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University Relations News Bureau
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MSU student team wins national unmanned aircraft competition

STARKVILLE, MS-- A Mississippi State team is the victor over students from 13 other universities for a top prize of more than \$10,000 in competition to navigate an unmanned radio-controllable aircraft system in a simulated combat zone.

MSU's 17-member unmanned aircraft systems group--working under the title "Team Xipiter"--recently took the 2008 Best Flight Award of the Association for Unmanned Vehicle Systems International.

The organization's sixth annual student competition took place at Webster Field in St. Inigoes, Md. The challenge involved the identification of 10 targets on a mission similar to what might be encountered by a military strike team seeking strategic targets for attack.

Team adviser Calvin R. Walker said the MSU group also finished with the highest score ever logged in the event's six-year history. "This team truly is an integrated product team for unmanned aircraft systems," the senior flight engineer at MSU's Raspet Flight Research Laboratory added.

With more than 1,400 member companies and organizations in 50 countries, AUVSI is considered the world's largest non-profit organization devoted exclusively to advancing the unmanned systems community. With offices located in Arlington, Va., the organization represents professionals in government, industry and academia.

"The experience gained in this competition will be invaluable for our students' future successes, and it gives them a taste of what lies ahead in the professional world," Walker said. "This is the type of team dynamics they will encounter, especially in the aerospace and automotive industries."

The winning MSU student team includes (by hometown):

BILOXI--Senior aerospace engineering major Martin J. Brennan, the son of Thelma Barlow.

BIRMINGHAM, Ala.--Sophomore aerospace engineering major Travis A. Cope, the son of William and Sally Cope.

DOTHAN, Ala.--Sophomore aerospace engineering major Ross E. Lee, the son of Russell and Patricia Lee.

ELLISVILLE--Christopher J. "Chris" Brown, a graduate student in electrical engineering and the son of Jeffrey and Rosalea Brown.

GERMANTOWN, Tenn.--Christopher D. Edwards, a May summa cum laude graduate in electrical engineering and the son of Conan and Pamela Edwards.

GULFPORT--Senior aerospace engineering major William P. Cleveland, the son of Peter and Faye Cleveland.

HAMILTON--Senior computer engineering major Daniel M. Wilson, the son of Gloria Wilson and Martin Wilson.

HAMILTON, Ohio--Senior aerospace engineering major Savannah S. Ponder, the daughter of David and Jackie Ponder.

JACKSON--Senior computer engineering major Joshua A. Lasseigne, the son of Stephen and Bethany Lasseigne.

LEWISBURG, Tenn.--James S. "Sam" Curtis, a May magna cum laude graduate in aerospace engineering and the son of William and Kaye Curtis.

MOODY, Ala.--Sophomore aerospace engineering major Bryan K. Hamby, the son of Bryan and Sally Hamby.

OLIVE BRANCH--Senior elementary education major Melissa B. Lyons, the daughter of James and Anita Lyons.

STARKVILLE--Peter C. Lamborn, a graduate student in computer science [parents not listed]; Brittany N. Penland, a May cum laude graduate in aerospace engineering and the daughter of Maj. Patrick and Tawnya Penland, formerly of Columbus Air Force Base; and junior aerospace engineering major Wade M. Spurlock, the son of Stanley and Ann Spurlock.

STERLINGTON, La.--Sophomore aerospace engineering major Eric A. Hill, the son of Dr. Ronald and Shelley Hill.

WINONA--Senior aerospace engineering major Trenton M. Ricks, the son of Patti Corley of Winona and Steven Ricks of Grenada.

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