Boeing Celebrates 20th Anniversary of 1st Avenger Delivery to US Army

HUNTSVILLE, Ala., Nov. 03, 2008 -- Boeing [NYSE: BA] today announced that Nov. 1 marked the 20th anniversary of its first Avenger fire unit delivery to the U.S. Army.

Developed and produced in Huntsville, Avenger is the Army's premier short-range air defense system, and has been used effectively in tactical defense and convoy-protection operations with U.S. units around the world.

"Boeing in Huntsville has a long legacy of providing our nation's military with reliable, effective weapons systems," said Sen. Jeff Sessions, R-Ala. "The Avenger team deserves our sincere gratitude for their commitment and dedication delivering a system designed to help ensure our men and women in uniform return home safely."

"Boeing's dedicated work force in Huntsville has been a significant contributor to our national defense, and their work on the Avenger program is no exception," said Sen. Richard Shelby, R-Ala. "As we mark the 20th anniversary of the first Avenger fire unit's delivery to our armed forces, I would like to commend the Avenger team for their hard work on this important air defense system."

"I am proud of Boeing and its entire work force in North Alabama on this significant milestone," said Rep. Bud Cramer, D-Ala. "The Avenger has performed successfully for the past 20 years and continues to provide the necessary short-range air defense needed for our service members. I look forward to the Avenger's continued success and development."

Since the first delivery, Boeing has produced more than 1,100 Avenger systems for the Army, Army National Guard and U.S. Marine Corps. The system also is in production for international customers through U.S. Foreign Military Sales contracts.

"The 20th anniversary of the Boeing Avenger marks an important milestone in a program that has been employed by the Army and Army National Guard since 1988," said Phil Hillman, the Avenger program manager for Boeing. "Avenger performs a very important security role by providing warfighters with unmatched short-range air defense capability through improved situational awareness and rapid target acquisition. Because Boeing and the Army are committed to warfighter safety and mission effectiveness, we have incorporated enhanced capabilities based on operational needs and lessons learned from current and previous conflicts to ensure its continued relevance on the battlefield."

Armed with Stinger missiles in two launch pods that hold four missiles each, and a .50-caliber machine gun on a gyro-stabilized turret, the Avenger was deployed to the Middle East in 1991 to support NATO troops during Operation Desert Storm and again in 2003 during Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Boeing is the largest aerospace company in Alabama, with a work force of more than 3,000 employees performing leading-edge work on a broad array of key defense and space programs, including Ground-based Midcourse Defense, Ares I, International Space Station, Avenger, Arrow and PAC-3 Missile.

A unit of The Boeing Company, Boeing Integrated Defense Systems is one of the world's largest space and defense businesses specializing in innovative and capabilities-driven customer solutions, and the world's largest and most versatile manufacturer of military aircraft. Headquartered in St. Louis, Boeing Integrated Defense Systems is a $32.1 billion business with 71,000 employees worldwide.
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