



Northrop Grumman's KC-45 Aerial Refueling Boom Completes Key Flight and Performance Milestones

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Advanced refueling system nears the end of extensive flight testing and validation

WASHINGTON, June 30 /PRNewswire-FirstCall/ -- The advanced fly-by-wire aerial refueling boom that Northrop Grumman Corporation (NYSE: NOC) will integrate onto the U.S. Air Force KC-45 Tanker completed its 100th test flight in June, further demonstrating the system's maturity and validating the team's ability to rapidly modernize the U.S. Air Force's tanker fleet.

Over the course of its extensive test and validation program, the Advanced Refueling Boom System (ARBS) developed by EADS has:

- Accumulated over 300 flight hours;
- Logged over 60 separate wet and dry contacts with an F-16 receiver aircraft;
- Successfully completed flight envelope expansion testing; matured and validated fly-by-wire control laws; and
- Executed proximity, pre-contact and contact flight trials with five different aircraft -- the F-16, F-1, F/A-18, C101 and the A330-based Royal Australian Air Force Multi-role Tanker Transport.

The completion of these key milestones clearly demonstrates the capability of our boom and provides tangible evidence that the KC-45 is ready now to meet the U.S. Air Force's refueling needs, said Paul Meyer, Northrop Grumman vice president and general manager of Air Mobility Systems. Unlike our competitor's offering that has yet to leave the drawing board, we have a mature, state-of-the-art boom that has logged over 100 flights, passed fuel in the air, completed over 60 individual contacts and been validated with multiple aircraft operating with U.S. and allied air forces.

The Air Force needs tankers now and had a choice between a yet to be built tanker concept and boom system against a flight-proven KC-45 to meet the critical, time-urgent refueling needs of the warfighter. The Air Force selected the KC-45, the only system that can fully meet these requirements today, concluded Meyer.

The ARBS already is integrated on the first Royal Australian Air Force A330 Multi-role Tanker Transport (MRTT), which is scheduled for delivery by EADS in 2009, and will soon enter the second phase of its flight testing and validation. The U.S. Air Force's selection of Northrop Grumman's KC-45 is the fifth straight win for the A330-based tanker, having been selected by the air forces of Australia, United Kingdom, Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates.

Modern fly-by-wire technology incorporated in the ARBS provides enhanced controllability and includes an automatic load alleviation system, which greatly aids the boom operator and the receiver aircraft's pilot during refueling operations. The ARBS' Remote Aerial Refueling Operator station employs a three-dimensional vision surveillance system for a high-fidelity view of the boom's position during the entire air-to-air refueling process. The 55.7 ft. ARBS has the capacity to offload up to 1,200 gallons of fuel per minute.

About the KC-45

The KC-45 Tanker aircraft will be assembled in Mobile, Ala. -- establishing Mobile as the new cornerstone of the Southern Aerospace Corridor. The program will employ 48,000 American workers at 230 U.S. companies in 49 states; and will be built by a world-class industrial team led by Northrop Grumman, and includes EADS North America, General Electric Aviation and Sargent Fletcher.

Northrop Grumman Corporation is a global defense and technology company whose 120,000 employees provide innovative systems, products and solutions in information and services, electronics, aerospace and shipbuilding to government and commercial customers worldwide.

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