

Army to hit one million unmanned flight hours

Jason Lomberg, Technical Editor

Traditionally pegged as a ground force, the Army is approaching an historic [milestone](#) [1]: one million flight hours for its Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS).

According to COL Christopher Carlile, director, U.S. Army Unmanned Aircraft Systems Center of Excellence, the Army will hit one million UAS flight hours some time next month. This includes all types of UAS missions. "It'll take us to around September or October before we'll hit one million hours in support of combat operations," he said.

For a service traditionally afforded a ground role, the Army operates a wide array of Unmanned Aerial Systems. They range from the [RQ-11 Raven](#) [2], a hand-launched recon/surveillance system, to the beefy [MQ-1C Warrior](#) [3] (a.k.a. "Sky Warrior"), an upgraded version of the Air Force's MQ-1 Predator.



A soldier launches an RQ-11 Raven.

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Published on Electronic Component News (<http://www.ecnmag.com>)

The two services approach Unmanned Aerial warfare quite differently. Unlike the Air Force, the Army uses enlisted personnel as UAS pilots. "Army enlisted UAS operators are fully capable and well trained to do anything you give them to do, and it'll shock you when you hear how many hours of operation they have," said COL Carlile. Furthermore, the Army operates its UAS's in-theater, while the Air Force pilots its drones remotely from Creech AFB, Nevada (among other locations).

The one-million hour milestone will be recognized in late-May with displays at the Pentagon and the Smithsonian Museum in Washington.

Source URL (retrieved on 01/29/2015 - 9:53pm):

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