See what it's like to go off-road inside the Marines' self-driving vehicle

By Jacob Kastrenakes (http://www.theverge.com/users/Jacob%20Kastrenakes) *on July 21, 2014 04:10 pm*   Email (mailto:jacob.kastrenakes@theverge.com)   @jake_k (https://twitter.com/intent/user?screen_name=jake_k)

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The US military has been working on self-driving vehicles of its own for several years now, and earlier this month a video was published (http://www.dvidshub.net/video/349405/driverless-gopro-marines-test-unmanned-ground-vehicle-guss-hawaii) showing just what it's like to take a ride in one. The footage was taken from a GoPro placed right above the driver's seat in one of the Ground Unmanned Support Surrogate (GUSS) vehicles being tested by the Marines. The ultimate goal is for the military to be able to use GUSS vehicles to lighten the load of soldiers by carrying equipment for them — potentially for multiple days at a time — and to keep soldiers further from harm's way in the process.

This new video comes from a Marine Corps Warfighting Laboratory test of the vehicles in Oahu, Hawaii. Unlike Google's self-driving car (http://www.theverge.com/2014/5/27/5756436/this-is-googles-own-self-driving-car) , the military's has a steering wheel and all of the dials and levers you'd expect to see in a car, important here in case a driver needs to shift it into manual. The video above shows the wheel twisting as the vehicle moves slowly forward, though that low speed may be a matter of the vehicle keeping pace with the soldiers ahead of it rather than a system limitation. Earlier videos of GUSS vehicles show that they're actually capable of going much faster than this new video shows, and — impressively — doing so while off road.
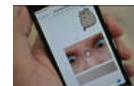
VIA

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microsoftmissionary (http://www.theverge.com/users/microsoftmissionary)

Great now all we need is to put a .50 cal on top and boom automatic weapon.

Jul 21, 2014 | 4:17 PM (#246693130)   Reply (#)

> **Jruhlman09 (http://www.theverge.com/users/Jruhlman09)**
>
> an automatic automatic weapon
>
> Jul 21, 2014 | 4:22 PM (#246694184)   Reply (#)
>
>> **microsoftmissionary (http://www.theverge.com/users/microsoftmissionary)**
>>
>> • an AAW :P
>>
>> Jul 21, 2014 | 7:52 PM (#246728414)   Reply (#)

> **Psycros (http://www.theverge.com/users/Psycros)**
>
> Maximum Overdrive?
>
> Jul 21, 2014 | 4:57 PM (#246701144)   Reply (#)
>
>> **amnesiality (http://www.theverge.com/users/amnesiality)**
>>
>> Sunset Overdrive.
>>
>> Jul 21, 2014 | 6:08 PM (#246713562)   Reply (#)

raydnjames (http://www.theverge.com/users/raydnjames)

Honestly, I'm not that impressed. Some of the commercial car companies are farther along that this.

Jul 21, 2014 | 4:23 PM (#246694378)   Reply (#)

> **Psycros (http://www.theverge.com/users/Psycros)**
>
> And that's exactly what they want you to believe.
>
> Jul 21, 2014 | 4:56 PM (#246701040)   Reply (#)

Tazz1k (http://www.theverge.com/users/Tazz1k)

I don't think the systems can be directly compared to the point of calling commercial "farther along." They're going in different directions. Commercial self-driving cars are designed to travel along well mapped, mostly paved roads. Military needs to be able to go off-road and handle a much larger variety of obstacles and terrain.

Jul 21, 2014 | 4:57 PM (#246701134)   Reply (#)

steveanderson1357 (http://www.theverge.com/users/steveanderson1357)

But are the commercial car companies' projects named "GUSS"?

Jul 21, 2014 | 7:43 PM (#246726760)   Reply (#)

cy.starkman (http://www.theverge.com/users/cy.starkman)

Off road?

Google even stated in that recent public demo that they could not do off road or other complex environmental conditions

Jul 21, 2014 | 8:02 PM (#246730434)   Reply (#)

MrTed (http://www.theverge.com/users/MrTed)

This is far more impressive a demo compared to Google driving through perfectly maintained and heavily documented streets. But who cares? They are both awesome.

Jul 21, 2014 | 8:39 PM (#246738366)   Reply (#)

LongLimbsLenore (http://www.theverge.com/users/LongLimbsLenore)

Wouldn't these be really vulnerable to enemy fire? Like all they'd have to do is take out that scanner on the front. And how would they recognize friendlies vs enemies? If a local villager runs out in front of it, the truck should swerve or stop, but what if it's a combatant?

I'm interested in the tech but it seems like there are so many more variables here than the commercial side of self driving cars.

Jul 21, 2014 | 5:40 PM (#246709194)   Reply (#)

t1oracle (http://www.theverge.com/users/t1oracle)

It's cheap, and mostly likely any attempt to attack it will provide useful Intel on the enemy.

Jul 22, 2014 | 11:59 AM (#246842276)   Reply (#)

LongLimbsLenore (http://www.theverge.com/users/LongLimbsLenore)

And potentially cripple a very expensive and very important piece of the operation.

Jul 22, 2014 | 12:30 PM (#246848834)   Reply (#)

mattkenefick (http://www.theverge.com/users/mattkenefick)

That happens in war all the time. It's just part of it.

I would imagine these are mostly to be used as workhorses for transport items so the military can save the driver for other things. Transporting ammo from this base to that base, etc. If something goes wrong.. well, it probably would've happened anyway.

Jul 23, 2014 | 11:19 AM (#247057274)   Reply (#)

LongLimbsLenore (http://www.theverge.com/users/LongLimbsLenore)

Valid point. Plus it's better to lose a computer controlled vehicle than a crew of soldiers. Maybe by the time this thing gets implemented it will have much better evasion skills.

Jul 23, 2014 | 4:23 PM (#247135750)   Reply (#)

Plopfish (http://www.theverge.com/users/Plopfish)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EkzxP-Wt9oo (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EkzxP-Wt9oo)

Jul 21, 2014 | 5:48 PM (#246710476)   Reply (#)

iCello (http://www.theverge.com/users/iCello)

Pretty cool – you wouldn't need to risk soldier's lives on supply runs through unstable areas.

Jul 21, 2014 | 6:21 PM (#246715314)   Reply (#)

Generic Eric (http://www.theverge.com/users/Generic%20Eric)

You mean the enemy won't be able to "grind 'til they find it?"

Hope they put a lack on the door.

 Also if we can put rover on mars, this shouldn't be out side the realm of possibility

Jul 22, 2014 | 8:49 PM (#246957478)   Reply (#)

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