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Press Release

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Airborne Systems low cost aerial delivery parachute provides “drop and forget” solution in hostile terrains.

DSEi London Excel (Stand 176) - September 8th 2009 – Airborne Systems Canada announces that the Canadian Department of National Defence (DND) has procured an undisclosed, but significant number of low cost aerial delivery parachutes, the “Unicross”, for “drop-and-forget” missions in Afghanistan.

The cruciform shaped Unicross system is specifically designed for any tactical situation that makes recovery of the chute either too dangerous or economically unfeasible. It reduces the need for logistical convoys and lessens unnecessary exposure of friendly troops and land vehicles to IEDs (improvised explosive devices).

The Unicross family of parachutes replaces the conventional cargo parachutes such as the G-11, G-12, G14 and T-10 (expired personnel canopy used for cargo) and provides a low cost solution to supply missions. As an example of savings achieved the 2,200 lb (1,000kg) version is around 40 per cent cheaper than the current in-service G-12 cargo parachute. With a price of around one US dollar per pound of weight carried, it is available in 150 lb (70kg), 500 lb (230kg), 2,200 lb (1,000kg) and 5,000 lb (2,300kg) configurations. A cluster of two, three and four separate Unicross parachutes on the same load can increase the weight carrying capacity potentially up to 10,000 pounds.

Made up of between 5 and 33 polypropylene, hand-tied panels, modularity is a key feature of the Unicross system - individual panels can be replaced quickly if torn or damaged and despite being primarily designed for single use, the parachutes can, if recovered, be repacked and re-used.

Operated by static line, the Unicross family of systems exhibits rates of descent (RoD) ranging between 25 and 32 feet (7.5m to 9.75m) per second and achieving 90 feet (27.5m) per second in its high velocity (HV) configuration. The HV configuration of the Unicross makes it a superior alternative to other systems because of the ability of the parachute to effectively decelerate prior to landing, thus increasing the payload survivability and accuracy for critical missions. In addition, this higher rate of descent improves the ballistic accuracy of the canopy. This set-up allows also cargo to be used in HALO (High Altitude Low Opening) operations, a technique favored by special operations forces for covert mission.

Elizabeth Johnson, Senior Vice President, Customer Business Team at Airborne Systems North America comments:” The low cost and modular features of the Unicross make it a very cost effective piece of equipment, supporting the modern day armed forces in operation in the remote corners of the world.”

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About Airborne Systems

Airborne Systems combines the core technologies of four of the world’s leading parachute brands; Irvin Aerospace, GQ Parachutes, Para-Flite and AML (Aircraft Materials, Ltd). Airborne Systems is a world leader in the design, development, and manufacture of best-of-class parachutes for military, personnel, and cargo systems, space and air vehicle recovery systems, and deceleration systems for high-performance aircraft. The company also provides airbags, ordnance flare chutes and weapons delivery systems. Airborne Systems’ North American headquarters is located in Pennsauken, NJ and Airborne Systems Europe is headquartered in Llangeinor, Wales. Information about the various Airborne Systems products and services can be found at www.airborne-sys.com.

Attached photograph: Unicross in operation

