

Techies coming to Brooklyn Navy Yard with futuristic new inventions, new jobs

"Making things is cool again," says Navy Yard official Andrew Kimball

BY [LORE CROGHAN](#)

NEW YORK DAILY NEWS

Published: Sunday, March 24, 2013, 5:00 AM

Updated: Sunday, March 24, 2013, 5:00 AM



[JOE MARINO/NEW YORK DAILY NEWS](#)

Steven Brower (r.) and Nikolay Moiseev of Final Frontier Design.

The 200-year-old complex where battleships were once built is going high tech in a big way.

The Brooklyn Navy Yard is turning Building 77, an old 1 million-square-foot ammunition depot, into factory space for brainiacs and their futuristic products.

“Making things is cool again,” said Brooklyn Navy Yard Development Corp. CEO Andrew Kimball.

“This is where manufacturing is going,” said Kimball, whose nonprofit operates the industrial park where just 10% of the current tenants are into high tech.

“It’s driven by highly educated grads of local schools trained as engineers, designers, even artists.”

Techies already working at the Yard have dreamed up bomb-proof underwear and fake “fish” that generate electricity — a taste of the innovations expected to come out of Building 77’s future tenants.



JOE MARINO/NEW YORK DAILY NEWS

Crye Precision a face plate that can be mounted to combat helmets which protects soldiers faces from shrapnel and other threats.

“There’s a little bit of magic in here,” said Caleb Crye, 37, whose company Crye Precision makes gear to protect soldiers in combat — right down to boxer briefs with kevlar panels covering genitals and inner thighs.

The ballistic underwear deflects shrapnel and debris from roadside bomb blasts. Another invention is a kevlar helmet attachment that covers the wearer’s cheeks as a shield from explosive fragments.

In a place of honor by the front door Crye keeps body armor that was worn by a soldier who survived being shot in Iraq.

“It reminds everybody this is not just a product; it’s something somebody lives in and depends on,” the Cooper Union fine arts grad said.

Building 77's \$80 million reconstruction, which starts next month, is part of a campaign to make the city-owned Navy Yard a hot spot for job creation. New tenants in the building are expected to hire 1,500 people over five years.



JOE MARINO/NEW YORK DAILY NEWS

Crye Precision founder Caleb Crye.

The Yard's 300-plus current occupants have 6,400 employees, up from 3,600 in 2001. Many are film and media businesses like Steiner Studios where "Boardwalk Empire" is shot or construction and architecture firms.

One big tenant, printing company Duggal, has branched out into tech manufacturing with street lights powered by solar panels and wind turbines.

"This is a solution that makes sense post-Sandy," said company president Baldev Duggal. "We can light the streets without Con Edison."

A small tenant, Final Frontier Design, is working on a prototype spacesuit for private astronauts that weighs just 15 pounds, which is half as heavy as NASA suits, said Nikolay Moiseev who worked for Russia's space agency.

"When tourists go into space they will want to be comfortable," said Steven Brower, 43, an artist and space enthusiast who's working with Final Frontier.



JOE MARINO/NEW YORK DAILY NEWS

Crye Precision founder Caleb Crye.

The U.S. Navy gave Pietro Filardo of Pliant Energy Systems a grant to design a prototype device with fish-like fins that “swims” through water to generate electricity. The electricity will power docking stations for charging unmanned submarines.

“The Navy Yard is the natural place for us to be,” said Filardo, 46, a former designer for celebrity architect Philip Johnson.

“When we’re ready for manufacturing we might move to Building 77.”

lcroghan@nydailynews.com

<http://www.nydailynews.com/new-york/brooklyn/techies-coming-brooklyn-navy-yard-futuristic-new-inventions-new-jobs-article-1.1295443>