
THE PODCAST ON ROBOTICS AND
ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Talking Robots: Final Episode

May 23

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INTERVIEWER: While the following interviews are not intended to represent the general opinion, they provide another source of information next to the papers, scientists, and the industry, as to how robots will be affecting our future.

With all the military driving robotics nowadays, my first stop ended up being an army recruitment office in the center of Boston. Luckily, they sent me straight to their sergeants.

SERGEANT FIRST CLASS GRAYSON: I'm Sergeant First Class Grayson; I'm the station commander for the army recruiting office in Boston.

INTERVIEWER: What is a robot for you?

SFC GRAYSON: When I think of robots, I'm thinking of robots with military applications and stuff through DARPA, where you see the unmanned area vehicles. DARPA's been doing a lot of competitions on unmanned land crafts that can navigate by themselves without direct input, so it's not just remote controlled; it's completely running on its own. It seems like more and more defense applications with robots every time I turn around.

INTERVIEWER: Do you see the use and need of these robots for the military?

SFC GRAYSON: Oh, absolutely. The things that I've been seeing on the Discovery Channel, Learning Channel, places like that, look like it's going to be really, really good to put more robots out into the field. You have fewer soldiers out there exposed to the dangers. In a perfect world, we'd be able to handle everything we needed to handle, entirely robotically, and never have to risk the life of a human soldier.

INTERVIEWER: Does this mean that the way soldiers are prepared will have to change with respect to these robots—maybe more technical?

SFC GRAYSON: I would say that, based on my limited knowledge, it would seem that we would have to definitely be more technical—longer times in school, training on the equipment. Changing from back in the old days of flintlock muskets to the M16s and M4s that we have now, as it gets more and more advanced and more and more technical, we have to do a lot more training and have better quality of training.

INTERVIEWER: Regarding robots in the military, do you think at one point we'll have to create laws or limits on what we can and can't do with robots?

SFC GRAYSON: I don't really know. You start getting into the legalities of things and it just gets to be such a big field, you know? Wow, it gets so deep, I can't really say.

I would assume yes, because the way I understand certain laws now—say assault laws, where if I take a step outside of the rules of war, then I can be punished for it—those laws are all directed and written in respect of violence by persons on persons. I don't know if it would apply to something happening with robots. There's some pretty interesting lawyers out there.

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