

Bell Boeing, Navy Sign Special Operations V-22 Development Contract

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The Bell Boeing Tiltrotor Team was awarded a contract modification by the U.S. Naval Air Systems Command (NAVAIR) for the engineering and manufacturing development (EMD) phase of the Special Operations Forces (SOF) variant of the Osprey tiltrotor aircraft, the CV-22.

The contract, signed late last July and valued at \$490 million, calls for the design, integration, installation and test of a number of special operations-unique systems into the baseline V-22, including terrain following/terrain avoidance radar, an electronic warfare suite, additional communications and navigation equipment, and additional fuel tanks in the Osprey's wings.

"Since its inception, the Osprey has been a leading example of a truly joint-service program," said Stu Dodge, Bell Boeing program director. "This is an important next step in executing an affordable program that meets multi-service needs."

During EMD, Bell Boeing has reduced the unit flyaway design-to-cost figure of the V-22 by nearly 23 percent.

The agreement also calls for the remanufacture of MV-22 EMD aircraft number 9 into a CV-22 production-representative configuration in 1999. The aircraft will be used to validate the radar and other CV-22 unique equipment and operational evaluations by Special Operations Command (SOCOM) personnel in 2002. MV-22 EMD aircraft number 8 will be used for the initial development and testing of the radar and additional fuel tanks.

The CV-22 will fulfill the USSOCOM requirement for long-range insertion and extraction of SOF teams. The aircraft will have a mission radius of 500 nautical miles and carry 18 special operations troops. SOCOM will purchase 50 CV-22 aircraft with deliveries scheduled for 2003 and initial operating capability expected by 2005.

In June 1996, a \$1.385 billion Low Rate Initial Production (LRIP) contract was signed between the Bell Boeing Tiltrotor Team and NAVAIR. At that time, \$44 million in funding was released for long-lead component procurement for the first lot of four aircraft. The contract provides funding for the first LRIP lot manufacturing and options for two additional LRIP lots, with the first scheduled to begin in early 1997. A full-rate production decision is scheduled for 2000. The Marines will purchase a total of 425 MV-22s.

The Bell Boeing Tiltrotor Team comprises Bell Helicopter Textron of Fort Worth, Texas, a wholly owned subsidiary of Textron, Inc., and Boeing Defense & Space Group, Helicopters Division, a unit of The Boeing Company.

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