions](#) | [Obituaries](#) | [Eating In](#) | [Restaurant Reviews](#) | [Advertising](#) | [Media Kit](#)



© Copyright 2009 Digital Chicago, Inc. | [Terms of Use](#) • [Privacy Policy](#) • [Submission Guidelines](#)