



STORY RELEASE



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2CR Troops use Raven to patrol skies

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Hohenfels, Germany – When U.S. Forces move into an area for operations, one of the biggest aspects of modern warfare that helps with success is surveillance. It provides the necessary knowledge of what happens on the battlefield when it happens. One way to complete this task is to, not only see what happens on the ground, but also survey the area above it.

The 2nd Cavalry Regiment conducted Unmanned Aerial System operations to patrol the sky March 16, at Hohenfels, Germany during a Mission Readiness Exercise designed to prepare Troops for an upcoming deployment in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

2CR is giving a new definition to the saying “a bird’s eye view”. With a UAS called an RQ-11 Raven, the Regiment’s Troops will be able to advise and assist Afghan National Security Forces from a completely safe perspective that involves the use of a drone aircraft. It has the capability to provide essential knowledge in deciding who, or what, to send into combat for successful and safe results.

The Raven is 2-man operated, used for quick reconnaissance and designed to sustain crash landings. It provides troops with the skills to survey an area ahead of them that is suspected of being occupied by enemy combatants that provides a safe decision on how, or which way to proceed.

U.S. Army Spc. Joshua Phan, an armor crewman and Raven operator with Iron Troop, 3rd Squadron, 2nd Cavalry Regiment and native of Portland, OR., talks about the advantages of using the UAS during deployment to assist and advise ANSF.

“As we have our SFAATs [Security Force Assistance and Advisory Teams] with Afghans leading the way, we can scout a little bit ahead of them so they are not in danger,” said Phan. “We can use it in conjunction and to benefit them. If you throw up a Raven and you see enemy activity in an area where you weren’t expecting it, you can save your whole team or platoon.”

The UAS asset allows troops to view the battlefield without endangering human life. Instead of soldiers heading into an unknown territory possibly occupied by hostile forces, a Raven can be sent up to view the distance ahead and provide the entire unit with timely up-to-date knowledge of what's out there.

"It's really great if you don't want to send your route clearance patrol out first to go and see what's out there," said Sgt. Skyler Rose, a forward observer, Raven operator and native of Spokane, Wash., also with Iron Troop. "As far as the Regiment goes, by taking the still imagery, I would be providing them with the most up-to-date and accurate imagery they can get at that time. Satellite imagery, they get it month-to-month or week-to-week, but I can give it to them right then."

During the MRE Rose and Phan were able to survey a town and various terrain features surrounding a safe location without putting themselves or any other troops in harms way. Rose talks about how this capability is used and how it could benefit ANSF downrange.

"We were conducting operations over a town looking for avenues of approach, MSR's [main supply route], possible enemy mortar locations and we were capturing imagery in and around the town," said Rose. "By showing them their own surroundings from a birds-eye perspective you kind of give them a view of their own battlefield. We are teaching them to fight the Taliban and if they can grasp a visual of the terrain from the sky, then they can maneuver better throughout the terrain."

The Raven requires 2 people to operate, a vehicle operator [VO] and a mission operator [MO]. The two focus on mission completion that is essential to any combat related scenario.

"There's two positions, the VO and MO, said Phan. "When you're operating, either team member should be able to do one another's job. I think as a team, when we operate we get the mission done and that's the important part."

Rose talked about operating the Raven and the opportunities the experience has brought to him over the years.

"I have been a raven operator for two years and every time I get to fly during training it's usually a good time I enjoy," said Rose. "I get to feel like a kid again and I'm doing something cool. I'm seeing where I live from a birds eye view and it's just fun to fly the aircraft."