

AUTOMOTIVE

Jaguar Land Rover aims to make mobility barrier-free

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Simone Caleddu was among the wounded veterans who test drove the autonomous Range Rover Sport. Image courtesy of Jaguar Land Rover

By STAFF REPORTS

British automaker Jaguar Land Rover is pointing to the potential of autonomous vehicles for wounded veterans with a driving experience ahead of the Invictus Games Sydney 2018.

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Jaguar Land Rover let wounded warriors take a ride in a self-driving Range Rover Sport, getting their perspective on their needs for the technology. As autonomous driving becomes an increasingly nearer future, Jaguar Land Rover is looking to ensure that all passengers can use self-driving cars to get around.

"The competitors' insight has been invaluable," said Jim O'Donoghue, autonomous research engineer at Jaguar Land Rover, in a statement. "We are already working with industry, academia and government to bring self-driving cars to the roads within the next 10 years, with the ambition of zero accidents, zero emissions and zero congestion for future generations.

"To add zero mobility barriers to this list would be a huge achievement and something we are striving for," he said.

Vetting autonomous cars

Jaguar Land Rover took members of Invictus teams on test drives in four autonomous SUVs.

The passengers were Mark 'Dot' Perkins, who is the captain of the U.K. team, Italy's Simone Careddu and former Invictus competitors Jamie Weller and JJ Chalmers.

During the test drive, the vehicles managed to reach speeds of up to 50mph, while also navigating lane changes and responding to traffic lights. These are innovations being worked on by the UK Autodrive Consortium, aiming to develop autonomous cars that can adapt to traffic and obstacles such as pedestrians.

"It was a great opportunity to experience the new technology Jaguar Land Rover is developing," said Mr. Weller, a veteran aircraft engineer from the Royal Navy who suffered a visual impairment, said in a statement.

"It's exciting to be discussing cars that could be used by visually impaired people," he said. "The technology has so many positive benefits for anyone living with a disability."

Jaguar Land Rover is a presenting partner of the fourth Invictus Games, which will take place in Sydney from Oct. 20 to 27. The competition, founded by Prince Harry, is positioned to help wounded service members recover while also paying respect to injured or sick warriors.

Jaguar Land Rover was also a partner of the 2017 Invictus Games

In 2016, Jaguar Land Rover began real-world testing for autonomous vehicles.

By 2020, the automaker plans to have a fleet of more than 100 research automobiles for development and testing of Connected and Autonomous Vehicle technologies. The announcement comes immediately after the company detailed plans for all-terrain autonomous driving ([see story](#)), signaling the urgency of the goal ([see story](#)).

While Jaguar's latest test drive was focused on four individuals, the feedback could help to make self-driving vehicles work for the millions who have limited mobility.

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