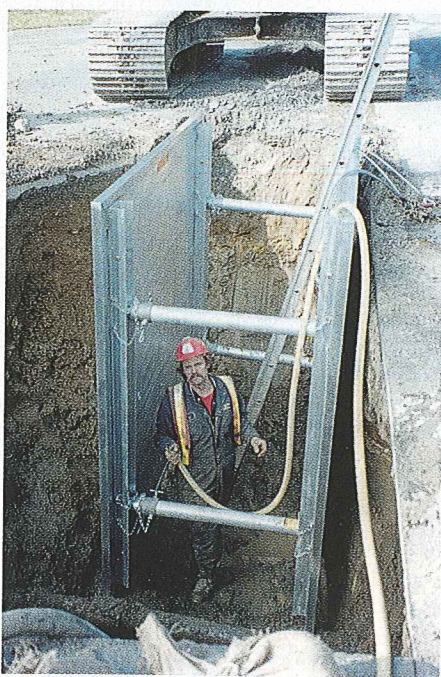


SPECIAL SECTION

A look at what's happening and the tools that make them happen

SIMPLY SAFETY



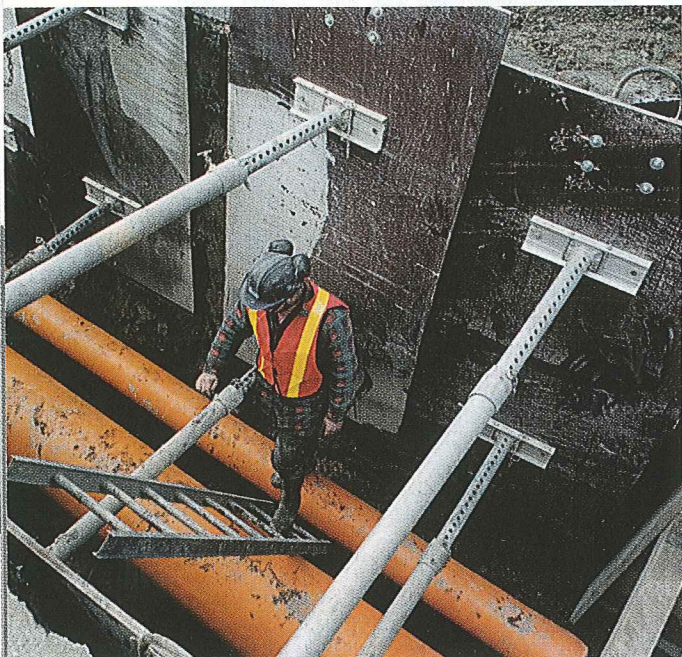
From what started as a contractor tinkering to craft an innovation that would better suit his needs, Airshore International has grown into a worldwide supplier of search and rescue equipment. The state of the art rescue equipment manufacturer has its humble roots in contracting.

In the 1970s, Harry Berg, president of HB Contracting, a busy contractor with a good name well into the 1990s, found that the conventional shoring systems were not working well for his applications. He came up with a system that effectively protected the crews like a shoring cage, but it also supported the trench walls during excavations.

Today, Airshore International out of Langley, BC manufactures, rents and sells Airshore jacks for the construction industry mostly in Western Canada and parts of the US, however they sell their Airshore search and rescue equipment, and provide the training to use it, all over Canada and the US (their biggest market), Japan, Korea, and parts of

CANADIAN
Equipment
THE CONTRACTORS' PREFERRED SOURCE
RENTALS

SPECIAL SECTION

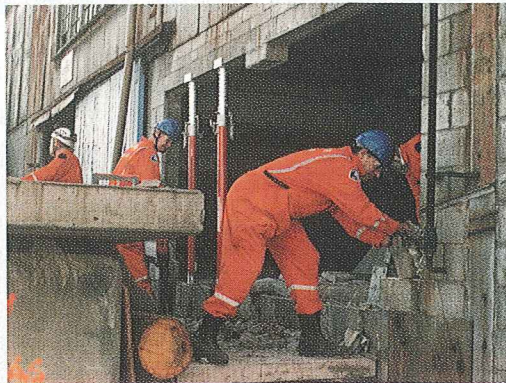


Western Europe.

Simple in its concept, the hollow aluminum Airshore struts and the Airshore Rescue Tools (A.R.T.) provide support systems that are controlled by compressed air. When activated by CO₂, nitrogen or even just using a regular air compressor, the piston is pushed out of the column and the pneumatic strut expands to refusal exerting pressure on the trench walls. The locking pin is then set and the pressure released. The mechanical lock ensures that the system will not creep back over time. The struts come in six sizes ranging from 0.5 m to 4 m in length, operate using 100 PSI to 350 PSI, and are capable of 700 to 2,450 pounds of

thrust. This system is especially effective in applications where there is a high water table, or weak soils. This

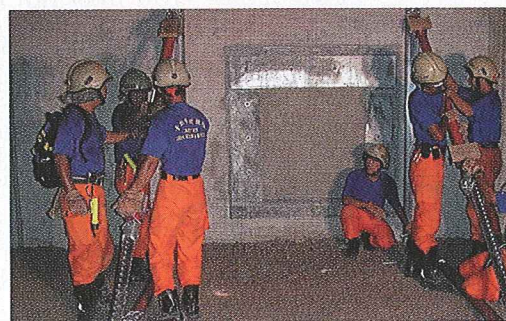
the Airshore jacks for some of the search and rescue operations, particularly those involving trenches. Around 1990 the fire department started requesting modifications to



some of the fittings. Completely interchangeable and removable bases and heads have been developed for a variety of applications. 'V-blocks' are used for building stabilization, 'C-grips'

Support & Safety

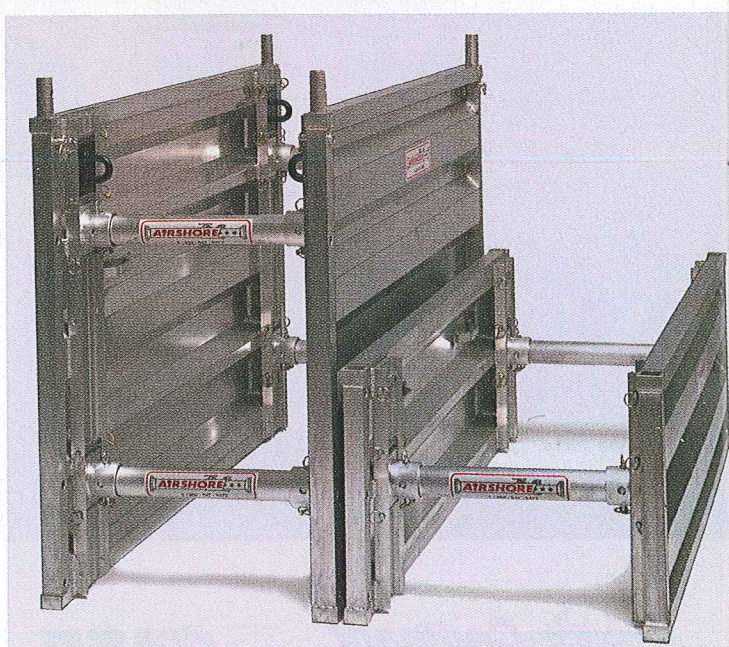
support main structural beams, and 'swivels' are often used in trench rescue. 'Flat', 'chain wedge' and a number of other parts are available for almost every imaginable circumstance.



"We don't want to just be involved in trench rescues, we want to develop equipment for a wide range of applications," says Derek Parisotto,

system will actually prevent trench collapse as compared with conventional caging which will protect personnel but sloughing or caving can still occur behind the caging walls.

During the early development of this product, the fire department started using





so that they can slide under the object to be lifted. When fully inflated the bags can lift to a maximum of 104 mm (when two are used together), and can lift up to 67 700 kg.

"It's not that we're abandoning our construction roots," says Parisotto. Airshore's biggest market for construction applications is in BC and Alberta. "It's just that right now there is little competition to do what we do. One of our competitors has developed a similar strut primarily for construction applications that doesn't violate our patent, and we will start to face serious competition soon. Most contractors have some kind of shoring

the sales manager for Airshore International. Other products include portable 'A-frames' that can be assembled quickly to move heavy objects over short distances where restricted room or poor access would preclude the use of heavy equipment. The gantries they have developed act like an 'A-frame' with a cantilever for overhead rescue, and simple tripods are used for confined space rescues where the personnel can repel down a shaft or manhole.

Search & Rescue columns are often used to support a spot on the floor so that rescue personnel can walk along the upper floor without fear of collapse.

Light, portable vehicle stabilization kits have been designed to adapt to a number of car wreckage scenarios. Low, medium and high pressure reusable airbag kits have been designed specifically to lift vehicles, heavy equipment, pipes, buses, and even railcars with-

To The Rescue



out damaging the thin walled body work. The airbags have also been used to lift floors.

Typically an airbag would be used to lift the object and the rescue tools would then be used to stabilize and support the object. The airbags are only about one inch thick when deflated



systems but need to rent stuff from time to time and we are happy to oblige. We do have longer term goals to grow the construction applications as well, but what we are really interested in right now is in

growing the search and rescue side of our business." Currently about 65% of their business is search and rescue related. One of their biggest search & rescue clients is the US Federal Emergency Medical Association (FEMA). Airshore has been supplying FEMA since 1999 and currently outfits 10 of the 28 FEMA divisions with rescue tools.

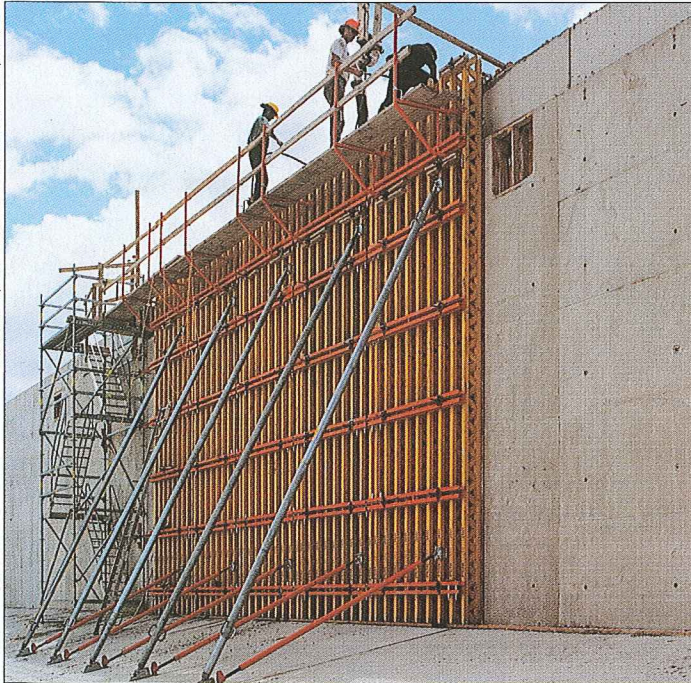
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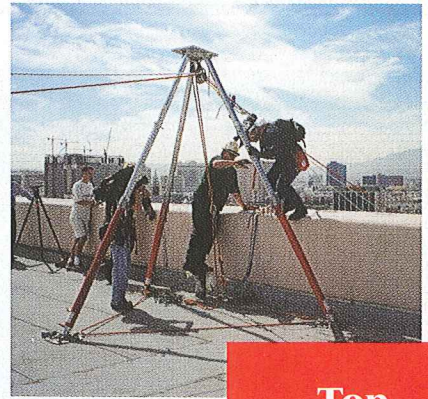
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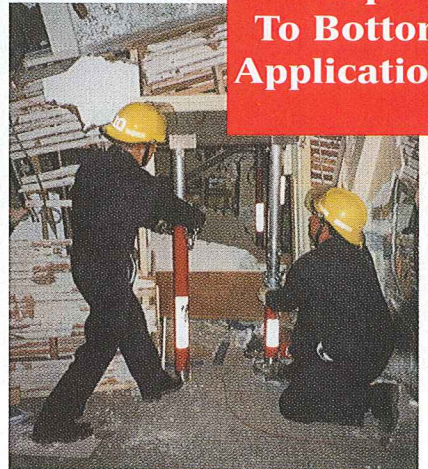
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SPECIAL SECTION



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Applications**



training for using their equipment. All of their training is customized to meet (and often exceed) the requirements of the local safety regulatory bodies. Typical training for the construction industry might be one day, but intensive multi-day training is offered to instruct crews on bracing vertical walls on the verge of collapse from fire or earthquake. In fact the President of Airshore, Stephen Cudmore has received special accolades from the Vancouver Urban Search and Rescue team as a trainer, supplier and as a consultant for product development. Unfortunately this supremely trained multi-hazard disciplined team of about 70 has been called out to a number of disasters but for some reason the deployment had always been cancelled. Inaugurated in 1995, their purpose is to carry out search and rescue missions where there has been building collapses primarily due to earthquakes, fire or explosions. ♦