

HERON Unmanned Aerial System – Fact sheet

The Royal Australian Air Force will operate the Heron Unmanned Aerial System (UAS) in Afghanistan for a number of tasks including:

- Surveillance
- Reconnaissance
- Security and escort
- Battle damage assessment

The Heron UAS includes a number of different elements. The major components are the Air Vehicle, Payloads, the Ground Control Station (GCS), and the Processing and Dissemination Suite.

Air Vehicle (AV) The Heron is a medium altitude long endurance UAS with the ability to conduct operations in excess of 24 hours at altitudes of up to 10,000 metres, with a maximum speed of more than 180 km/h. The AV cannot be seen or heard when it is at normal operating altitudes.

The AV has a wingspan of 16.6 metres, a length of 8.5 metres and a maximum take-off weight of more than 1 tonne. The Heron navigates using Global Positioning System (GPS), and also has a backup capability to enable operations in a GPS-denied environment.

Payloads The Heron carries a combination of sensors which communicate with the ground control station in real-time. Multiple sensors can be used simultaneously.