Global Hawk Sets Two Pending World Records During Milestone Flight Across Equator

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SAN DIEGO, March 22, 2001 -- The U.S. Air Force's Global Hawk unmanned aerial reconnaissance system, developed by Northrop Grumman Corporation's (NYSE:NOC) Integrated Systems Sector (ISS), has successfully completed a milestone flight across the equator that set pending world records for altitude and endurance by an autonomous, unmanned jet-powered aircraft.

Global Hawk, a high-altitude, long-endurance system under development to provide military field commanders with high-resolution, near-real-time imagery of large geographic areas, reached an altitude of 65,191 feet during a 30-hour, 24-minute flight.

A representative of the National Aeronautic Association (NAA) was present for the landing, and the NAA is evaluating the flight data to confirm the world records. In February, the NAA named Global Hawk the winner of its prestigious Collier Trophy as the top aeronautical achievement of 2000.

The system's unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) took off from Edwards AFB, Calif., at approximately 6:52 p.m. P.S.T. March 19 and landed at Edwards at approximately 1:17 a.m. P.S.T. March 21. After takeoff, the UAV flew along the Pacific Ocean coastlines of Mexico, Central America and portions of South America before returning to California.

The flight, a precursor to the Global Hawk system's deployment to Australia planned for April, validated recent modifications to Global Hawk's environmental control system that allows the UAV to fly in extremely cold temperatures at high altitudes in equatorial latitudes. The Global Hawk system used Mexico's Satellites Mexicanos 5 (SATMEX 5) satellite as its primary command and control link during the mission.

Global Hawk is under development for the Air Force's Aeronautical Systems Center at Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio. Northrop Grumman ISS's Air Combat Systems business area is the prime contractor, with work performed at its Unmanned Systems facilities in San Diego and Palmdale, Calif.

Northrop Grumman's ISS, headquartered in Dallas, Tex., is a premier aerospace systems integration enterprise. ISS has the capabilities to design, develop, integrate, produce and support complete systems, as well as airframe subsystems, for airborne surveillance and battle management aircraft, early warning aircraft, airborne electronic warfare aircraft and air combat aircraft.

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