

Norwegian army testing Oculus Rift virtual goggles system for tank drivers

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The Norwegian army has announced that they have begun testing the possibility of using the Oculus Rift virtual goggle system in tanks to help expand the field of view for soldiers inside. Such a system would help tank drivers navigate during battlefield operations when the hatch is down, limiting vision for those attempting to maneuver the vehicle during wartime.

The Oculus Rift was created for use as a gaming device—to provide a

more immersive experience than a [flat screen](#) can allow. Adding the system to a tank means adding cameras to its front and sides and then running the video feed through a computer. The result is a virtual reality version of the area in the vicinity of the tank. One drawback to the system is that gamers have reported seasickness after extended use. Engineers at Oculus Rift are reportedly working on a fix for that problem, though it's not known how close they are to a solution. In initial tests with the system in real tanks, drivers reported being able to use the system for short periods of time before experiencing nausea. Even if the problem isn't fixed, however, it may not stop the project from going forward, as the system might only ever be used when actually engaged with an enemy—which, history suggests, would be a short lived affair. The system being tested by the army allows for 185 degrees of video feed on either side of the tank, and drivers can also look straight down directly in front of the tank to see what is being driven over.

More of a concern for the army would be the vulnerability of the cameras—a problem for many advanced tank systems where cameras have been mounted outside the vehicle to provide a real-time [video feed](#) of events going on outside. It's not known how far technology has come in surmounting such obstacles but if solutions do exist, the odds are good that they are both top secret and very expensive.

In its announcement, the army noted that Oculus Rift was recently purchased by Facebook, which they see as a positive sign that the goggle system will not only be around for some time, but that it will see continual improvements, which hopefully, over time will translate to better field vision for tank drivers.

Norwegian TV station TuTV has put together a profile of the new system with an accompanying [video](#).

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