

# MQ-9 Guardian trials demonstrate Japan's maritime security needs

General Atomics, the manufacturer of the Predator Remote Piloted Aircraft (RPA) concluded its trials in Japan recently. We spoke to Joseph Song, GA-ASI Vice President, International Strategic Development about the details and the plans for the future.

**The Predator Guardian RPA recently had its demonstration flights in Japan. Can you share some light on the details of the same?**

The demonstration flights collected data for scientific research that was shared across multiple government agencies, while operating from the island of Iki, in Japan's Nagasaki Prefecture. Specifically, the flight demonstrated how using a remotely piloted aircraft that can fly greater than 40+ hours using optical and radar sensors to survey maritime environmental conditions as well monitor conditions in the event that humanitarian assistance or disaster relief is required.

**Were these demonstration flights only for civil applications or also military in nature?**

These demonstration flights were primarily for civil applications to include environmental monitoring, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief. Other missions that were conducted also showed the effective maritime domain awareness (MDA) capability. Based on its long endurance, sensitive optical and radar sensors, the Guardian aircraft showed that it is the ideal platform to perform key Japanese missions.

**What have these trials demonstrated to both, GA and the customers?**

GA-ASI has made a large investment to conduct the demonstration flights from Iki Island to show the benefits MQ-9 Guardian can provide

for Japan. The Japan demo has been instrumental for us to learn about important Japan maritime security needs. But more importantly, we believe that the customers have also learned about the many benefits of our Guardian aircraft.

**What are the other countries in the region that have expressed their interest in the Predator in different applications?**

India has announced that it intends to procure MQ-9B SeaGuardian. SeaGuardian is the next generation of Predator certifiable aircraft. SeaGuardian is equipped with maritime surface search radar that will allow the Indian Navy to significantly enhance MDA in the Indo-Pacific region. Additionally, Australia just announced as part of Air 7003, that it intends to procure MQ-9 or MQ-9B to support Australian Land Forces

**How do you think can the Guardian help improve the maritime capabilities of Japan?**

Guardian combines long endurance and unique maritime surface search capabilities to provide a persistent ISR capability. Combined with the capabilities including artificial intelligence processing, exploitation and dissemination (PED) that can secure the maritime domain that is critical to Japan's interests.

**What are the new developments that one can see to the Predator platform in the**



Joseph Song

**coming years?**

We have made significant investment in designing and developing the aircraft that can be certified to civil standards in order to fly in non-segregated airspace. Specifically, through design and development to the same standards that are required for manned civil aircraft, we have designed and developed the MQ-9B to be the first certifiable RPA. The MQ-9B will also integrate Detect and Avoid (DAA) system that will allow our RPA to avoid both cooperative and non-cooperative aircraft. DAA consists of TCAS2, ADS-B and our own, Due Regard Radar.

**What is the objective of participating at the show this year?**

Our objective is to continue showcasing the huge benefits of introducing MQ-9 to the Japan's fleet of manned maritime systems. MQ-9 system will provide broader maritime coverage with much lower operating and acquisition cost. ■

- Bhavya Desai

## Airborne Technologies appoint Aero Facility as Authorized agent for Japan



**Signing Ceremony:** Mitsuo Hattori, Managing Director, AERO Facility Co.,LTD and Marcus Gurtner, Chief Sales Officer, Airborne Technologies

**A**irborne Technologies announced that they appointed Aero Facility of Japan as their authorized agent for the Japanese market. The agreement was signed at the show between Mitsuo Hattori, Managing Director, AERO Facility Co.,LTD and Marcus Gurtner, Chief Sales Officer, Airborne Technologies.

Commenting on the agreement Mitsuo Hattori said that there is high potential of Airborne Technologies products in the Japanese market. Marcus Gurtner stated that Airborne Technologies excels in three business areas: ISR Turnkey Solutions, Sensor Integration and Data Solutions and as an EASA approved Part 21 J Design Organisation, the company specializes in the modification, installation, certification and operation of sensor equipment.

The company provides tailor-made turnkey solutions for airborne surveillance and surveying systems for a wide range of new airborne platforms (fixed and rotary wing), as well as integration of Sensor Systems into existing customer aircraft. Airborne Technologies Data Acquisition & Processing Department provides services in the field of remote sensing and geophysics processing, exploitation and dissemination that covers a wide range of applications. The technology/solutions are widely used in Europe including Germany, UK and other countries and are now looking to expand in the Japanese market. ■