

Boeing ScanEagle UAV Makes First Autonomous Flight

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ScanEagle, a Boeing long-endurance unmanned aerial vehicle, or UAV, successfully made its first autonomous flight Wednesday at the company's Boardman test facility in eastern Oregon. The UAV, built by The Insitu Group, took off via a pneumatic catapult and flew a pre-programmed course at a maximum altitude of 1,500 feet.

During the 45-minute flight, ScanEagle completed a number of test points using the Global Positioning System. The test team also demonstrated the ability to make real-time updates to the flight plan from the ground station. The UAV was retrieved using the patented SkyHook technique, in which the ScanEagle catches a rope hanging from a 30-foot-high pole.

"ScanEagle's milestone autonomous flight is a great example of the breadth of projects of our Unmanned Systems organization," said Charlie Guthrie, Boeing Unmanned Systems director of rapid prototyping and advanced concepts. "We are melding Insitu's expertise and unique capabilities with the best of Boeing to provide an autonomous, low-cost, long-endurance UAV for a wide range of potential customers.

"Boeing has the proven expertise in all the areas essential to success in the unmanned market, and we foresee both commercial and military applications for this type of small, low-cost, long-endurance platform."

The four-foot long vehicle, which has a 10-foot wingspan and can fly up to 68 knots, was built using systems automation, integration, communications and payload technologies applicable to a variety of Boeing unmanned systems.

"Insitu is very happy to be working with Boeing because of the technologies and capabilities they bring to the table," said Steve Sliwa, Insitu chief executive officer.

"They not only make the UAV system much more robust, but will enhance the value to potential customers."

In February 2002, Boeing signed a 15-month agreement with Insitu to develop the ScanEagle UAV. ScanEagle is based on Insitu's Seascan aircraft, a ship-based surveillance platform. In 1998, Insitu and the University of Washington demonstrated the potential of these types of vehicles when they coordinated the first UAV transatlantic flight, a 2,000-mile trip from Newfoundland to Scotland that used only 1.5 gallons of gasoline.

The Boeing Company is the world's largest manufacturer of satellites, commercial jetliners and military aircraft. In terms of sales, Boeing is the largest exporter in the United States. Total company revenues for 2001 were \$58 billion.

Boeing Military Aircraft and Missile Systems designs, produces and provides follow-on support for fighters, bombers, transports, rotorcraft and weapons for the United States and its allies around the globe. As the world's largest military aircraft manufacturer, Boeing has delivered more than 130,000 military aircraft to the U.S. government and international customers. Among emerging businesses are unmanned systems, as well as military aircraft that are based on the company's renowned commercial airplanes.

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02-53

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