Boeing C-130 Avionics Upgrade Pre-Development Aircraft Takes Flight

The Boeing Company's (NYSE: BA) C-130 Avionics Modernization Program (AMP) reached another milestone March 15, when a pre-Development, Test and Evaluation (DT&E) U.S. Air Force MC-130E Combat Talon I aircraft achieved first flight at Edwards Air Force Base, Calif.

"The flight-test program will reduce development risk associated with the C-130 AMP terrain following system which allows the C-130 to fly low over various types of terrain," said Dave Koopersmith, Boeing AMP program manager. "This pre development activity will allow the most efficient delivery of the weapon system to the warfighter."

This first flight verified operation of the newly installed components, providing an overall check of the MC-130E aircraft systems. The Combat Talon was modified with a Northrop Grumman APN-241 radar and a prototype mission processor from Smiths Industries. Additionally, flight software provided by Northrop Grumman, Boeing Aerospace Support and the Warner Robins Extendable Integrated Support Environment lab at Robins AFB, Ga., have been installed in the pre-DT&E aircraft.

"The U.S. Air Force C-130 AMP program is performing to plan," said Koopersmith. "We accepted delivery of the first U.S. Air Force aircraft for installation in January and we're on track for first flight of an AMP'd aircraft in early 2006." The flight test program will last approximately 18 months. It will allow AMP engineers to evaluate the airplane systems prior to starting actual terrain following demonstrations. The test program is being conducted by an integrated test team of Boeing and Air Force Flight Test Center personnel at Edwards AFB.

The C-130 AMP program will standardize aircraft configurations with the installation of a fully integrated, night-vision-goggle-compatible digital glass cockpit and provide a reduction in total ownership costs for the U.S. Air Force. The new avionics system features digital displays and the proven flight management system from the 737 commercial airliner, both of which provide navigation, safety and communication improvements to meet global air traffic management (GATM) requirements. The GATM upgrade will allow the fleet to be deployed world-wide.

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