



Press Release

UAV Communications Supports North Dakota Air National Guard

7/24/07 – Newport News, VA -- UAV Communications support personnel have been instrumental in supporting the North Dakota Air National Guard (ND ANG) in the design, installation and staffing of the ND ANG Predator Operations Center (POC). The POC is the heart and sole of the command and control of Predator operations and UAV Comm personnel have assisted the ND ANG in achieving a remarkable first-ever unmanned aircraft system/vehicle (UAS/V) flight.

Recently Governor John Hoeven and ND National Guard Adjutant General Maj. Gen. David Sprynczynatyk announced that the 119th Wing, N.D. Air National Guard, has flown its first UAS mission from Fargo, Hector International Airport. The squadron is flying the MQ-1 Predator, a medium-altitude, long-endurance, remotely piloted aircraft. The MQ-1's primary mission is interdiction and reconnaissance.

In Jan. 2007, the 119th Wing converted from the F-16A Fighting Falcon jet mission to the new missions of the UAS and the C-21A Lear Jet cargo aircraft. The C-21A Lear Jet is an interim aircraft leading to the Joint Cargo Aircraft (JCA) which is expected to be available by 2011. "This is an example of how truly incredible the members of the N.D. National Guard are," Hoeven said. "Our Soldiers and Airmen continue to make significant contributions on the frontlines in Iraq and Afghanistan, and now they are able to do it right from Fargo."

"This week marks the beginning of a new era and an exciting future for the NDANG. The 119th Wing is at the forefront of future unmanned aircraft systems," said Sprynczynatyk. "The hard work and dedication of the Happy Hooligans have made this a very successful transition. The 119th Wing is leading the way and will stay relevant for years to come."

"The N.D. Air National Guard has flown fighters for 60 years, but now, we're bringing all of the skills from the fighter mission into the Predator mission," said Col. Robert Becklund, 119th Wing commander. "This is a dramatic and cultural change for our unit and we're proud to be a part of this new and exciting mission." Throughout the transition, 119th Wing personnel have been training for the new positions of the MQ-1 Predator mission.

"It is great to be a part of this air and space power mission. Our squadron is committed to maintain the traditional high standards the Happy Hooligans are known for," said Lt. Col. Rick Gibney, commander the reconnaissance squadron. "It is exciting and rewarding to be a part of this mission that involves the global war on terrorism, homeland security and domestic contingencies."

UAV Communications President and CEO, Robert (Bob) Fitzgerald, commended UAV Comm personnel in their outstanding support of the ND ANG's mission. Mr. Fitzgerald noted "UAV Comm is proud to support mission-critical UAS/V systems. "Our company offers technical advisory and staffing assistance to customers seeking reliable and secure video, sensor, voice, and data, we have been focused on consistent, reliable, real-time delivery of motion video, voice, metadata, still imagery, radar, and other sensor data for end-to-end solutions through any communications media available or desired." We are excited to be a part of ND ANG's recent success.