Boeing Delivers Royal Australian Air Force's 5th C-17 Globemaster III

LONG BEACH, Calif., Sept. 14, 2011 -- Boeing [NYSE: BA] today delivered Australia's fifth C-17 Globemaster III airlifter to the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) during a ceremony at the C-17 program's final assembly facility in Long Beach. A RAAF delegation led by Stephen Smith, Australia's Minister for Defence, received the country's latest C-17 at an event also attended by Chief of the Defence Force Gen. David Hurley, Australian Secretary of Defence Duncan Lewis, and U.S. Ambassador to Australia Jeffrey Bleich.

"Australia's fleet of four C-17s has been on the front lines of defense and humanitarian missions around the world, and continues to demonstrate the aircraft's great versatility and capability," said Boeing Military Aircraft President Chris Chadwick. "We look forward to a continued close partnership with the Commonwealth."

Australian C-17s were part of the relief mission to Japan following a devastating earthquake and tsunami earlier this year. The fleet delivered more than 1 million pounds of cargo, including water cannons to help cool the damaged Fukushima nuclear power plant. RAAF C-17s also conducted relief operations following a major earthquake in Christchurch, New Zealand, and floods in Pakistan and Australia.

"Since 2006, Boeing has enjoyed a strong partnership with the RAAF and the crews who fly the C-17," said Bob Ciesla, Boeing C-17 program manager. "With this fifth C-17, the RAAF continues to expand and extend its global airlift reach. We're certain that the C-17 we delivered today will continue to fully provide the reliability and versatility the RAAF has come to expect."

The Commonwealth of Australia in April announced the signing of an agreement with the U.S. government to acquire its fifth C-17. The U.S. Air Force approved the Foreign Military Sale and assigned a C-17 already in production to be delivered to the RAAF.

The C-17 provides the RAAF with the capability to airlift large payloads across intercontinental distances and transport combat-ready troops to remote locations, by either landing or airdropping them directly where needed. The C-17's unique maneuverability allows it to operate on narrow taxiways and congested ramps. With a maximum payload of 164,900 pounds (74,797 kg), the C-17 can take off and land on runway space measuring 3,000 feet (914.4 m) or less.

There are currently 235 C-17s in service worldwide – 24 with international customers. The U.S. Air Force, including active duty, Guard and Reserve units, has 211 C-17s. Other international customers include the UK Royal Air Force, the Canadian Forces, the Qatar Emiri Air Force, the United Arab Emirates Air Force and Air Defense, and the 12-member Strategic Airlift Capability initiative of NATO and Partnership for Peace nations. India became the newest C-17 customer in June, when India's Ministry of Defence signed an agreement with the U.S. government to acquire 10 C-17s that will be delivered in 2013-2014.

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