

## Troops Fashion Makeshift Counter-IED Tool

■ **There's nothing a little duct tape and a steel blade can't fix.**

Improvised explosive devices have left Pentagon officials scratching their heads for a decade. They have enlisted the help of countless scientists and even created a whole new bureaucracy in the name of defeating roadside bombs.

But leave it to those on the battlefield to take a less expensive approach to the problem. Marines and soldiers recently discovered that a pole used to install cable and wiring could be combined with a steel hook crafted locally in Afghanistan to form a new counter-IED tool.

The poles come in lengths up to 26 feet and are made by CMD Cable Management Division and sold through CableOrganizer.com. More than 100 of these fiberglass tools have now been sold to armed forces for locating homemade bombs, digging them up and slicing their wires.

About 50 of the poles were first ordered and shipped to Afghanistan in 2009. When Marines from one unit called the manufacturer last year wanting to place an order, they revealed that they had been making modifications to the poles to fight IEDs. A Marine sent CMD owner

Judy Herdman photos to show what they had been doing to the poles.

"It appears from the photos that they have removed the first and possibly the second section of the pole, probably to make it less flexible, then they taped the blade onto the end," Herdman said.

Beyond that, it remains somewhat of a mystery who exactly came up with the idea (and when) to turn these cable installation devices into homespun counter-IED tools.

"I can just assume that they were searching the web for something that could help them and came upon the poles," Herdman said. "Or perhaps the troops saw some of the poles that had been shipped over there in 2009 and decided they would fit the bill."

