

# Iowa National Guard Training with Unmanned Aircraft at Boone Airport

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BOONE, Iowa -- For the past month, people around the Boone Airport have may have noticed a strange-looking aircraft.

The Iowa National Guard has a new unmanned aircraft which they are using to train for troops in combat situations. The drone is used to scout where enemy troops may be heading.

It's called the RQ-7B Shadow Aircraft. It is flown from inside the control room on an army vehicle. Pilots use a keyboard and a mouse to send the drone where it needs to go.

It is launched from a pressure mounted sling shot which shoots the 11 ft. long aircraft into the sky. The plane has a rear mounted propeller, it flies on regular aviation fuel, and can be in the air for around six hours.

“Our main mission out here between the takeoffs and landings, is to be able to organize a good training structure for our young soldiers as they learn how to operate the aircraft,” said Sgt. Francisco Hernandez/Iowa National Guard. “It is actual aviation they're in control of an aircraft which weighs 465 pounds.”

The training is for when soldiers are called to actual combat situations. The unit takes 28 soldiers to operate, with trucks, radio antennas and cables to make everything on the ground work together.

On Wednesday the guard opened a flight session to the media and members of the public.

“We got some calls saying that they heard we were flying this,” said Hernandez. “More curiosity trying to find out what it's about, pilots want to come in and see how it flies and what it looks like.”