Boeing Provides ScanEagle UAV to Australian Army

Boeing Australia Limited announced it has been awarded a contract to provide reconnaissance and surveillance services to the Australian Army using the ScanEagle autonomous unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV).

The services provided by ScanEagle are currently being used in southern Iraq by Australian soldiers operating with the Overwatch Battle Group (West)-2 in Operation Catalyst.

Today's announcement, coupled with a contract award announced Dec. 14, 2006, to deliver Australia's first Tactical Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (TUAV) capability under Joint Project (JP) 129, further strengthens Boeing's position as the leading supplier of UAV solutions to the Australia Defence Force.

The service-based ScanEagle solution provides immediate, operational imagery coverage for the Australian Army while the I-View system is introduced. The capabilities of both systems will complement each other in terms of payloads and flight profiles.

The Boeing Company [NYSE: BA], which partners with Insitu, Inc., to provide the low-cost, long-endurance UAV system to military customers, is providing assistance with system operations in theatre. ScanEagle currently is in operation with the U.S. military and has logged more than 20,000 combat flight hours over the past 20 months.

"ScanEagle has proven to be one of the U.S. military's most effective tools for reconnaissance and surveillance for force protection missions. We expect the system will be equally valuable to the Australian Army to help protect our troops," said Lindsay Pears, Boeing Australia general manager, Advanced UAVs.

"We are pleased to support the Australian Army's rapid acquisition of services to be provided by this advanced UAV system. It has been a great joint effort by Boeing, Insitu and the Commonwealth to bring this project together so quickly in order to support operations in the field," said Pears.

ScanEagle, which is four feet (1.2 metres) long with a 10-foot (3 metres) wingspan, carries either an electro-optical or an infrared camera. Both are inertially stabilized. The gimbaled camera allows the operator to easily track stationary and moving targets, including enemy combatants, vehicles, roads, buildings and other hot spots.

"ScanEagle provides critical real-time imagery through low-altitude reconnaissance to give tactical commanders a clearer picture of the battlefield," said Andrew Duggan, Boeing Australia executive manager, Advanced UAVs. "The air vehicle's small size and relatively quiet engine make it highly stealthy even at low altitudes.

"Furthermore, for a vehicle of its size, ScanEagle's combination of endurance and fully stabilized payload is unmatched. The system can provide more than 15 consecutive hours of 'on-station' coverage, and the catapult and Skyhook allow launch and recovery from land or sea, providing greater flexibility than other systems in its class," Duggan said.

ScanEagle is launched autonomously via a pneumatic wedge catapult and flies pre-programmed or operator-initiated missions guided by GPS and its onboard flight control system. It is retrieved using a "Skyhook" system in which the UAV catches a rope hanging from a 50-foot (15 metres) high pole. The patented system allows ScanEagle to be runway-independent and operate from rough terrain or ships.

Insitu, Inc., located in Bingen, Wash., develops miniature robotic aircraft for commercial and military applications. Insitu introduced the first UAV to cross the Atlantic Ocean and is developing vehicles for civilian applications. For more information about the company, see www.insitu.com.
Boeing Australia Limited, a wholly-owned subsidiary that reports to Boeing International Support Systems, is a high-technology aerospace company specializing in installation and support of systems for defense and commercial customers.
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