Air Force Contract Awarded To Boeing For B-1B Bomber Defensive Upgrades

The U.S. Air Force has awarded Boeing a $216 million contract with award fee to upgrade defensive systems on the B-1B Lancer bomber, thereby increasing the survivability of the aircraft and its crews in combat.

The contract provides for engineering and manufacturing development (EMD) of a new defensive system for the B-1B.

Improvements to the B-1B s defensive systems will enhance the bomber s capability to survive in a hostile environment. In addition, the new systems are less expensive to operate and maintain.

Under this contract, Boeing will deliver a dramatic improvement in the B-1B s situational awareness, expendable countermeasures, and on- and off-board jamming capabilities, said Jean Chamberlin, director of bomber programs for Boeing. "This is consistent with our near-term objective to help our customer enhance the B-1B s conventional warfighting capabilities," she said.

The B-1B Defensive System Upgrade Program (DSUP) is one element of the Air Force's overall B-1B conventional mission upgrade program (CMUP). The work covered under the new contract is sometimes referred to as CMUP Block F.

Howard Chambers, Boeing vice president and B-1B program mananger, said that work on the contract will be done at Boeing facilities in Seal Beach, Palmdale and Edwards Air Force Base, Calif.; Seattle; and Oklahoma City under the direction of the U.S. Air Force Aeronautical Systems Center, Dayton, Ohio.

The EMD contract calls for integration of the integrated defensive electronic countermeasures system, or IDECM, and installation of an ALR 56M radar warning receiver. The EMD phase is scheduled for completion in 2002 at the conclusion of flight testing at Edwards Air Force Base. Production and installation of the improvements on the 95-aircraft B-1B fleet is scheduled to begin in 2003. DSUP upgrades will ensure the B-1B's survivability well into the 21st century.

Major subcontractors to Boeing for the Block F work are Sanders, a Lockheed Martin Co. that will perform as the IDECM and ALR-56M system integrator, and the Collins Communications and Avionics Division of Rockwell.

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