U.S. Navy Extends Afghan Tour of Duty for Northrop Grumman-Built Fire Scout

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Unmanned System Proves Invaluable to Ground Troops

SAN DIEGO, Nov 8, 2011 (GlobeNewswire via COMTEX) --

Northrop Grumman Corporation's (NYSE:NOC) Fire Scout unmanned helicopter has improved ground commanders' ability to see potential threats and increase fighting effectiveness in Afghanistan -- prompting the U.S. Navy to extend the system's service through most of next year.

A team of U.S. Navy sailors and Northrop Grumman employees began their mission in May to gather 300 hours per month of full-motion video surveillance, and deliver it in real time to ground forces.

"After six months of solid performance, our team has established itself as the go-to asset for intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance support for northern Afghanistan," said George Vardoulakis, vice president for tactical unmanned system with Northrop Grumman.

Northrop Grumman will operate and maintain the Fire Scout systems through October 2012 under an $18.65 million contract awarded to the company Sept. 28 by Naval Air Systems Command.

"We are providing a level of situational awareness many soldiers in the field have never experienced," said Rick Pagel, Fire Scout's operations lead for Northrop Grumman. "In the first five months we surpassed 1,500 hours with over 400 flights. Since Fire Scout doesn't require a runway, we are conveniently nearby and arrive on station quickly."

Fire Scout features a modular architecture that accommodates a variety of electro-optical, infrared and communications payloads. These payloads provide ground- and ship-based commanders with high levels of situational awareness and precision targeting support.

Northrop Grumman is a leading global security company providing innovative systems, products and solutions in aerospace, electronics, information systems, and technical services to government and commercial customers worldwide. Please visit www.northropgrumman.com for more information.

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CONTACT: Warren Comer
(858) 618-7788 office
(858) 705-7246 mobile
warren.comer@ngc.com