AV's Wildcat Reaches Key Milestones in DARPA's ANCILLARY Program's EVADE Demonstration

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Full-scale platform transitions to forward flight, accelerates mission system integration, and pushes the boundaries of maritime VTOL autonomy

ARLINGTON, Va.--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Jun. 26, 2025-- AeroVironment, Inc. ("AV") (NASDAQ: AVAV) announced today that its Wildcat uncrewed aircraft system (UAS) has achieved a series of development milestones in support of the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency's (DARPA) Early VTOL Aircraft Demonstration (EVADE). Wildcat has successfully completed VTOL-to-forward-flight transitions, validated its core flight and propulsion systems, and begun integrating critical mission payloads—demonstrating rapid progress toward an operationally relevant capability.

This press release features multimedia. View the full release here: https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20250626965421/en/

Designed for operations in high sea states, Wildcat showcases AV's MacCready Works' commitment to rapid innovation and mission-focused solutions. (Photo: AV)

Wildcat is a Group 3, tail-sitting vertical take-off and landing (VTOL) aircraft designed for launch and recovery from ship decks in denied and distributed maritime environments. Its compact footprint, autonomous launch and recovery, and robust flight performance across high sea states make it a flexible and scalable solution for contested littoral operations.

"Wildcat reflects the spirit of MacCready Works - breakthrough thinking, accelerated timelines, and deep mission alignment," said Chris Fisher, AV's vice president of MacCready Works Novel Systems. "In a matter of weeks, we've gone from system integration to full forward flight transitions, all while validating key subsystems. This is what innovation at operational speed looks like."

Within this fast-paced program, innovations include a new Visual Precision Landing System (VPLS), an AVACORE™-enabled integration of Government Furnished Software and testing of a new modular autopilot and AI compute module all of which feed back into AV's existing product lines including the JUMP® 20-X, P550™, and others.

Recent flight testing included the expansion of Wildcat's hover envelope and the first successful transitions to forward flight using the full-scale test platform. Key systems—such as a heavy fuel propulsion system, fuel, and flight control—were validated in both hover and level flight, with aerodynamic performance confirmed across a range of airspeeds and flight profiles. These results reflect the maturity of the design and the pace of advancement within the EVADE framework.

The EVADE initiative accelerates DARPA's AdvaNced airCraft Infrastructure-Less Launch And RecoverY (ANCILLARY) program Phase 2 plan, which the agency initially projected to conduct flight testing in late 2026.

AV is now integrating mission-critical payloads that will enable Wildcat to support ISR, communications, and other tactical effects from a single, modular platform. In the next phase of flight tests Wildcat will perform simulated maritime missions—transitioning between hover and forward flight while executing payload-driven tasking in representative operational scenarios.

Designed and developed by MacCready Works, AV's advanced development team, Wildcat embodies the company's commitment to solving the hardest challenges in autonomy, edge operations, and next-generation air dominance.

About AEROVIRONMENT, INC.

AeroVironment ("AV") (NASDAQ: AVAV) is a defense technology leader delivering integrated capabilities across air, land, sea, space, and cyber. The company develops and deploys autonomous systems, precision strike systems, counter-UAS technologies, space-based platforms, directed energy systems, and cyber and electronic warfare capabilities—built to meet the mission needs of today's warfighter and tomorrow's conflicts. With a national manufacturing footprint and a deep innovation pipeline, AV delivers proven systems and future-defining capabilities with speed, scale, and operational relevance.

For more information, visit www.avinc.com.

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MEDIA CONTACT

Ashley Young AeroVironment
+1.703.418.2828
pr@avinc.com

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