Boeing A160T Proves Resupply Capability for US Marines

ST. LOUIS, March 15, 2010 -- The Boeing [NYSE: BA] A160T Hummingbird has successfully completed a cargo delivery demonstration under a U.S. Marine Corps Warfighting Laboratory contract, proving the unmanned rotorcraft's ability to resupply frontline troops in rough terrain. The Hummingbird met or exceeded all of the demonstration requirements during the tests, conducted March 9 - March 11 at the U.S. Army's Dugway Proving Ground in Utah.

Boeing showed that the A160T can deliver at least 2,500 pounds of cargo from one simulated forward-operating base to another 75 nautical miles away in well under the required six hours. The simulated mission carried 1,250-pound sling loads over two 150-nautical-mile round trips, with the A160T operating autonomously on a preprogrammed mission.

"The Hummingbird's performance was outstanding, as we had expected," said Vic Sweberg, director of Unmanned Aerial Systems for Boeing Military Aircraft. "The A160T's capabilities can fulfill our customer's near-term need for 24/7, reliable cargo resupply. It also provides unmatched flexibility to carry out a variety of other missions, including intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance; target acquisition; direct action; and communication relay."

The A160T completed seven test flights during the demonstration, including a two-minute hover at 12,000 feet with the 1,250-pound sling load, and a nighttime delivery to a simulated forward operating base. The A160T's ability to execute extremely accurate autonomous deliveries also was demonstrated.

The A160T has a 2,500-pound payload capacity. It features a unique optimum-speed-rotor technology that significantly improves overall performance efficiency by adjusting the rotor's speed at different altitudes, gross weights and cruise speeds. The autonomous unmanned aircraft, measuring 35 feet long with a 36-foot rotor diameter, has hovered at 20,000 feet and cruised at more than 140 knots. The A160T established a world endurance record in its class in 2008 with an 18.7-hour unrefueled flight.

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Contact:

Marc Sklar
Boeing Military Aircraft
480-773-5266
marc.a.sklar@boeing.com

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