JOBY CELEBRATES FIRST FLIGHT OF TURBINE ELECTRIC DEMONSTRATOR AIRCRAFT

News / Manufacturer



Joby Aviation announced the first flight of its turbine electric, autonomous VTOL aircraft. The demonstrator builds on Joby's fully-electric air taxi platform and integrates a hybrid turbine powertrain along with the Company's SuperPilot autonomy stack to deliver greater range and payload capability. Potential applications for Joby's hybrid aircraft include longer range air taxi services as well as sales to civilian, commercial and defense customers.

The start of flight testing comes just three months after Joby announced the aircraft concept alongside a new partnership with L3Harris Technologies, who bring proven expertise on platform missionization, including sensors, effectors, communication and collaborative autonomy. L3Harris plans to equip Joby's commercial hybrid aircraft to address defense applications, such as contested logistics, "loyal wingman" operations and low-altitude support. The U.S. government has prioritized the acquisition of resilient, autonomous and hybrid aircraft, requesting over $9 billion in the FY26 budget for next-generation platforms.

JoeBen Bevirt, CEO and Founder of Joby commented: "It's imperative that we find ways to deliver

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new technology into the hands of American troops more quickly and cost-efficiently than we have in the past. Our vertical integration puts us in a unique position to deliver on this goal, moving from concept to demonstration - and from demonstration to deployment - at a pace that is unprecedented in today's aerospace and defense industry. The magic of dual-use technology is that it creates value in both directions. By building on our proven technology stack, our partners can rapidly deliver new capabilities for the Department of War while we benefit from advancing the maturity of our hybrid and autonomous systems. In turn, this will help pave the way for commercial applications, from longer-range hybrid VTOL missions to autonomous air operations in commercial airspace."

Jason Lambert, President, Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance, L3Harris stated: "The future battlefield relies on unmanned systems augmenting manned platforms, and our partnership with Joby accelerates missionized VTOL aircraft to directly support defense requirements. L3Harris has delivered thousands of missionized aircraft, and our focus is scaling rapidly to bring these commercial VTOL aircraft to the fight."

The aircraft completed its first flight at Joby's Marina, California, facility on November 7. It will continue ground and flight testing before taking part in operational demonstrations with government customers, planned for 2026. The hybrid aircraft builds on a proven all-electric technology platform that has completed more than 50,000 miles of flight testing and has entered the final stage of the FAA's Type Certification process for commercial aircraft.

Joby's SuperpilotTM autonomous technology stack has been in development for more than five years and, in July, the company successfully participated in REFORPAC, a landmark Department of War exercise over the Pacific Ocean. Using a conventional Cessna 208 aircraft, the company logged more than 7,000 miles of autonomous operations across more than 40 flight hours in and around Hawaii, managed primarily from Andersen Air Force Base in Guam, more than 3,000 miles away.

Key Features of Joby's Hybrid Aircraft Platform:

- **Long Range:** Turbine-electric propulsion delivers longer range as well as extended hold times required for critical multi-role missions, "loyal wingman" and contested logistics.
- **Agile:** Precise vertical maneuverability allows the aircraft to deploy effectively from rear- and forward-operating locations where traditional runway infrastructure is regularly unavailable.
- **Autonomous:** Designed to be autonomous utilizing Joby's proven autonomous flight technology, Superpilot.

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