

GA-ASI to Supply 8 MQ-9A Extended-Range UAS for Marine Corps



General Atomics Aeronautical Systems Inc. will provide eight MQ-9A Extended Range aircraft as part of the ARES contract, the company announced July 17. GA-ASI

SAN DIEGO – General Atomics Aeronautical Systems Inc. was awarded a contract for eight MQ-9A Extended Range unmanned aircraft systems as part of the Agile Reaper Enterprise Solution (ARES) contract from May 27, 2022, the company said in a July 17 release.

GA-ASI anticipates awards later this year for ground control systems, spares and ground support equipment as part of the first increment of the Marine Air Ground Task Force Unmanned Expeditionary program of record.

GA-ASI will begin first delivery of aircraft and support

equipment this winter to facilitate the fleet standup in late summer 2023 for U.S. Marine Corps' Marine Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Squadron (VMU) 3 located at Marine Corps Air Station Kaneohe Bay, Hawaii. As part of the Marine Corps' Force Design 2030 efforts, VMU-3 will operate these MQ-9A ERs with their unique sensors and network capabilities to support training for the Marine Littoral Regiment.

"We look forward to rapid deployment of these MQ-9A ERs for our USMC customer," said Patrick Shortsleeve, GA-ASI vice president of DoD Strategic Development. "This capability will be a key ISR contributor for the Marine Air Ground Task Force – and ultimately for U.S. Indo-Pacific Command – as we pace ourselves to outmaneuver our adversaries."

The MQ-9A Extended Range is designed with field-retrofittable capabilities such as wing-borne fuel pods and reinforced landing gear that extends the aircraft's endurance to more than 30 hours, while further increasing its operational flexibility. It provides long-endurance, persistent surveillance capabilities, with full-motion video and synthetic aperture radar/moving target indicator/maritime mode radar. An extremely reliable aircraft, MQ-9A ER is equipped with a fault-tolerant flight control system and triple redundant avionics system architecture.