

Saving lives

ACR Electronics has been saving lives since 1956. Famously, its Pen Light helped assist the astronauts of Apollo 13 return home safely. The company now is a full subsidiary of Drew Marine, and leverages their combined technology expertise in the marine, aviation, outdoor and military markets to develop emergency beacons that are designed with one purpose in mind: Saving Lives. ACR's Director of Marketing, Mikele D'Arcangelo, highlights their recent acquisition of Ocean Signal, Ltd., a UK-based supplier of marine safety and survival equipment. "A passion for saving lives is in the DNA of both companies. Like ACR, Ocean Signal is known for reliable products that perform in the worst conditions the first time, every time and we are excited to add them to our team."

ACR Electronics was founded in 1956 as the manufacturer of the first electronic flash unit for cameras that used photo flash batteries. Diversifying into strobe lighting, the company rose to fame when in 1970 the crew of the stricken Apollo 13 relied upon a magnesium-powered penlight designed for NASA. When forced to power down, the penlight provided the sole source of light for the crew as they struggled to get their capsule back to earth. The crew of Apollo 13 sent ACR a thank you note, and years later Jim Lovell was cleaning out his desk and found the exact Pen Light he had with him on the Apollo 13 mission...and it worked like it was brand new.

This obviously was a proud moment in company history, as Mr. D'Arcangelo confirms. He says that while ACR Electronics has since changed ownership and has continued to evolve, also with the addition of ARTEX, their commitment to, and passion for saving lives has remained much the same. "The equity firm that owned us also owned Drew Marine, and as the two companies have many synergies, we're now bundled together. This allows us to leverage Drew Marine's global network; they have a much larger organisation with a much larger maritime footprint than ACR Electronics has ever had."

He expects that Ocean Signal will reap similar benefits. The UK-based company

develops and commercialises its proprietary rescueME range of products, which includes the rescueME PLB1, the rescueME MOB1, the rescueME EPIRB1 and the rescueME EDF1 electronic distress flare, and SafeSea range of GMDSS products, including the E100 and E100G EPIRB, S100 SART and V100 handheld VHF radio. These provide both recreational and commercial mariners with simple to use, compact and affordable life-saving solutions. All products are engineered by a highly experienced team of marine electronics professionals.

"Ocean Signal have done a great job developing products and building the brand and we don't want to get in the way of their efforts," says Mr. D'Arcangelo. "We want to help them grow in every way we can." That means the company remains in the UK and will continue to operate largely independently, he adds. "We will not impose a bunch of rules and make them do things our way. We actually want them to maintain the entrepreneurial spirit that has made their business a success. We probably have some synergies; we might go to tradeshows together, and there are cross-selling opportunities. But we each have our own engineering department and each have their own goals and objectives. If there are shared capabilities we'll take advantage of them."

ACR Electronics focuses on electronic survival products for the maritime, aviation, outdoor and military markets. These products include a full range of 406 MHz distress beacons including EPIRBs, Personal Locator Beacons, and ARTEX ELTs, as well as Search and Rescue Transponders (SARTs), Rescue Strobe Lights, Searchlights, VHF Radios





and Survival Accessories. The combination of the ACR and Ocean Signal brands bolster the product lines for the marine market place. Together the companies offer a full range of Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacons, Personal Locator Beacons, Search and Rescue Transponders, AIS Man Overboard Beacons, VHF radios, Searchlights, rescue strobe lights, pyrotechnics, and safety accessories. The ACR Electronics product development philosophy is that products have to work the first time, every time, as Mr. D'Arcangelo points out. "We know the responsibility we have: save lives." Interesting in that regard is that the company also

engages in educating the market on safety issues. In 2012 the ACR ARTEX Survivor Club was launched, with a website SurvivorClub.com providing those who have used an ACR 406 MHz Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon (EPIRB), Personal Locator Beacon (PLB) or an ARTEX 406 MHz Emergency Locator Transmitter (ELT) in an emergency with an opportunity to share their stories, trade-in their used beacon for a new one and to be included on the company's Wall of Fame. Mr. D'Arcangelo says that they see SurvivorClub.com as building a forum that will promote a very important public service message that satellite detectable 406 MHz beacons

are the ultimate way out of trouble, and literally are saving lives somewhere around the planet nearly every day. Since the inception of the Cospas-Sarsat Search and Rescue programme in 1982, electronic beacons transmitting distress signals have resulted in over 35,000 people rescued worldwide (6,800-plus in the U.S.) "An important aspect of keeping boaters, aviators and outdoor enthusiasts safe is educating them on the lifesaving benefits of having access to a 406 MHz distress beacon. Not only will the beacon greatly improve their chances of survival, but it also greatly reduces the risk to the brave men and women searching for them. Who better to promote this safety message than survivors who have actually been rescued."



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