

MQ-9A RPV Passes 2 Million Flight Hours



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SAN DIEGO – The MQ-9A remotely piloted aircraft has surpassed 2 million flight hours in support of global customers, General Atomics Aeronautical Systems Inc. said March 2. The workhorse unmanned aircraft combines unmatched persistence and mission flexibility with a greater than 90% mission capable rate.

“We developed the MQ-9A to set the standard for persistent surveillance and rapid strike capability, and it’s delivered on expectations,” said GA-ASI Vice President of DoD Strategic Development J.R. Reid. “The effectiveness of a military aircraft can be measured in how often its used [total flight hours] and in its readiness to perform, and the MQ-9A exceeds in performance on both metrics.”

Combined with the flight hours of other GA-ASI aircraft, including Predator A and Predator XP; Predator B Extended Range, Guardian, Gray Eagle and Gray Eagle ER; Predator C

Avenger; and MQ-9B SkyGuardian and SeaGuardian, the total flight hours for the GA-ASI fleet exceed 7.2 million, supporting close to 500,000 missions.

GA-ASI aircraft average more than 48,000 hours per month supporting the U.S. Air Force, Army, Marine Corps, NASA, the Italian air force, the United Kingdom Royal Air Force, the French air force, the UAE armed forces, the Indian government, and new MQ-9As are being delivered to the Royal Netherlands Air Force now. Missions include helping protect ground units on the battlefield, supporting first responders in the wake of natural disasters and providing critical ISR around the world. With a host of additional reconnaissance, surveillance, and communications payloads in development and early fielding, GA-ASI UAS continue to demonstrate exceptional value across the full spectrum of current and future operations.

The MQ-9A Block 5 has endurance of over 27 hours, speeds of 240 KTAS and can operate up to 50,000 feet. It has a 3,850-pound (1,746-kilogram) payload capacity that includes 3,000 pounds (1,361 kilograms) of external stores. It provides a long-endurance, persistent surveillance capability with full-motion video and synthetic aperture radar/moving target indicator/maritime radar. An extremely reliable aircraft, MQ-9A Block 5 is equipped with a fault-tolerant flight control system and triple redundant avionics system architecture. It is engineered to meet and exceed manned aircraft reliability standards.