Boeing Delivers "Spirit of California," First C-17 to be Based in California

Officials from March Air Reserve Base took delivery today of the first C-17 Globemaster III airlifter to be based in California and flown by California citizen airmen.

Named "Spirit of California," the aircraft flew to its new home near Riverside, Calif., about 65 miles east of the Boeing [NYSE: BA] Long Beach facility where C-17 aircraft are assembled and where the delivery ceremony was held.

"We're extremely proud and excited to receive the Air Force Reserve Command's first C-17 here at March," said Maj. Gen. Robert E. Duignan, commander, 4th Air Force, Air Force Reserve Command at March ARB. "It's an extraordinary aircraft that increases our ability to accomplish our Total Force, global-reach mission, which is critical to the war on terrorism. March is the first reserve wing with the Globemaster III and it will continue to demonstrate the capacity of our citizen airmen to serve America."

The newly delivered aircraft is the U.S. Air Force's 138th operational C-17 and the first of eight scheduled for delivery to March ARB between now and January 2006. The new C-17s will be flown and maintained by the Air Force Reserve Command's 452nd Air Mobility Wing at March.

"As the only airlifter that can fly between continents and land on short austere airfields, the C-17 does the work of several planes," said Ron Marcotte, Boeing vice president of Airlift and Tanker Programs. "The C-17 is the most technologically advanced airlift aircraft ever built, and March's C-17s are the most capable in the fleet."

The C-17 fleet has amassed more than 850,000 flying hours -- and in the global war on terrorism, has flown combat missions for more than 1,400 consecutive days -- with record-setting reliability rates. With a payload of 160,000 pounds, the C-17 can take off from a 7,600-foot airfield, fly 2,400 nautical miles, and land on dirt runways in 3,000 feet or less.

The March C-17s will have upgrades incorporating the latest avionics technologies, a next-generation weather radar system, an enhanced onboard inert gas generating system, and a new stabilizer strut system.

The C-17s will replace the base's aging fleet of C-141 Starlifters, the last of which was ceremonially retired earlier this year. March air mobility assets also include Boeing KC-135 Stratotankers. The base is undergoing a $50 million facilities upgrade and infrastructure improvement to accommodate the new C-17s.

"With its unique capabilities, the C-17 is revitalizing March Air Reserve Base, and ensuring that its mission remains critical and relevant well into the 21st century," said U.S. Rep. Ken Calvert, whose district includes the base. "This aircraft is so important to the nation and to our community that I intend to help March get a second squadron sometime in the next decade."

In addition to March's new aircraft, C-17s are based at Charleston Air Force Base, S.C.; McChord Air Force Base, Wash.; the Air National Guard Base at Jackson, Miss.; McGuire Air Force Base, N.J.; and Altus Air Force Base, Okla. Four C-17s are leased to the United Kingdom 's Royal Air Force.

Boeing currently is on a multi-year production contract to design, build and deliver 180 C-17s to the U.S. Air Force through 2008.

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; NASA's largest contractor; and a global leader in sustainment solutions and launch services.

###

For further information:
Rick Sanford
Boeing Airlift & Tanker Programs
562-593-7512
rick.sanford@boeing.com
Gary Lesser
Boeing Airlift & Tanker Programs
562-593-5233
gary.a.lesser@boeing.com