Gray Eagle STOL Makes Historic First Flight from Ship to Land



Short Takeoff and Landing UAS Operates from South Korean Warship

From GA-ASI

SAN DIEGO – 13 November 2024 – General Atomics Aeronautical Systems, Inc. (GA-ASI) logged another aviation milestone on Nov. 12, 2024, when its Gray Eagle STOL aircraft took off from a South Korean warship and landed at a ground base – the first-ever such mission for an aircraft of this type. Working with our GA-ASI's in-country partner, Hanwha Aerospace, Gray Eagle STOL launched from the South Korean navy's amphibious landing ship Dokdo underway at sea off the coast of Pohang, South Korea. The Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS) then flew to Pohang Navy Airfield and landed normally.

Gray Eagle STOL – which stands for short takeoff and landing – is the only medium-altitude, long-endurance aircraft of its

kind with the ability to operate from large-deck warships such as amphibious ships and aircraft carriers, as well as short and unimproved fields on land. The test with the South Korean military further validates the aircraft's capability and versatility.

"We applaud the South Korean navy for its foresight in examining the unique capability of GE STOL for its fleet. This demonstration illustrates the ability of the GE STOL to safely operate on many types of aircraft-capable ships, which opens myriad new ways our allies can use this UAS to support multi-domain naval operations," said GA-ASI CEO Linden Blue.

Hanwha Aerospace is engaged with General Atomics to support national defense with proven, state-of-the-art technology suited for a multi-domain warfare environment, contributing to global security alongside allied nations in response to rapidly growing threats.

"The demonstration is a crucial step in verifying how the GE STOL can contribute to defense capabilities, and I am honored to witness this alongside the Republic of Korea Navy, to whom I extend my deepest gratitude for conducting the test," said Hanwha Aerospace CEO and President Jae-il Son. "Hanwha is fully committed to making bold investments, fostering collaboration, and providing steadfast support in the Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) business."

The Ministry of National Defense for the Republic of Korea is initially evaluating GE STOL for its ability to meet its emerging military requirements. South Korean navy, army and other officials were asked to evaluate Gray Eagle STOL and supported the test.

"The demo highlighted the versatility of STOL aboard a warship, in the Dokdo, designed not for fixed-wing aircraft but solely for helicopters. Gray Eagle STOL's flight proves that navies can add significant new capability without costly

major modifications to their existing warships," said South Korean Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Yang Yong-mo.

Gray Eagle STOL is highly common with the classic Gray Eagle aircraft, substituting a different engine, wings, control surfaces and landing gear. Gray Eagle STOL is General Atomics' name for the production variant of the historic aircraft demonstrator known as Mojave.

In November 2023, GA-ASI and Mojave performed a demonstration of STOL takeoff and return landing aboard an aircraft carrier in an event with the UK Royal Navy's HMS Prince of Wales, which is smaller than a typical U.S. aircraft carrier at 932 feet long (284m) and 240 feet wide (73m). The Dokdo class is considerably smaller than the Prince of Wales, only 653 feet long (199m) and 102 feet wide (31m).