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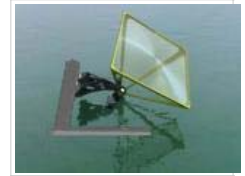
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## Autonomous Rotorcraft Sniper System packs .338-caliber rifle controlled by Xbox 360 pad

from **Military** (245 articles)

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April 29, 2009 Late last year reports surfaced of a modified radio controlled helicopter equipped with a .45 caliber hand gun, including a video of the RC copter doing target practice with live ammunition (see below). It seems the US Army have been thinking along the same lines, except this one carries a .338 caliber sniper rifle.

Most unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) like the Predator and Reaper are fixed wing aircraft which originally filled a reconnaissance role but have more recently been fitted with 500-lb bombs and Hellfire missiles to tackle Hunter-Killer roles in combat zones. To limit collateral damage, especially in cities the US Army is developing a small, unmanned helicopter equipped with a powerful .338-caliber rifle and an autopilot system handles the tricky business of flying while the operator lines up the kill shot on a remote monitor.

The autonomous Rotorcraft Sniper System (ARSS) is based on the **Vigilante 502** unmanned helicopter which is a much modified version of the commercially available Ultraspout 496 which is an ultralight class kit helicopter. Powered by a 115 hp 4 cylinder turbocharged Rotax engine the 1,100 pounds (500kg) UAV can fly at 117 knots (135 mph / 216 kph) for up to 9 hours with a ceiling of 13,000 feet (4,000 m). The Vigilante can carry up to 380 lb (172 kg) of payload which is enough for a medium caliber machine gun, a shotgun or in this case a sniper gun. The autopilot is based on a 266Mhz Pentium PC-104 industrial computer that gets it bearings using GPS, radar altimeter and magnetometer. Communication with the ground is via RF digital modems at 115kbps and has a 20 mile range.

Mounted onto this UAV is a lightweight gun turret developed by **Space Dynamics Laboratory**. The turret carries a .338 Lapua Magnum rifle and a situational awareness camera plus a scope with cameras attached that provides two levels of zoom. Control of the rifle is via a laptop computer with a Xbox 360 gaming controller used for aiming and firing.

Paul Evans

**Video - Modified radio controlled helicopter equipped with a .45 caliber hand gun**



ARSS is based on the Vigilante 502 unmanned helicopter

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