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MATBOCK VBSS Robot for Visit, Board Search and Seizure Ops: Maritime Magnetic Marvel Drives Up the Side of the Ship and Sets Your Grapnel Hook! (Video!)

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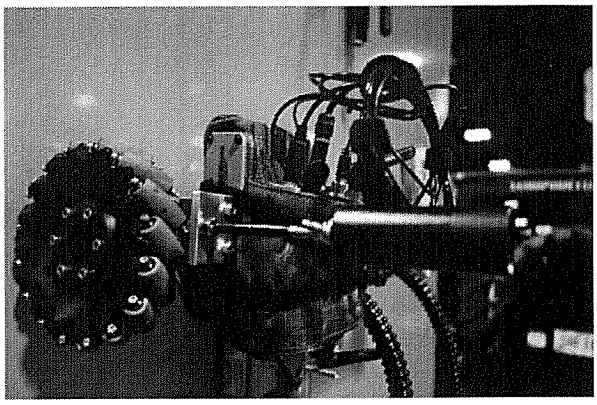
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The developmental (prototype) MATBOCK VBSS Robot is the first item DefenseReview (DR) covering from NDIA SOFIC 2015 (Special Operations Forces Industry Conference 2015), since it was one of the two most interesting products we saw at the show, and since we ended up sharing a cab with one of its founders, on Sean Matson, from Tampa International Airport to our hotel, where we were coincidentally all staying. During the cab ride, Sean explained the technology to us and we were hooked from the first sentence. Here at DR, we like robotics, we like magnetics, we like big grapnel hooks, and we like maritime VBSS (Visit, Board, Search and Seizure) operations conducted by highly-skilled assaulters. So, what's not to like about the Matbock VBSS Robot?

Nothing. There's really nothing not to like about it. It's a pretty cool little system, especially when you actually see it doing its thing, which is quietly driving up the side of a ship in any direction (thanks to 45-degree rollers on its wheels), and planting/mounting a large grapnel hook at the top, so a U.S. Navy SEAL team (or any other maritime/waterborne assault unit) can quickly climb on up and take care of business. By the way, Matson and his Matbock partner Zach Steinbock both come from the U.S. Naval SPECWAR/SEAL community, so now they're basically designing and developing products to make their old job quicker and easier for their successors. After all, SEALs have it hard enough already, so why make life any more difficult than it has to be? Anyway, Defense Review was so intrigued with the VBSS Robot concept that we made sure to stop by the Matbock/Helical Robotics booth on the first day of the show. Matson had really sold us on the product just by talking about it in the cab. DR was, shall we say *hooked* from the very first sentence.

To bring the Matbock VBSS Robot to life, the company has teamed with Helical Robotics for the magnetic robotic platform, and target=right>Kopis Mobile for the HD video capability. The base robotic platform/system is a Helical Robotics FerroTanker-20 lightweight magnetic climbing robot, which is manpackable. Being omni-directional, the FerroTanker-20 robot allows the Matbock VBSS Robot to maneuver around bulkheads and portals to get to the top and plant the hook. Matbock's also integrated a Kopis Mobile backpack cam for realtime HD video capability. We're not yet sure who's making the actual hook yet, but we'll try to find out, and we'll update this article accordingly.



Again, the MATBOCK VBSS Robot is currently a prototype, and as such, is still under development. MATBOCK and Helical Robotics are currently in the process of reducing the robot's weight (and perhaps simultaneously increasing its load-carriage capability), modifying its form factor, and enhancing it's overall mission capability, including things like mounting a camera on the grapnel hook, itself.

Editor's Note: Zero Point was kind enough to lend MATBOCK, Helical Robotics and Kopis Mobile the booth space to display their innovative tech. Also, just as an aside, we ran into Mr. Steinbock in the lobby of the Marriott Waterside Hotel and talked with him for a minute. Like his business partner, he seemed like a good dude.



Matbock VBSS Robot Specs:

– Omni-Directional
– 20 lbs lift capacity
– Wireless range: 2500 ft (762m) line of sight
– Current Battery life (Continuous use): 4+ hours
– Stable in 50+ mph winds
– Able to climb on wet surfaces
– Full Motion video securely transmitted to operator's tablet

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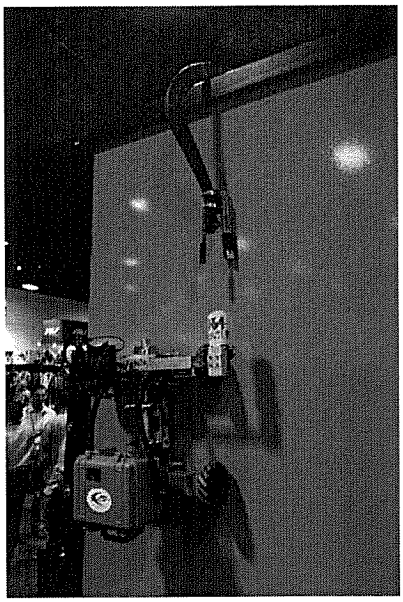
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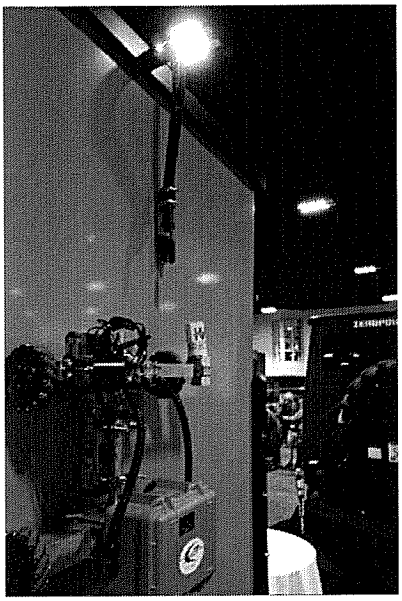
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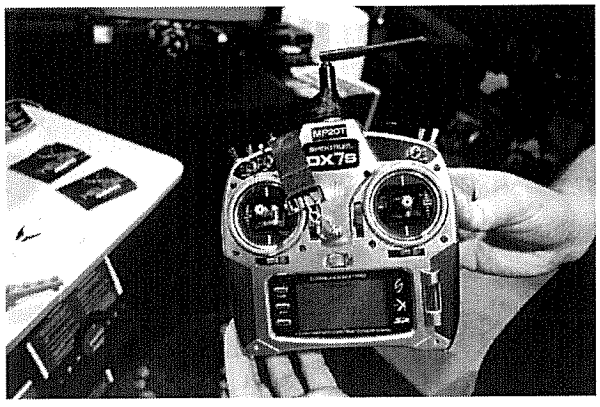
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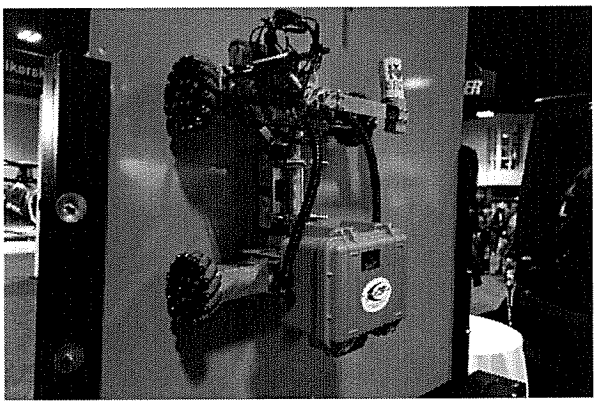
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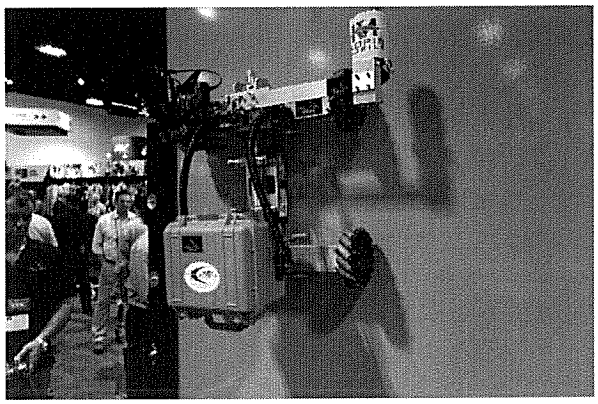
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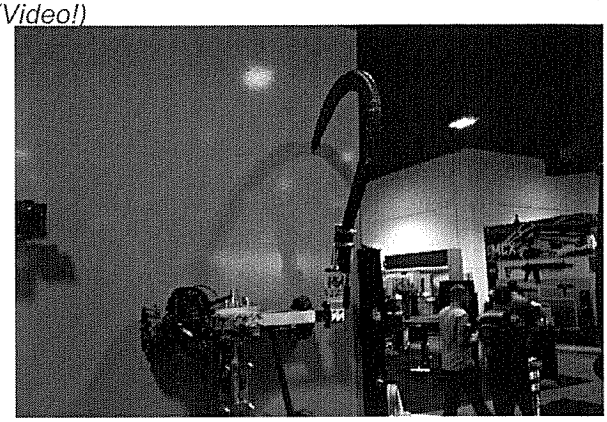


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