

For Immediate Release

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SKYGUARDIAN SURPASSES 100 TEST FLIGHTS

New GA-ASI RPA Continues On-time Development towards First Delivery in Early 2020s

PARIS – 16 June 2019 – The MQ-9B SkyGuardian Remotely Piloted Aircraft (RPA) – designed and developed by General Atomics Aeronautical Systems, Inc. (GA-ASI) – has now flown more than 100 test flights as development continues towards its first delivery to the Royal Air Force (RAF) as part of the Protector RG Mk1 programme.

Since making its first flight in November 2016, GA-ASI has kept the new RPA busy performing a variety of flights, from long endurance testing (logging 48.2 consecutive hours in flight in May 2017) to becoming the first Medium-altitude, Long-range RPA to perform a trans-Atlantic flight in July 2018. A second company-owned SkyGuardian was completed in September 2018 to support the aggressive development workload.

“There’s no rest for these aircraft,” said David R. Alexander, president, Aircraft Systems, GA-ASI. “They’re built to remain aloft for long periods of time performing the important missions our customers require. SkyGuardian is customizable with nine hardpoints and payloads to meet customer requirements. Just another reason why we’re getting so much interest from international customers.”

The Royal Air Force (RAF) is acquiring SkyGuardian as part of its Protector RG Mk1 programme and is scheduled for first delivery in the early 2020s. The Government of Belgium has approved Belgian Defense to negotiate the acquisition of *SkyGuardian* to meet the nation’s RPA requirements. The aircraft is also being considered by the Australian Defence Force, who chose GA-ASI to supply an RPA system for Project Air 7003.

GA-ASI designed the new RPA as the next generation of multi-mission Predator® B fleet. GA-ASI named its baseline MQ-9B aircraft *SkyGuardian*, and the maritime surveillance variant *SeaGuardian*, which is available with a multimode 360 degree Maritime Patrol Radar and a host of other maritime capabilities.

MQ-9B development is the result of a five-year, company funded program to deliver an unmanned aircraft to meet the stringent airworthiness type-certification requirements of NATO and various civil authorities. As part of the certification effort, MQ-9B is being provisioned with a GA-ASI-developed Detect and Avoid (DAA) system. The DAA system consists of a Due Regard Radar and processor, coupled with an advanced Traffic alert and Collision Avoidance System (TCAS II), and Automatic Dependent Surveillance-Broadcast (ADS-B). The new RPA is also built for all-weather performance with lightning protection, damage tolerance, and a de-icing system.

Hi-resolution images of MQ-9B SkyGuardian are available to qualified media outlets from the listed GA-ASI media contact.

About GA-ASI

General Atomics Aeronautical Systems, Inc. (GA-ASI), an affiliate of General Atomics, is a leading designer and manufacturer of proven, reliable Remotely Piloted Aircraft (RPA) systems, radars, and electro-optic and related mission systems, including the Predator[®] RPA series and the Lynx[®] Multi-mode Radar. With more than five million flight hours, GA-ASI provides long-endurance, mission-capable aircraft with integrated sensor and data link systems required to deliver persistent flight that enables situational awareness and rapid strike. The company also produces a variety of ground control stations and sensor control/image analysis software, offers pilot training and support services, and develops meta-material antennas. For more information, visit www.ga-asi.com.

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