Boeing Advanced Tactical Laser Strikes Moving Target in Test

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M., Oct. 13 /PRNewswire-FirstCall/ -- The Boeing Company [NYSE: BA] and the U.S. Air Force on Sept. 19 damaged a moving ground vehicle from the air using the Advanced Tactical Laser (ATL) aircraft, completing ATL's first air-to-ground, high-power laser engagement of a mobile target.

During the test, the C-130H aircraft took off from Kirtland Air Force Base near Albuquerque and fired a high-power chemical laser through its beam control system while flying over White Sands Missile Range. The beam control system guided the laser beam's energy to the unoccupied, remotely controlled target, striking the vehicle and putting a hole in a fender. The test demonstrated the ability to aim and fire a high-energy laser beam at a moving target.

"In this test, a directed energy weapon successfully demonstrated direct attack on a moving target," said Gary Fitzmire, vice president and program director of Boeing Missile Defense Systems' Directed Energy Systems unit. "ATL has now precisely targeted and engaged both stationary and moving targets, demonstrating the transformational versatility of this speed-of-light, ultra-precision engagement capability that will dramatically reduce collateral damage."

The test occurred less than three weeks after an Aug. 30 test in which ATL damaged an unoccupied stationary vehicle, marking the aircraft's first air-to-ground, high-power laser engagement of a tactically representative target.

Boeing developed ATL for the Air Force. ATL demonstrations support the development of laser defense systems that will destroy, damage or disable targets on the battlefield and in urban operations with little to no collateral damage.

The Boeing-led ATL industry team includes L-3 Communications/Brashear, which built the laser turret; HYTEC Inc., which made a variety of the weapon system's structural elements; and J.B. Henderson, which provides mechanical integration support.

Boeing leads the way in developing and integrating laser systems for a variety of customers, including the U.S. Air Force, Army and Navy. Besides ATL, these systems include the Airborne Laser, Free Electron Laser, High Energy Laser Technology Demonstrator and Tactical Relay Mirror System.

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 billion business with 70,000 employees worldwide.

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