



UAS Video Terminal Connects Boots on Ground to Eyes in Sky

KIM HENRY

The Army fielded its 200th One-System Remote Video Terminal (OSRVT) to Iraq and Afghanistan last month. Soldiers using an OSRVT can display the sensor feed from any of the Army's unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) and gain an unprecedented, instantaneous common view of the battlefield.

The OSRVT is a leap in capability from other UAS video receivers because it displays not only video, but also "metadata" that tell Soldiers exactly where the UAS is, which is essential for tactical combat decisions. In addition, the OSRVT constantly scans through its operational range for other UASs and displays them on a map of the area, allowing Soldiers to instantly switch to a UAS with a better view of a target.

"It is the only UAS video receiver that has metadata to improve situational awareness," said Lieutenant Colonel Jennifer Jensen, Common Systems Integration acting product manager. "You know where you are in relation to the unmanned aircraft, so you know how far and what direction you would need to go to reach the area of interest."

In this time where Joint UAS cooperation is critical, the OSRVT is unique in enhancing situational awareness, commonality and interoperability. The OSRVT provides the Soldier with not only near real-time sensor information from Army UASs, such as Raven, Shadow, Hunter, Warrior A, Micro Air Vehicle and the new Sky Warrior, but also the video and data of other services' manned and unmanned platforms including the Marine Corps' Pioneer and Air Force's Predator and Lightning Pods.

"Everyone, regardless of the platform, receives the same information at the same time, leading to true interoperability, the



Photo by PEO Aviation

Soldiers can now get an unprecedented instantaneous view of the battlefield through the One-System Remote Video Terminal.

Army's key goal," said Lieutenant Colonel Adam Hinsdale, chief of the UAS Division, Department of the Army Aviation Directorate. "The OSRVT is a vital component of manned/unmanned teaming, allowing all elements, air and ground, to view the same synchronized area of interest simultaneously for coordinated engagement, with either kinetic or non-kinetic effects."

PEO Aviation fielded the first of 1,000 OSRVTs in February, and the system will soon be common throughout the modular force. Laptop units are in use by ground combat teams, while 12 command and control UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters are already equipped with this system. OSRVTs have been integrated into 28 Strykers headed to Iraq, and the system will be in Apache cockpits by next summer.

"It is the link that brings it all together to the end user, the Soldier," said Tim Owings, Army UAS deputy project manager.

(Kim Henry serves with PEO Aviation Public Affairs.)

CAPTAINS NOW ELIGIBLE FOR \$25K BONUS

A critical skills-retention bonus (CSRB) of \$25,000 or more is available to more than 16,000 regular-Army captains who agree to remain on active duty beyond their initial active-duty service obligations.

The bonus is part of a "menu of incentives" targeting officers willing to remain on active duty an additional three years. The other incentives include graduate school, military schooling, branch or functional area transfer, or post of choice.

An earlier version of the plan unveiled in May was reviewed by senior leaders. The final plan increases the number of officers eligible for the bonus (up from 7,000), and includes a higher basic bonus (up from \$20,000) and targeted higher amounts for officers in critical branches.

The bonus is available to captains with dates of rank of April 1, 2002 or later, based on the original accession branches listed below.

- The basic \$25,000 bonus is available to officers who were originally commissioned in air defense, engineer, finance, signal, quartermaster, nurse corps and select medical service functional areas.

- Officers commissioned in adjutant general, armor, chemical, military police and ordnance are eligible for a \$30,000 critical skills-retention bonus.

- Officers commissioned in aviation, transportation, infantry, field artillery, and military intelligence are eligible for a \$35,000 CSRB.

Additional CSRB information can be found in Military Personnel message 07-237, available online at <https://www.hrc.army.mil>

SOLDIER TRAINS FOR PARALYMPICS

BRIDGETT SITER

Staff Sergeant Joshua Olson considers himself “very, very lucky.” At 28, he’s doing the job he dreamed of doing as a boy, growing up in Spokane, Washington. He’s Soldiering — “there’s no better job in the world.” And if the stars align just right, the former high school athlete will be the first active-duty Soldier to compete in the Paralympics.

Not bad for a man with one leg.

Olson lost his right leg — all of it — four years ago when his squad was ambushed in Iraq. What should have put an end to the only career he ever wanted turned out to be a blessing in disguise, Olson said.

“I try to find the good in everything, but sometimes it sucks,” he said. “When I get frustrated, I have a friend I call. He’s like, ‘Do a 360-degree turn Josh and look at where you’re at. How many people get to do that?’”

“That,” among other things, is Olson’s opportunity to compete on the U.S. Army Marksmanship Unit. “The best-kept secret in the Army,” he calls it. After two and a half years on the International Rifle Team, he ranks eighth in the world as a prone shooter with his .22 caliber rifle. He’s training for the Paralympics next year in Beijing, and he hopes to compete in the 2012 Olympics.

“It’s pretty amazing when I think about it,” Olson said. “The places I’ve been and the stuff I’ve done — the opportunities I would never have had if I hadn’t got hurt.”

Master Sergeant Jock Olson, of the Washington Air National Guard, remembers his son playing Army at a very young age. Somewhere around the house, there’s a picture of the boy at 5 or 6 decked out in BDUs and green face paint.

Ten years ago, right out of high school, Josh attended basic training at Fort Benning. The Army was everything he thought it would be, his father said. Josh loved the discipline. And he loved to run.

After a couple of years at Fort Campbell, Kentucky, six months in Kosovo and a year in Korea, Josh shipped out to Iraq in 2003. He served as a squad leader with the 1st Battalion, 187th Infantry Regiment. Eight months into his deployment, in October, he was leading a patrol “for the hundredth time” through the streets of Telafar, just west of Mosul, when they came under fire. Olson said he jumped out of the forward vehicle and returned fire.

A rocket-propelled grenade (RPG) struck the truck and knocked him to the ground. The impact knocked the wind from him, Olson said, but he told himself to get up and walk it off like he did in those high school football games.

He couldn’t muster the strength to rise, and from where he lay, stretched out on his back with a cumbersome plated vest protecting his torso, Olson couldn’t see the hole at the base of his right hip. It wasn’t until his Soldiers had squelched the attack and returned to his aid that Olson realized he’d been badly injured.

“The look on their faces, I’ll never forget it,” he said. “I



Courtesy photo

Staff Sergeant Joshua Olson was injured in Iraq and is currently an international rifle shooter with the U.S. Army Marksmanship Unit.

knew it was bad then.”

Olson was bleeding profusely when they lifted him into a truck and retrieved his leg, but still he felt no pain.

“I remember thinking here goes — I’m not going to make it. I said a quick prayer; ‘Take care of Mom and Dad and let them know I didn’t feel any pain,’” he said.

When Olson woke up nine days later in Walter Reed, his mother and father had already been standing vigil by his bed for nearly a week. They flew to Germany first, where they found their son clinging to life. A collapsed lung and shrapnel wounds complicated treatment for his severed leg.

Jock credits “the good Lord” for saving his son, and Josh agrees. But they’re both quick to praise the staff at Walter Reed, also.

“What they did for him was truly amazing,” Jock said. “That’s one of the best hospitals in the world.”

As he healed and learned to walk with a prosthetic leg, Josh made lots of new friends at Walter Reed. Celebrities dropped in to visit. President Bush delivered his Purple Heart. Vietnam veterans, mostly amputees, shared their stories and listened to his.

But it was the other wounded warriors that impacted Josh the most. Together they learned to cope with their disabilities.

“On a bad day, you’d look around and see people worse off than you,” he said. “You see somebody with two legs but no arms or half a skull. You learn to be happy for what you have. It’s funny, but the general attitude among amputees is ‘I’m glad I lost this and not that.’”

Patients at Walter Reed are encouraged to participate in a program there that teaches them to enjoy outdoor sports again — fishing, shooting and such. A recruiter from the AMU recognized Josh’s potential as a shooter and offered him a chance to stay in the Army.

“I couldn’t believe it. I already had a job lined up when I got out,” he said. “Then I came here for an interview and I was in awe. I still am. We have the greatest coaches here, the greatest teammates, the best gunsmiths and facilities in the world. And I get to stay in the Army.”

(Bridgett Siter is the assistant editor of The Bayonet at Fort Benning, Georgia.)