

## U.S. puts hold on video management upgrade

By Ben Iannotta, C4ISR Journal  
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U.S. Central Command has said “no thanks” to a \$29 million system of video management computers and software that Joint Forces Command had planned to start sending to Afghanistan in April.

Intelligence operatives and troops were expected to use Valiant Angel’s broadcasting-inspired viewing tools to watch full-motion video from Predator unmanned planes and other aircraft, while storing the video for later use.

Joint Forces Command awarded the Valiant Angel contract to Lockheed Martin in August under a plan to rapidly develop and deploy it for the war in Afghanistan.

Advocates said Valiant Angel would help troops and intelligence operatives track insurgents and terrorist leaders while aiding in forensic investigations after roadside bomb attacks or firefights. The system is named for Angela Houtz, a Navy intelligence analyst killed in the Sept. 11 attack on the Pentagon.

Commanders in Afghanistan “determined that existing capabilities in theater satisfy their immediate requirements,” said U.S. CentCom in a May 26 statement relayed through Joint Forces Command, which manages Valiant Angel development.

Since 2006, intelligence operatives and troops in the region have used a system called the Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance Information Service, which pulls video from ground stations and displays it.

CentCom cited “evolving operational requirements” and “force, logistics, and architectural priorities” as the reasons for the decision stick with the existing equipment for now. The command said it would reassess Valiant Angel in 12 months.

The Valiant Angel equipment remains in Suffolk, Va., said Lt. Cmdr. Rob Lyon, a Joint Forces Command spokesman. In March, officials invited reporters to view the equipment inside the lab where they said it was undergoing final evaluation before being shipped to Afghanistan.

In a prepared statement May 26, Joint Forces Command said “Valiant Angel will not deploy as a quick reaction capability to Afghanistan.” Instead, developers plan to send Valiant Angel to the Empire Challenge intelligence demonstration in Arizona in August “to work integration with the Distributed Common Ground System (DCGS) Enterprise and cross security domain issues.”

Joint Forces Command has previously said it plans to transfer responsibility for Valiant Angel to the National Geospatial-intelligence Agency. The command said it would “accelerate that transition.”