

## BUSINESS TODAY

# Attacks made tech firms' shift focus

By JAY FITZGERALD

For some Massachusetts business executives, the terrorist attacks against America five years ago today changed their businesses within hours, as the nation geared up for a massive rescue effort, increased security and, later, war in faraway lands.

"Like everyone, we were watching horrified," recalled Helen Greiner, chairman and cofounder of iRobot Corp. in Burlington, referring to the carnage Americans saw on their television sets on Sept. 11, 2001.

But then a phone call came from New York: Search-and-rescue officials desperately needed iRobot's experimental "PackBot" robots equipped

with cameras to search through the rubble of the World Trade Center in the hope of finding victims.

"We stopped the whole company and everyone was working to get the PackBots" to New York, said Greiner, whose employees managed to get one of the small mechanical wonders to Ground Zero by the evening of Sept. 11, 2001.

Greiner said iRobot, best known for its robotic "Roomba" vacuum cleaner, was already moving toward working with the military on various products — but Sept. 11 dramatically accelerated and expanded those plans.

The company now has PackBots in Afghanistan and Iraq, buzzing around on treads looking for terrorists or

helping to deal with roadside explosives.

Chris Anderson, president of the Massachusetts High Technology Council, said Massachusetts companies — from small software firms to large defense contractors such as Raytheon Co. — have received billions of dollars in orders from a federal government determined to fight terrorists both here and abroad.

From Hanscom Airforce Base's research facilities in Bedford to Analogic's CT-scanner products in Peabody, hundreds of Massachusetts companies and institutions have been impacted, directly or indirectly, by the events of five years ago, officials say.

Laura Teodosio's Boston-based Salient Stills is one of them.

A maker of a digital imaging technology that transforms sometimes scratchy video shots into more clear still photos, Salient Stills helped FBI agents analyze security video clips from Boston's Logan International Airport soon after the terrible events of Sept. 11, 2001.

The goal: To identify the terrorists who used Boston's airport — as well as Portland's airport in Maine — as a springboard for their deadly mission to attack New York via airliners.

"After 9/11, the focus of our business completely changed," said Teodosio, chief executive of Salient Stills and a graduate of MIT's Media Lab.

Before Sept. 11, Salient Stills' customers were mostly newspapers, which used its product to capture pictures from television broadcasts and transform them into clear enough photos to use in print.

Salient Stills had been working with some law enforcement officials, including officers at the Boston Police Department. But after 9/11, the main thrust of its business is now working with police and government personnel, she said.

Before 9/11, John Wood, chief executive of Analogic Corp., said his business was almost entirely focused on providing the medical industry with imaging devices, such as CT scanners.

Now 20 percent of its business is dedicated to selling machines that scan baggage at airports for weapons that could be used by would-be terrorists. "From our perspective, it has changed our business," said Wood, noting his company has now sold about 600 of its scanners, worth about \$300 million, to airports around the world.