

Boston Dynamics shows off latest abilities of AlphaDog (w/ Video)

September 11 2012, by Bob Yirka



(Phys.org)—Anyone who follows the latest in robot technology is almost certainly familiar with Boston Dynamics' [AlphaDog](#), the mechanical pack mule and descendant of the original Big Dog built at the behest of DARPA. It's all part of what its developers call it Legged Squad Support System (LS3); heavy duty robots designed to carry stuff around for troops walking in the field. Some might call the robots scary, or even

creepy, but what is undeniable is that this latest member of the LSSS, is truly impressive. Not only does it appear more confident in its movements than the last time it appeared on YouTube, it does so in quieter fashion and is now able to follow a soldier without assistance.

It might be that many people have watched too many science fiction movies, as there is nothing inherently scary about AlphaDog; he (it) simply marches from one point to the next, crashing through the brush if need be, to the required destination. Perhaps it's because of the size; AlphaDog is a lot bulkier than a horse and likely heavier. It's strong too, able to carry up to 400 pounds of gear and now able to walk for twenty miles before needing a recharge.

It might be that the line of development seen in the LSSS line incites the imagination, causing viewers to fear the worst. Where once the big pack robots seemed more like pipe dreams for the pentagon, now it appears almost a certainty that these new kinds of robots will be deployed on the battlefield within our lifetime, and maybe as soon as just a few years from now. And because of that, it's not difficult to imagine [herds](#) of them one day storming across terrain fully armed, destroying everything in their path; an unstoppable force not seen since the days of panzer divisions in [World War II](#).

Currently AlphaDog can walk at a pace of just a few miles an hour or trot at up to five; not fast enough to keep up with soldiers who typically move at seven to ten miles per hour, thus, the next goal for the engineers at [Boston Dynamics](#) is to bump up that speed without sacrificing distance between recharges. Based on the progression of development seen thus far, few will doubt they'll achieve that mark, and likely surpass it, which we will all no doubt witness the next time AlphaDog shows up on YouTube.

More information: [Darpa](#)

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