Air Force museum unveils Reaper exhibit

Jason Lomberg, Technical Editor

Since 2007, the MQ-9 [1]Reaper *[1]* RPV (Remotely Piloted Vehicle [2]) has been on the front lines of the war on terror. It scored its first kill [3] in October ’07, and has served a crucial role ever since. On Monday, the National Museum of the Air Force officially unveiled [4] its new MQ-9 *Reaper* exhibit.

The MQ-9 *Reaper* is the Predator *[5]*’s bigger, nastier cousin. At 36 feet long, and with a 66 foot wingspan, the *Reaper* features a 900 shaft horsepower turboprop engine (dwarfing the *Predator*'s 115 hp (86 kW) piston engine) and a max payload of 3,750 lbs (vs. the *Predator*’s 450). The *Reaper* can climb to 50,000 feet, and has a max range of 3,682 miles. With a cruising speed of 230 MPH, this amounts to 14-16 hours in the air. The *Predator* chugs behind at 84 mph (up to 135 mph), with a max range of only 454 miles.

First MQ-9 *Reaper* arrives at Creech AFB, March 2007.

The Museum will feature one of the two pre-production YMQ-9s (serial number 02-4002) sent to Afghanistan. In four years, it flew 3,266 combat hours and 254 combat sorties. The *Reaper* will be displayed near the RQ-4 Global Hawk *[6]* (surveillance craft) in the museum's Modern Flight Gallery [7].

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[1] http://www.af.mil/information/factsheets/factsheet.asp?fsID=6405
[2] http://www.airforcetimes.com/news/2009/08/airforce_uav_name_081509/
[3] http://www.airforcetimes.com/news/2007/10/airforce_mq9_reaper_071029w/
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[5] http://www.af.mil/information/factsheets/factsheet_print.asp?fsID=122&page=1
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