JOBY DEMONSTRATES AUTONOMOUS FLIGHT IN UNITED STATES AIR FORCE ‘AGILE FLAG’ EXERCISE

News / Manufacturer

Joby Aviation demonstrated autonomous logistics aircraft operations in an evolving mission environment, in partnership with the U.S. Air Force during the ‘Agile Flag 24-3’ exercise. During the exercise, Joby’s team, which includes the autonomy division of Xwing acquired by Joby in June of this year, operated a fully autonomous Cessna 208B Grand Caravan for more than 3,900 miles of flight between military bases and public airports across California and Nevada.

The aircraft autonomously transported essential components to restore the operational readiness of various Air Force assets, flying between 9 locations in a dynamic operational environment. The aircraft, while monitored by a safety pilot, completed a fully autonomous taxi, take-off, and landing at each location during the exercise without requiring on-the-ground infrastructure, including numerous sites that had not been previously visited by the aircraft. Joby also showcased its ability to remotely supervise the aircraft using a laptop and a satellite communications terminal, both of which are transportable in a single backpack.

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Maxime Gariel, Autonomy Lead at Joby, commented: “We were pleased to continue demonstrating the capabilities of our autonomy technology during Agile Flag 24-3, where we completed dozens of fully autonomous aerial missions and showcased an ability to perform rapid resupply. We look forward to continuing to work with the U.S. Air Force as we further develop the suite of technologies that could enable greater automation or full autonomy, first on the Caravan and then on numerous other aircraft types.”

Col. Max Bremer, Air Mobility Command Special Access Program management officer stated:“The return on investment for the U.S. Air Force with this technology is significant. By using it to handle smaller cargo, we can preserve cargo aircraft for more critical tasks like transporting large parts or engines. This not only enhances the overall capability of the cargo fleet but also ensures they are used where they are most needed.”

Earlier this year, the Xwing team participated in ‘Agile Flag 24-1’, a similar exercise, completing more than 2,800 miles of fully autonomous flight and demonstrating the ability to integrate autonomous aircraft into congested airspace as well as night operations, sloped runways, and landing at airports with no infrastructure.

The Caravan’s autonomous capabilities are enabled by a suite of technologies developed by the Xwing autonomy team, which joined Joby in June 2024, and the aircraft has completed more than 300 fully autonomous flights since 2020.

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