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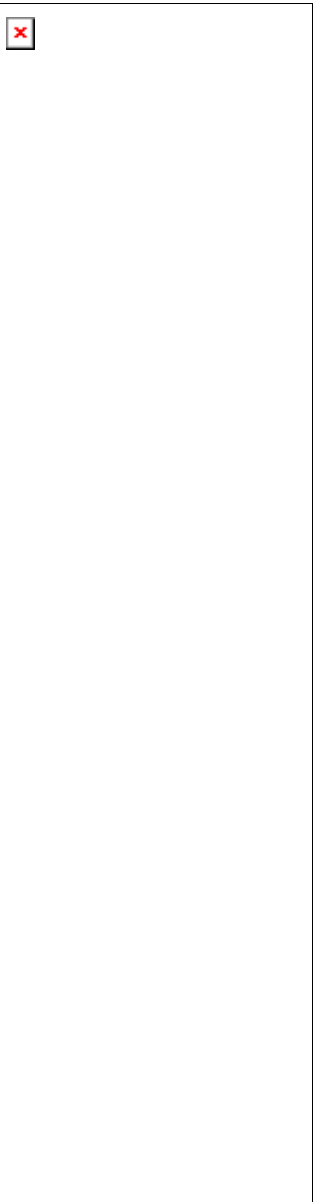


## Military Sensor Hears Through Walls

By Bill Christensen

posted: 09 January 2006  
08:48 am ET

ADVERTISEMENT



A new handheld radar scope from the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) can provide troops with an ability that was formerly the province of science fictional superheroes alone—the ability to sense through up to 12 inches of concrete whether someone is in the next room.

The [Radar Scope](#) is expected to be in use in Iraq by spring of this year, according to DARPA's Edward Baranoski. Weighing just 1.5 pounds, the device is about the size of a telephone handset and will cost about \$1,000. Waterproof and rugged, it runs on AA batteries. Held up to a wall, users will be able to sense movements as small as breathing up to fifty feet into the next room.

"It may not change how four-man stacks go into a room (during clearing operations)," Baranoski said. "But as they go into a building, it can help them prioritize what rooms they go into. It will give them an extra degree of knowledge so they know if someone is inside."  
(From [DefenseLink](#))

Science fiction writers have been working on this idea for generations. Golden age writer E.E. "Doc" Smith wrote about a [spy ray](#) in his 1934 novel [Triplanetary](#). DARPA has yet to actually come up with an actual sci-fi [life detector](#) like the one that Frank Herbert wrote about in 1958 in his story *Cease Fire*:

The antennae of the Life Detector atop the OP swept back and forth in a rhythmic halfcircle like so many frozen sticks brittle with rime ice...

One operator - drugged to shivering wakefulness - stood watch in the OP. The space around him was barely six feet in diameter, crammed with equipment, gridded screens glowing a pale green with spots that indicated living flesh.  
(Read more about [Frank Herbert's life detector](#))

Still, the handheld Radar Scope is a remarkable invention, and should make the task of searching buildings at least a bit less dangerous. Read more at [DefenseLink](#).

(This *Science Fiction in the News* story used with permission from [Technovelgy.com - where science meets fiction.](#))

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[DARPA expects the portable Radar Scope, which can sense someone in a room through 12 inches of concrete, to look similar to this model and to be fielded as soon as this spring to help patrols conducting urban operations to sense if someone is inside a building. Credit: American Forces Press Service](#)

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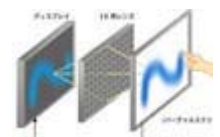
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