

UAV platform. Our UAV platform is the Boomerang III, purchased as a fully assembled model airplane from (Autonomous Unmanned Air Vehicles, Palmetto, Florida, <http://auav.net/>) [FIGURE 1]. The Boomerang III has a 86.5 in wingspan with 1320 in² of wing area. Boomerang III is equipped with a 1.2 in³ engine (O.S. Engines, Champaign, IL) that produces 3.1 hp at 9,000 rpm and a Master Airscrew 15 x 8 in K-Series propeller (Windsor Propeller Company, Rancho Cordova, CA). The flying weight (with payload installed, minus fuel) is approximately 13 pounds. An aerobiological sampling device is mounted inside the UAV's fuselage towards the nose. Air enters the sampler via a small opening in the nose of the fuselage.

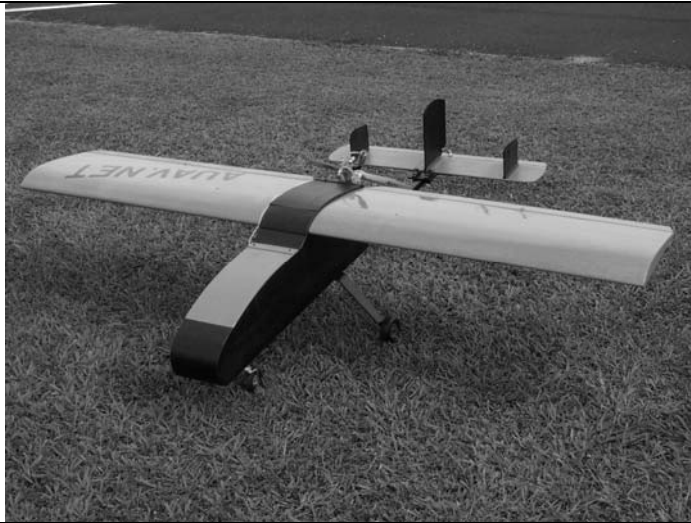


FIGURE 1. Photograph of Boomerang III UAV.

Flight controller. The MicroPilot MP2028g system (MicroPilot Inc., Stony Mountain, Manitoba, Canada) is used as our flight controller. The MicroPilot MP2028g system is lightweight (28 grams), has good functionality, and is relatively affordable. The system permits a UAV to navigate GPS waypoints through a desired sampling area while providing the ground-based pilot with real-time dynamic control of flight characteristics. The MicroPilot MP2028g system is a printed circuit board equipped with 3-axis gyros and accelerometers. These components provide inertial measurements to allow control of the roll, pitch, and yaw of the UAV. A GPS unit attached to the board receives satellite signals through the attached antenna, a static pressure sensor allows the flight controller to measure relative altitude, and a pitot tube pressure sensor monitors the airspeed of the UAV. A compass module (MP-COMP, MicroPilot Inc.) enables MicroPilot to determine the true heading of the UAV. All of the control surfaces on the UAV can be controlled by the flight controller. The signal for the servos passes through a servo board, allowing the power supply to the servos to be independent of the power supply to the MicroPilot. A rigid plastic electronics box houses all of the MicroPilot components. The flight controller and the radio modem are powered by separate 11.1 volt lithium-ion battery packs with 2200 mAh capacity (L18650-2200-3, Tenenergy Corporation, Sunnyvale, CA). The UAV control surface servos use a 4.8 volt Nickel-Cadmium battery pack with 600 mAh capacity (NR-4J, Futaba).

Aerobiological sampling device The aerobiological sampling device is controlled via an independent, stand alone RC system. Its usage will have no impact on controllability or safe usage of the UAV. This system includes a separate transmitter, receiver and power source. The aerobiological sampling device uses both a 4.8 volt Nickel-Cadmium battery pack with 600 mAh capacity (NR-4J, Futaba) and a 11.1 volt lithium-ion battery packs with 2200 mAh capacity (L18650-2200-3, Tenenergy Corporation, Sunnyvale, CA).

Redundant control via the RxMUX for increased safety. An additional safety feature on the Boomerang III (the RxMUX, Reactive Technologies, Merrimack, NH) permits the addition of a second RC receiver to be added to the UAV for redundant control from the ground. The RxMUX is a signal multiplexer that takes inputs from two RC receivers and outputs one signal to control the servos of the UAV. In this case, the primary source of control is the flight controller, which can be controlled by its own RC receiver. The secondary source of control is the backup RC receiver on a different channel from the autopilot. The receiver that passes through the flight controller has a channel that allows the safety pilot to reclaim control at any time. The RxMUX also allows one channel of the input to control which input source is controlling the servos. With this setup, the ST can be operated independently with either transmitter. In other words, only one of the two transmitters is needed to fly the UAV at any given time. If only the flight controller transmitter is used, the pilot is able to pass control back and forth to the flight controller. If only the backup transmitter is used, the UAV can only be flown in RC mode. But with the combination of the two, two pilots can be watching the UAV during flight where both have the ability to take control from the flight controller if something goes wrong. If the secondary transmitter takes control of the UAV, then the primary transmitter and the flight controller cannot take control back at any time. The secondary backup pilot has to give control back the primary transmitter or flight controller. This system allows the pilot to be in two different locations with two different views of the UAV and whoever has the best view of the UAV can have control. The only time that communication between the two pilots is needed is when the secondary backup transmitter gives control back the primary transmitter.