RPV APPLICATIONS IN THE U.S. NAVY

R. D. FRIICHTENICHT
Program Manager, RPV's
Naval Air Systems Command Headquarters

ABSTRACT: The continuing evolution to smaller, more reliable electronics packages has had a tremendous impact throughout industry and the world. one application that has just recently started receiving wide spread attention is Remotely Diloted vehicles (RPVS). The smaller computers, electro-optical devices, infra-red systems, etc. have brought the RPV out of its "model airplane" stage and into the military arena. RPVs offer some distinct advantages over manned aircraft, which places them in a very competitive position for accomplishment of selected missions. Cost savings promise to be significant and their comparatively small size make them attractive for operation from small naval ships. However, the Navy faces some unique problems that must be addressed before RPVs are an integral part of the Naval Forces. The most immediate and overriding problem is recovery. Not only is the recovery platform very small, but ship's movement through all three axis further complicates the problem. This paper discusses some of the possible naval applications of RPVs, and outlines the Navy's program for solving the recovery problem.