Marine Corps Sets New Milestone with GA-ASI MQ-9A Reaper UAV

SAN DIEGO – Over the last year, the U.S. Marine Corps' Marine Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Squadron 1 (VMU-1) blazed a trail of firsts and was awarded the 2018 Marine Corps Aviation Association Unmanned Aircraft Squadron of the Year.

A major component of the squadron's accomplishments included use of the MQ-9A Reaper unmanned aircraft system (UAS), which to date has more than 4,800 flight hours of direct support reconnaissance over a 12-month period, General Atomics Aeronautical Systems Inc. (GA-ASI) said in a release.

The multi-sensor reconnaissance equipped MQ-9A UAS produced by GA-ASI has provided crucial support to the Corps' forward operations on the battlefield as well as serving as a proof of concept for the Deputy Commandant's Marine Aviation Plan. Building the Corps' Group 5 UAS community, this initiative will help inform the Marine Air Ground Task Force (MAGTF) UAS Expeditionary (MUX) program while also meeting the 38th Commandant's planning guidance to expand unmanned capabilities.

VMU-1 utilized leased MQ-9A Reaper aircraft to fulfill a request for intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) in Afghanistan since September 2018.

"We congratulate the officers and Marines of VMU-1 for their superb performance this year, winning the John I. Hudson Award as the Marine Unmanned Aircraft Squadron of the Year," said David R Alexander, president, GA-ASI.

"GA-ASI looks forward to working with VMU-1 as the USMC transitions its Company Owned/Company Operated (COCO) MQ-9A

contract to a Government Owned/Government Operated (GOGO) contract in the coming year.”

The GOGO capability fulfills the commandant’s directive for Marine Corps Group 5 persistent ISR capability with strike and will achieve IOC in 2020. VMU-1 will be the test bed and incubator to provide crucial information, lessons learned, requirements and tactics, techniques, and procedures that will aid in Marine efforts for a successful acquisition and fielding of MUX.