

Boeing/Insitu ScanEagle UAV Completes Long-Endurance Flight

ScanEagle, a low-cost, long-endurance autonomous unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) developed and built by Boeing [NYSE:BA] and The Insitu Group, successfully demonstrated its long-endurance capability when it completed a 15.2-hour flight at the Boeing Boardman test facility in eastern Oregon.

ScanEagle "A," the first vehicle in the ScanEagle family, completed the major program milestone recently after taking off autonomously via its wedge catapult launcher. The UAV worked through a series of test points at altitudes ranging between 900 and 2,000 feet, tracking and videotaping both stationary and moving targets with its electro-optical camera.

ScanEagle operated in autopilot mode for the entire flight, initially launching into a pre-programmed pattern. Later during the flight a variety of search patterns and orbits were uploaded, demonstrating the vehicle's ability to successfully accept in-flight re-programming.

"This flight confirmed that ScanEagle is capable of the long-endurance necessary to complete an array of missions including intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) and communication," said Al Awani, ScanEagle program manager for Boeing. "It's no surprise there is a lot of interest in a highly capable, economical UAV that can stay in the air for more than 15 hours."

According to Dave Sliwa, Insitu director of flight operations, ScanEagle performed flawlessly and still had fuel in the tank when it landed.

"While ScanEagle A is capable of flying at 16,000 feet, during the flight we also demonstrated the ability to provide persistent, low-altitude reconnaissance," Sliwa said.

ScanEagle's long-endurance capability is one of the most significant characteristics that sets it apart from competitors. Endurance for the ScanEagle family of UAVs will range from 15 to more than 48 hours.

Another feature unique to ScanEagle is a standard payload consisting of an inertially stabilized gimballed video camera. The camera has full pan, tilt and zoom capabilities allowing it to better track and videotape targets. Depending on customer requirements, a number of other sensor payloads can be seamlessly integrated as well.

Sliwa said the long-endurance flight was also significant in that it was the first time the team put two vehicles in the air simultaneously. Approximately 14 hours into the UAV's flight, a second ScanEagle was launched and flew for 2.5 hours. During that time, the first ScanEagle monitored the second, sending real-time video to the ground station.

The ScanEagle vehicles were recovered using a "Skyhook" system, in which the UAV catches a rope hanging from a 50-foot-high pole. The patented system will allow ScanEagle to operate from forward fields, mobile vehicles or small sea vessels.

Since its first flight in April 2002, three ScanEagle UAVs have completed more than 70 sorties. In July, ScanEagle made three flights at Webster Field, Md., as part of the yearly Association for Unmanned Vehicle Systems International symposium. In January, ScanEagle participated in the U.S. Navy's Giant Shadow exercise in the Bahamas. During the exercise ScanEagle demonstrated the ability to serve as a multi-path data link similar to a satellite, while it simultaneously provided real-time video to a number of the participants.

The Insitu Group, located in Bingen, Wash., develops miniature robotic aircraft for commercial and military applications. Insitu, which introduced the first UAV to cross the Atlantic Ocean, developed its Seascan UAV to serve the commercial fishing industry for fish spotting, and is considering vehicles for other commercial applications. For more information about the company, click [here](#).

The Boeing Company is the world's leading aerospace company, with its heritage mirroring the history of flight. It is the largest manufacturer of satellites, commercial jetliners, and military aircraft. The company is also a global market leader in missile defense, human space flight, and launch services. Chicago-based Boeing has an extensive global reach with customers in 145 countries.

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