Boeing Laser Demonstrator Destroys Targets through Wind and Fog

Latest demonstrations prove laser system's effectiveness in maritime environment

HUNTSVILLE, Ala., Sept. 4, 2014 – Boeing [NYSE: BA] and the U.S. Army have proven the capabilities of the High Energy Laser Mobile Demonstrator (HEL MD) in maritime conditions, successfully targeting a variety of aerial targets at Eglin Air Force Base in Florida.

"Under windy, rainy and foggy weather conditions in Florida, these engagements were the most challenging to date with a 10-kilowatt laser on HEL MD," said Dave DeYoung, Boeing Directed Energy Systems director. "As proven at White Sands Missile Range in New Mexico in 2013 and at Eglin Air Force Base this spring, HEL MD is reliable and capable of consistently acquiring, tracking and engaging a variety of targets in different environments, demonstrating the potential military utility of directed energy systems."

In these recent demonstrations, HEL MD used a 10-kilowatt, high energy laser installed on an Oshkosh tactical military vehicle. The demonstrator is the first mobile, high-energy laser, counter rocket, artillery and mortar (C-RAM) platform to be built and demonstrated by the U.S. Army.

"With capabilities like HEL MD, Boeing is demonstrating that directed energy technologies can augment existing kinetic strike weapons and offer a significant reduction in cost per engagement," said DeYoung. "With only the cost of diesel fuel, the laser system can fire repeatedly without expending valuable munitions or additional manpower."

Throughout the two series of demonstrations, Boeing achieved all performance objectives on schedule, successfully engaging more than 150 aerial targets including 60 mm mortars and unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs). The next step will be to install a 50 or 60-kilowatt laser on HEL MD to demonstrate counter RAM and UAV capability at this tactically significant power level.

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