The Army is Improving the Combat Service Support Very Small Aperture Terminal (CSS VSAT)

Problem: It is critical for our Army to be ready. The CSS VSAT is an important capability in that effort, allowing sustainers to connect to logistics systems from anywhere. But the legacy CSS VSAT fielded in 2004 is large, heavy, difficult to transport, and reaches end of life in FY22.

Solution: The improved CSS VSAT is an expeditionary capability that supports the Army’s ability to react quickly to any situation.

Enables Readiness
- Supports the Army’s rapid mobility requirement
- Provides connectivity to unit logistics network systems including GCSS-A, GFEBS, CAN, and MC4 for enterprise logistics management

More Flexible and Secure
- Over 300 pounds lighter and half the physical storage requirements make it more versatile and portable than the legacy CSS VSAT
- A more powerful upconverter reduces interference by wind, improving system reliability
- Operates within the military X and Ka frequency bands in addition to the commercial Ku band, giving operators more flexibility and reducing signal-jamming threats

Easy to Set Up and Operate
- Setup time is reduced to under 30 minutes from more than 45 minutes on the legacy system
- Manually acquiring a satellite is simple—find azimuth, point, and adjust
- Manual-acquire eliminates the risk of failure-prone and heavy legacy auto-acquire pedestal

CSS VSAT Improvement Fielding & Training
January 2019: Korea
June 2019: Focused Readiness Units
1. Why is the Army switching to the Inflatable Satellite Antenna (ISA)?
   - The legacy system is reaching the end of its lifespan, limiting readiness.
   - The CSS VSAT improvement is lighter, easy to employ, and more capable. It better supports expeditionary operations.

2. What are the other benefits of the ISA?
   - It is easier to transport, more powerful, better able to overcome wind interference, and more secure thanks to its tri-band capabilities.

3. Can Soldiers operate a manual-pointing antenna without an auto-acquire feature?
   - Yes. All trained operators will be able to configure the system in under 30 minutes. The legacy auto-acquire is prone to failure and is no longer supported by the manufacturer.

4. Will the ISA pop like a balloon?
   - No. The system has a variable-power fan that will continue to run even when punctured. Quick-fix patches are issued with each kit.

5. How well does the ISA operate in wind?
   - Like its predecessor CSS VSAT, the ISA will operate in wind up to 45 MPH. But it is better able to withstand gusts because of its round shape, versus a rigid dish that can catch wind like a sail.

6. What is the lifespan of the ISA skin?
   - Usually 3-5 years before reskinning at the factory is recommended, but it varies according to usage. CECOM will always manage any reskinning, when needed.

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