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Aurora Skate Flies at Farnborough Airshow

Manassas, VA, July 19, 2010 - Aurora Flight Sciences' Skate small unmanned aerial system (SUAS) made its airshow debut on July 19th at the UAS indoor flight display area of the Farnborough International Airshow. Skate is a 1 kilogram all-electric SUAS with an innovative airframe design that allows it to pack into a standard military pack with room to spare. Currently the Skate is equipped with an electro-optical video payload; an infrared camera is available for nighttime missions, and additional payloads are part of future development. Skate is targeted to support squad-level Reconnaissance, Surveillance, and Target Acquisition (RSTA) missions.

Skate is an internally developed small UAS product with both military and civilian applications. George Kiwada, the program manager, states, "We are currently demonstrating the system to potential launch customers, and Farnborough represents an excellent opportunity to debut Skate to the international market." Mr. Adam Woodworth, the Skate chief engineer, adds, "Typical Skate demonstrations focus on the vehicle's performance in outdoor missions. Flying here at Farnborough allows us to showcase Skate's indoor capabilities, as well." At Farnborough, Aurora also demonstrated the Skate's packability. Made of ruggedized foam, the Skate airframe can be deployed from a standard military pack in seconds, and requires no dedicated large hardshell cases. Skate's innovative design also allows replacement of the inexpensive wing panels if damaged, while the more critical sensors and autopilot are reused.

Aurora's Skate UAS merges the simplicity and endurance of a fixed wing platform with the maneuverability and mission flexibility of a vertical takeoff and landing (VTOL) vehicle. Twin independently articulating motor pods allow the Skate UAS to rapidly transition between vertical and horizontal flight and achieve high maneuverability. Transferring from hovering to horizontal wing-borne flight increases the endurance and range of Skate to levels characteristic of a fixed wing platform and far beyond those of a traditional VTOL machine. This flexibility makes Skate an "all aspect" surveillance tool for the warfighter. Skate can fly overhead to provide overall situational awareness and target detection. When targets of interest are identified, Skate has the maneuverability and VTOL capability to descend down to street level, to give the operator a closer view of vehicles, individuals, or weapons. This includes the capability to peer into windows, doorways, and courtyards. Kiwada explains, "With Skate, you're not just stuck floating above – you can bring Skate right down into the fight."

About Aurora Flight Sciences

Aurora Flight Sciences designs and builds robotic aircraft and other advanced aerospace vehicles for scientific and military applications. Aurora is headquartered in Manassas, VA and operates production plants in Bridgeport, WV and Columbus, MS and a Research and Development Center in Cambridge, MA. To view recent press releases and more about Aurora please visit our web site at www.aurora.aero.

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