Textron Systems to Provide Second U.S. ESB with Shipboard UAS Operation



Aerosonde Unmanned Arial Surveillance (UAS) vehicle, Buck G, awaits to launch aboard the Expeditionary Sea-Base USS Hershel "Woody" Williams (ESB 4) in the Atlantic Ocean, Sept. 25, 2020. *U.S. MARINE CORPS / Sgt. Megan Roses*

HUNT VALLEY, Md. – Textron Systems Corporation, a Textron Inc. company, has been awarded a contract valued at up to $22 million by the U.S. Navy's Naval Air Systems Command (NAVAIR) to provide UAS operational support to the USS Miguel Keith (ESB 5), the company said in an Oct. 20 release. The contract begins in fiscal 2023 and has a total potential performance period of five years. This award builds on the four-year extension of USS Hershel "Woody" Williams (ESB 4) earlier this year and joins two guided-missile destroyers, bringing the

total number of U.S. Navy ships supported by the Aerosonde UAS system to four.

Under this contract, Textron Systems will deploy its Aerosonde UAS to provide extended range intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) services with enhanced mission payloads aboard the ESB 5. The company's Field Service Representatives will work alongside the sailors onboard to provide support for a variety of maritime missions.

"There are numerous vessels of opportunity with the Navy that can benefit from consistent multi-INT ISR," said Wayne Prender, senior vice president, Air Systems. "Through this fee-for-service contract, the Navy can continue to mature future shipboard ISR requirements while supporting existing real-world missions. We are already seeing the benefits for DDG- and ESB-class ships, and we continue to optimize our services to deliver the unique operational and logistical capabilities our customers demand in order to accomplish their mission and keep our sailors safe."

The Aerosonde system has amassed more than 585,000 flight hours while serving multiple U.S. and international allies. It is designed for expeditionary land- and sea-based operations in austere environments and is equipped for multiple payload configurations. For more than 10 years, Textron Systems has provided turnkey, fee-for-service operations, providing hands-on operational support for customers around the world.