Boeing Receives $14.5 Million Navy Contract For ScanEagle UAVs

Boeing [NYSE:BA] received a $14.5 million contract from the U.S. Navy for unmanned aerial vehicle services in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and the Global War on Terror.

Boeing will provide ScanEagle unmanned aerial vehicles, communication links and ground equipment to support the Navy's requirements. The Navy will use the ScanEagle systems during Naval Expeditionary Strike Group (ESG) missions to provide persistent intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) coverage and to increase oil platform security in the Persian Gulf. The UAVs supporting ESG will be ship-launched and recovered.

"Although this will be ScanEagle's first deployment aboard a Navy vessel, it has already proven its worth with the First Marine Expeditionary Force in Iraq," said Peggy Holly, Boeing ScanEagle program manager. "ScanEagle's unique ISR and long-endurance capabilities will provide the Navy with real-time intelligence and situational awareness."

The low-cost, long-endurance fully autonomous UAV, developed and built by Boeing and The Insitu Group, has quickly accumulated flight hours in Iraq. Since being deployed with the First Marine Expeditionary Force last summer, ScanEagle has surpassed 2,400 flight hours during operational missions. The Marines have relied heavily on the system due to its long-endurance capability, unique ISR value and ability to operate in a harsh weather environment.

As standard payload, ScanEagle carries either an inertially stabilized electro-optical or an infrared camera. The gimbaled camera allows the operator to easily track both stationary and moving targets, providing real-time intelligence. Capable of flying above 16,000 feet, the UAV has also demonstrated the ability to provide persistent low-altitude reconnaissance.

ScanEagle is launched autonomously via a pneumatic wedge catapult launcher and flies pre-programmed or operator-initiated missions. It is retrieved using a "Skyhook" system in which the UAV catches a rope hanging from a 50-foot high pole. The patented system allows ScanEagle to be runway independent and operate from forward fields, mobile vehicles or ships.

In August 2004 ScanEagle completed the longest flight ever recorded by a UAV launched and retrieved at sea -- 16 hours and 45 minutes. During ScanEagle's record-setting flight, it did aerial surveillance of sea conditions and ships in Puget Sound, Wash., demonstrating the type of mission anticipated for shipboard operations. For a vehicle of its size, ScanEagle's endurance/payload combination is unmatched. The ScanEagle "A-15" -- the company's current model -- can remain on station for more than 15 hours. Future planned variants will have an endurance of more than 30 hours. The UAV is four feet long and has a 10-foot wingspan.

Phantom Works, the advanced research and development unit and catalyst of innovation for the Boeing enterprise, is assisting in the development of ScanEagle. Through its Integrated Defense Advanced Systems group, it provides leading edge systems and technology solutions to Boeing Integrated Defense Systems, one the world's largest space and defense businesses.

A unit of The Boeing Company, Boeing Integrated Defense Systems is one of the world's largest space and defense businesses. Headquartered in St. Louis, Boeing Integrated Defense Systems is a $30.5 billion business. It provides network-centric system solutions to its global military, government, and commercial customers. It is a leading provider of intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance systems; the world's largest military aircraft manufacturer; the world's largest satellite manufacturer and a leading provider of space-based communications; the primary systems integrator for U.S. missile defense and Department of Homeland Security; NASA's largest contractor; and a global leader in sustainment solutions and launch services.

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 developing vehicles for other commercial applications. For more information about the company, see http://www.insitugroup.com.

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