Bell Boeing-built V-22 Osprey Fleet Surpasses 100,000 Flight Hours

MV-22 Osprey is safest Marine Corps rotorcraft over past 10 years

PATUXENT RIVER, Md., March 2, 2011 -- The Boeing Company [NYSE: BA] and Bell Helicopter today applauded the Naval Air Systems Command (NAVAIR) V-22 Joint Program Office (PMA-275) announcement that the Bell Boeing-built V-22 Osprey fleet has surpassed 100,000 flight hours. The milestone arrived on Feb. 10 during a U.S. Marine Corps MV-22 Osprey combat mission in Afghanistan. Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron 264, currently operating out of Camp Bastion in Helmand Province, was identified as the squadron that eclipsed the 100,000-hour mark.

“The entire Bell Boeing tiltrotor team congratulates our Marine Corps and Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC) customers on achieving 100,000 flight hours, and counting,” said John Rader, executive director of the Bell Boeing V-22 Program. “The performance of the aircraft in combat and humanitarian missions has been truly remarkable. We continue to take great pride in providing our customers with this revolutionary capability.”

Marine Corps MV-22 and AFSOC CV-22 Ospreys amassed the flight hours while performing combat, humanitarian, training, and test and evaluation missions on land and at sea. Almost half of the total hours were flown during the past two years. This milestone marks the latest major achievement for a program that has seen 14 successful combat and humanitarian deployments since the Osprey was first declared operational in 2007.

“The V-22 is proven and forward-deployed, supporting combat operations and responding to contingency operations around the world,” said Marine Corps Col. Greg Masiello, head of the V-22 Joint Program Office (PMA-275) at NAVAIR. “The Osprey brings unprecedented range, speed and survivability to the warfighter and will continue to excel in combat and remain ready, effective and survivable.”

According to Naval Safety Center records, the MV-22 has had the lowest Class A mishap rate of any rotorcraft in the Marine Corps during the past decade. The aircraft’s reduced susceptibility, lower vulnerability and advanced crashworthiness have made it the most survivable military rotorcraft ever introduced. Fiscal Year 2010 Navy flight-hour cost data also show that the Osprey has the lowest cost per seat-mile (cost to transport one person over a distance of one mile) of any U.S. Navy transport rotorcraft.

“At 100,000 flight hours, safety, survivability and mission efficiency have become hallmarks of the operational fleet,” said Mitch Snyder, deputy program director for the Bell Boeing V-22 Program.

The V-22 Osprey is a joint service, multirole combat aircraft using tiltrotor technology to combine the vertical performance of a helicopter with the speed and range of a fixed-wing aircraft. With its nacelles and rotors in vertical position, it can take off, land and hover like a helicopter. Once airborne, its nacelles can be rotated to transition the aircraft to a turboprop airplane capable of high-speed, high-altitude flight.

The tiltrotor aircraft is manufactured under a 50-50 strategic alliance between Bell Helicopter, a Textron Inc. [NYSE: TXT] company, and Boeing. The current V-22 Osprey program of record calls for 360 aircraft for the Marine Corps, 50 for AFSOC, and 48 for the Navy.

More than 130 Osprey tiltrotors are currently in operation. Marine Corps MV-22s are currently deployed in Afghanistan supporting Operation Enduring Freedom and with the 26th Marine Expeditionary Unit supporting contingency operations, while AFSOC CV-22s are preparing to deploy once again in support of ongoing Special Operations missions.

About Bell Helicopter-Textron:

Bell Helicopter, a wholly owned subsidiary of Textron Inc., is an industry-leading producer of commercial and military, manned and unmanned vertical lift aircraft and the pioneer of the revolutionary tilt rotor aircraft. Globally recognized for world-class customer service, innovation and superior quality, Bell's global work force serves customers flying Bell aircraft in more than 120 countries. Textron Inc. is a multi-industry company that leverages its global network of aircraft, defense, industrial and finance businesses to provide customers with innovative solutions and services. Textron is known around the world for its powerful brands such as Bell Helicopter, Cessna Aircraft Company , Jacobsen, Kautex, Lycoming, E-Z-GO, Greenlee, Textron Systems and Textron Financial Corporation. More information is available atwww.textron.com.

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Related photos are available at the end of the news release on theNAVAIR website.

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