Boeing Demos Unmanned Little Bird for Republic of Korea Army

Affordable pilotless technology could expand ROKA MD 500 helicopters' mission capabilities

Korean Air Aerospace Division supports demonstration flight

NONSAN, South Korea, Dec. 13, 2012 -- Boeing [NYSE: BA] today demonstrated affordable unmanned aircraft technology that could be integrated onto Republic of Korea Army (ROKA) MD 500 helicopters to expand the fleet's mission capabilities.

A Boeing Unmanned Little Bird (ULB) demonstrator aircraft, a variant of the highly successful MD 500 helicopter, autonomously flew for approximately 25 minutes at the ROKA Aviation School in Nonsan. The demonstration showcased proven pilotless capabilities available for integration onto rotorcraft to support intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR), resupply and other missions.

Korean Air supported transportation of the ULB for today's demonstration. Korea Air Aerospace Division (KAL-ASD) assembled ROKA MD 500s from 1976 to 1987 under license from Boeing heritage companies Hughes Helicopters and McDonnell Douglas. KAL delivered approximately 500 MD 500s to Hughes Helicopters, opening the Korean aircraft export market.

"Boeing and KAL continue to build on a history of collaboration to offer our customers innovative solutions, grow new business, and expand Korea's aerospace and defense industry capabilities," said Joseph Song, vice president and managing director for Boeing's defense, space and security business in the Republic of Korea.

Korean Air Aerospace Division (KAL-ASD), a division of Korean Air, provides design, manufacturing, marketing and maintenance products and services for aircraft, satellites and launch vehicles. Beginning with wing parts for the 747 in 1986, KAL now manufactures parts across the Boeing Commercial Airplanes family of aircraft, including the Next-Generation 737, 747-8, 767, 777 and 787 Dreamliner. KAL also is a joint development partner on the 787 program. As part of the Boeing Commercial Aviation Services worldwide network, the division provides spare parts for fleet maintenance around the globe. KAL-ASD also provides spares and related parts handling services for the Republic of Korea Air Force’s E737 Airborne Early Warning & Control Peace Eye aircraft. For its excellent on-time delivery and quality aerostructures design and manufacturing, KAL has been recognized by Boeing on multiple occasions as a Supplier of the Year.

Boeing's relationship with South Korea dates back more than 60 years. The company employs nearly 190 highly skilled workers in Seoul, Busan, Gimpo, Sacheon, Seosan and Daegu. Boeing procured goods and services worth more than $250 million from nearly 20 Korean companies in 2011, maintaining Korea's position in the top quartile of nations with which Boeing does business.

A unit of The Boeing Company, Boeing Defense, Space & Security is one of the world's largest defense, space and security 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 Defense, Space & Security is a $32 billion business with 60,000 employees worldwide. Follow us on Twitter: @BoeingDefense.

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