



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thales Contributes to UAV World Endurance Record Advancing Battlefield Communications Capabilities for Warfighters

CLARKSBURG, Md., November 14, 2008 – A solar-powered plane, funded jointly by the U.K. Ministry of Defence and the U.S. Department of Defense (U.S. DoD), recently set an unofficial world endurance record for a flight by an Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV). Thales Communications, Inc. provided the Communication Relay System that enabled users, more than 300 miles apart, to communicate using their organic radios.

The Zephyr UAV, developed by international defense and security technology company QinetiQ, stayed aloft, non-stop, for 82 hours and 37 minutes, exceeding the current world record for unmanned flight, which is 30 hours and 24 minutes (Global Hawk, 2001). The flight trial, which was funded by the U.S. DoD, took place at the U.S. Army's Yuma Proving Ground in Arizona, in the harsh conditions of the Sonoran Desert. Zephyr was flown on autopilot and via satellite communications to a maximum altitude of more than 60,000 feet. Thales's repackaged AN/PRC-148 Joint Tactical Radio System Enhanced Multiband Inter/Intra Team Radios (JEM) constituted the Zephyr's Communication Relay System.

Zephyr is part of a U.K./U.S. Joint Capability Technology Demonstration program, which is designed to rapidly field urgently-needed technologies, e.g., battlefield communications and reconnaissance, to U.S. warfighters in the field. For this program, Thales developed, integrated, tested, and provided a relay communications system that would support Single Channel Ground and Radio Airborne System (SINCGARS) capability. The system consisted of a four-radio solution (AN/PRC-148 JEM) capable of providing two retransmission demonstration systems at less than five pounds including radios, retransmission cables, and antennas.

"Our expertise in tactical communications solutions for size-, weight-, and power-constrained environments goes beyond the radio and enables us to provide solutions across a myriad of operational domains, including airborne systems," said Lewis Johnston, Vice President of Thales Communications, Inc., in charge of Advanced Programs. "Our technology has been proven in the low-temperature, high-altitude, long-endurance operational setting where reliability is key."

Based on the battle-proven AN/PRC-148 MBITR, Thales's AN/PRC-148 JEM is the smallest, lightest, and most widely-fielded tactical handheld radio in the world. It is a Software Communications Architecture-compliant platform that hosts all of today's key waveforms. The AN/PRC-148 JEM provides a strong evolutionary path for advanced capabilities via simple software upgrades, like new waveforms (e.g., DAMA IW SATCOM, Mobile Ad Hoc Networking, Project 25), increased data rates, situational awareness dissemination at the squad level, crypto modernization, and rifleman radio capabilities. There are more than 165,000 AN/PRC-148s on order/delivered globally.

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About Thales

Thales Communications, Inc. (www.thalescomminc.com) is a global leader in the development of battle-proven, software-defined, radio equipment and solutions. The company serves the ground, naval, airborne, and homeland security domains with tactical electronic equipment and information systems that address the technological and environmental challenges presented in real-world situations—especially those with size, weight, and power constraints. A U.S. proxy company (100% American), Thales Communications is part of Thales, a leading international electronics and systems group, addressing defense, aerospace, and security markets worldwide. Thales's leading-edge technology is supported by 22,000 R&D engineers who offer a capability unmatched in Europe to develop and deploy field-proven mission-critical information systems. To this end, the group's civil and military businesses develop in parallel and share a common base of technologies to serve a single objective: the security of people, property and nations. The group builds its growth on its unique multi-domestic strategy based on trusted partnerships with national customers and market players, while leveraging its global expertise to support local technology and industrial development. Thales employs 68,000 people in 50 countries with 2007 revenues in excess of \$18 billion.

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