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Hawker Beechcraft, Pratt & Whitney Canada Announce First Flight of Second AT-6 Prototype



BY TEXTRON AVIATION

Hawker Beechcraft Corporation (HBC) and Pratt & Whitney Canada (P&WC) today announced the successful first flight of the second Beechcraft AT-6 production representative test vehicle (PRTV). The aircraft features a new P&WC PT6A-68D engine with 1600 shaft horsepower (shp) that greatly improves the overall performance of the AT-6 to complement the world-class mission avionics performance of the Lockheed Martin mission system. The AT-6 is a structurally strengthened derivative of the highly successful U.S. Air Force (USAF) and U.S. Navy (USN) T-6A/B trainer – the world’s most proven military trainer aircraft – that will address the mission needs of the USAF for a Light Attack and Armed Reconnaissance (LAAR) aircraft. The USAF is expected to launch an acquisition program this year.

The integration of the PT6A-68D engine, designed to improve aircraft performance over the first AT-6 PRTV, was accomplished by the HBC-P&WC team in only nine months and was executed concurrently with the first PRTV's A-10-based mission avionics upgrade. The new T-6 derivative, while incorporating structural improvements and increased electrical power generation required for the LAAR mission, still retains approximately 95 percent overall commonality with the baseline T-6B.

“The AT-6 team has made remarkable progress in a very short time by integrating proven low-risk technologies on both of our AT-6 test vehicles,” said Jim Maslowski, president, Hawker Beechcraft U.S. and International Government Business. “I am especially proud of how quickly the HBC-P&WC team responded to the challenge of improving the performance of the AT-6 without sacrificing commonality with the rest of the T-6 worldwide fleet. The enhanced performance of the 1600 shp engine, when combined with our demonstrated A-10C derivative mission avionics capabilities, offers air forces around the world a LAAR aircraft that is unmatched in the market.”

“Pratt & Whitney Canada is proud to be part of HBC's successful first flight of this exciting program. Our engineering team has worked closely with HBC to ensure P&WC's engine meets all expectations,” said Michael Perodeau, Vice President, Corporate Aviation and Military Engines, P&WC. “The PT6A-68D is a member of the latest generation of our PT6 engine family, which totals over 25,000 engines in service today. It incorporates advanced materials and aerodynamic technologies for exceptional levels of performance and reliability.”

The AT-6 is designed to be able to quickly transition pilots between basic flight training missions and complex NetCentric LAAR missions. The AT-6 incorporates the very best of proven training and close air support capability to meet expected LAAR requirements. The aircraft covers a wide mission spectrum that includes training, manned Intelligence Surveillance and Reconnaissance and light precision attack, while also offering non-traditional capabilities for Homeland Defense, Homeland Security and Civil Support missions.

HBC has been meeting the needs of U.S. and foreign military customers around the world with trainer, weaponized trainer and special mission aircraft, which are currently in service in more than 50 nations. Today, all USAF and USN student pilots train in a Hawker Beechcraft aircraft.

Hawker Beechcraft Corporation is a world-leading manufacturer of business, special mission and trainer aircraft – designing, marketing and supporting aviation products and services for businesses, governments and individuals worldwide. The company’s headquarters and major facilities are located in Wichita, Kan., with operations in Salina, Kan.; Little Rock, Ark.; Chester, England, U.K.; and Chihuahua, Mexico. The company leads the industry with a global network of more than 100 factory-owned and authorized service centers. For more information, visit www.hawkerbeechcraft.com.

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