

# Robotics Day shows off newest technology

*Thomas Zimmerman, Army War College Public Affairs*

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*Area high and middle school students mingled with Army War College students, staff and faculty as they all saw firsthand some of the newest technologies being developed to aid Soldiers on the battlefield. Cumberland Valley student David Nesmith tries out the iRobot Model 310 SUGV (Small Unmanned Ground Vehicle). Photo by Thomas Zimmerman.*

May 4, 2011 – If you thought you saw a robot roaming the halls of Root Hall May 4, your eyes weren't deceived you. That was in fact a "trackBot" from the Robotic Collaborative Technology Alliance coming in from the rain to have its lens cleaned off.

Robots, unmanned vehicles and other cutting edge technologies were on display outside Root Hall and inside the Root Hall Gym as part of the annual Robotics Day.

"The purpose is for the students to experience a firsthand understanding of key components of robot technology to include mobility, communications, size, networking capability, and power systems," said Ken Chrosniak, one of the event organizers and a faculty instructor who teaches an elective on robotics and cyber-operations.. "Senior leaders can see and experience the capabilities of some existing operating robotic systems, and use of the robotic systems presently funded and being used for reconnaissance, surveillance and intelligence, logistics, convoy operations, medical, security, and mitigation of dull, dirty and dangerous jobs."

In addition to the USAWC students, faculty and staff, there were about 100 schoolchildren from local high schools who took part in the event.

"I was amazed that some of the stuff that really exists," said Jonathan Padlow, a student at Cedar Cliff High School, as he took his turn driving the iRobot Model 310 SUGV (small unmanned ground vehicle) of. "I really thought stuff like this only existed in the movies."

The 310 SUGV is used for dismounted EOD missions and features an arm that allows for easy

investigation and neutralization of suspicious objects. It is also used in theater for surveillance and reconnaissance and at checkpoints for inspections and explosives detection.

One of the other popular exhibits was for the TALON SWORDS (Special Weapons Observation Reconnaissance Direct-action System), which is being used in current operations. It has the ability to disarm and disable unexploded ordnance, move it to a safer location, blow it up in place, and more. It is controlled by a small control system that can be worn in conjunction with a Soldier's other equipment. More than 3,000 of the vehicles have been deployed to combat theaters.

Another exhibit was the Mobile Detection Assessment Response System, a small, unmanned robotic vehicle designed to relieve personnel of the repetitive and sometimes dangerous task of patrolling exterior areas that require some level of security.

*Maj. Steve Toth, an operations simulation analyst with the Center for Strategic Leadership, talks to a rep from REDCOM, one of the exhibitors from the Robotics Day on May 4. Photo by Thomas Zimmerman.*



“Any time you can use technology to save sending a person into harm’s way it’s a win,” said James Crofton, Foster-Miller, the company who manufactures the systems.

The MDARS robot is designed to perform random patrols around Department of Defense warehouses, airfields, ammunition supply depots, and port facilities. It detects intruders and determines the status of inventory, barriers, and locks. It is currently being used to protect Army Ammunition depots in the western U.S.