



Near Earth Autonomy Achieves First Autonomous Flight of Leonardo AW139 Helicopter for U.S. Marine Corps Aerial Logistics Connector Program

Pittsburgh, PA - June 17th, 2025: Near Earth Autonomy (Near Earth), a prime performer for the U.S. Marine Corps Aerial Logistics Connector (ALC) program, has successfully completed the first autonomous test flight of a Leonardo AW139 helicopter. This milestone demonstrates the real-world viability of scalable, uncrewed rotorcraft operating in contested environments without pilot or remote operator input, accelerating the path toward operational deployment.

Conducted in May in Phoenix, the flight marked the first time that the AW139 was autonomously controlled by Near Earth's onboard autonomy stack. The demonstration validated critical capabilities such as precise flight control, autonomous decision-making, and seamless integration with existing aircraft systems.

"This flight showcases Near Earth Autonomy's leadership in developing trusted autonomy for real-world operations," said Dr. Sanjiv Singh, CEO of Near Earth Autonomy. "By directly controlling the AW139's flight modes with our autonomy system, we've shown that scalable autonomous logistics using existing platforms is not just possible, it's happening now. This capability is essential for reducing risk to military personnel and ensuring resilient supply chains in the field."

The ALC program, managed under a Naval Aviation Systems Consortium Other Transaction Agreement (OTA), is designed to field an autonomous aerial logistics system that enhances operational readiness and mission responsiveness. As the program progresses, future testing will expand on key autonomy features such as automated obstacle avoidance, route planning, and logistics system integration.

This achievement was made possible through Near Earth's collaboration with Honeywell Aerospace Technologies and Leonardo. Honeywell's AW139 served as the flight test platform and was equipped with mission-critical avionics that interfaced with Near Earth's autonomy system. Leonardo, the aircraft manufacturer, provided vital engineering support to facilitate integration.

"This successful demonstration is a major step in creating brand new possibilities for not only the USMC, but potentially other helicopter operators as well," said Bob Buddecke, President, Electronic Solutions, Honeywell Aerospace Technologies. "Together with Near Earth Autonomy and Leonardo, we're showing how existing aircraft can be adapted with trusted avionics to support the next generation of defense logistics. Uncrewed aircraft will be vital in keeping service men and women safe in contested environments, and we are one step closer to realizing that vision."



Near Earth Autonomy is developing an autonomy solution that is affordable, scalable, and certifiable, enabling rapid adaptation of crewed aircraft to uncrewed logistics roles. These capabilities are essential for meeting both current and future operational demands across the Department of Defense and beyond.

About Near Earth Autonomy

Near Earth Autonomy is a leader in autonomy technologies that enable safe and efficient aerial logistics and operations. From enabling aircraft to autonomously take off, navigate complex environments, avoid obstacles, and deliver payloads, Near Earth's solutions provide a new dimension of operational capability. With a focus on safety, scalability, and certification-readiness, Near Earth's technology is transforming both military and commercial aviation.

For more information, visit www.nearearth.aero or follow [Near Earth Autonomy on LinkedIn](#).

About Honeywell

Products and services from Honeywell Aerospace Technologies are found on virtually every commercial, defense, and space aircraft, and in many terrestrial systems. The Aerospace Technologies business unit builds aircraft engines, cockpit and cabin electronics, wireless connectivity systems, mechanical components, power systems, and more. Its hardware and software solutions create more fuel-efficient aircraft, more direct and on-time flights, and safer skies and airports.

Honeywell is an integrated operating company serving a broad range of industries and geographies around the world. Its business is aligned with three powerful megatrends – automation, the future of aviation, and energy transition – underpinned by the Honeywell Accelerator operating system and the Honeywell Forge IoT platform. As a trusted partner, Honeywell helps organizations solve the world's toughest, most complex challenges, providing actionable solutions and innovations across its Aerospace Technologies, Industrial Automation, Building Automation, and Energy and Sustainability Solutions business segments.

For more news and information on Honeywell, please visit www.honeywell.com/newsroom.