Bell to Provide Bell 505 Airframe for U.S. Marine Corps' MARV-EL Program

Bell Textron will provide its Bell 505 airframe for the U.S. Marine Corps' MARV-EL uncrewed logistics aircraft program. *Photo credit: Bell Textron*

Bell Textron Inc., a Textron Inc. company, announced it was selected by Near Earth Autonomy (Near Earth) as a partner on the prototyping of an autonomous Bell 505 for the U.S. Marine Corps' Aerial Resupply Vehicle – Expeditionary Logistics (MARV-EL) Increment 2 program.

The goal of the program is to prototype an uncrewed logistics aircraft ready for tactical-edge resupply in contested environments and serve as a middle-weight uncrewed logistics asset.

"This platform will be a step forward in transforming the U.S. Marine Corps' autonomous operations and how our warfighters navigate on the battlefield," said Jason Hurst, Bell SVP, Engineering. "We're leveraging our decades of experience with

the U.S. Armed Forces and innovative product development applying it to the versatile Bell 505 for this program."

The awarded contract will deliver an autonomous aerial logistics capability that exceeds MARV-EL performance threshold requirements and accommodates a wide range of payloads and standard containers. Bell will provide engineering support to the Near Earth team on modifications to the Bell 505 for autonomy integration and enhanced cargo handling.

"Bell looks forward to continuing to build upon our relationship and prior autonomy development with Near Earth in support of the MARV-EL program," added Hurst.

In 2024, Bell revealed its Aircraft Laboratory for Future Autonomy (ALFA) platform – a step forward in its autonomous flight efforts. Bell and Near Earth collaborated to integrate an advanced perception system for flight demonstrations on the ALFA aircraft, working towards fully autonomous flight capability.