Boeing Awarded Minuteman III Upgrade Production Contract

The U.S. Air Force today awarded Boeing the Low Rate Initial Production contract for the Minuteman III ICBM Guidance Replacement Program (GRP).The award follows the successful completion of extensive testing to qualify the guidance system components and ensure their proper operation in the Minuteman III weapon system.

The first flight test of an upgraded missile will take place in June from Vandenberg Air Force Base, Calif.

Low Rate Initial Production (LRIP), valued in excess of $100 million, will lead to fielding of the first upgraded guidance units in early 1999. Forty units will be produced as part of LRIP. Full rate production is expected to begin in 1999 with 652 units ultimately being produced. Five hundred guidance systems will be fielded-operational units, while the remainder will be spares and flight test assets.

"The Guidance Replacement Program has such a significant impact on our national defense. It is with tremendous pride that we move the program into the production phase," said Robert D. Paster, vice president & general manager of Boeing Autonetics Guidance, Navigation & Sensors. "This is our legacy. We've been the sole guidance contractor for the U.S. Air Force on all intercontinental ballistic missiles. We are very proud of that achievement."

Production will take place at the Boeing El Paso, Texas, manufacturing facility. Production work will include building and testing modules for the missile guidance computer, missile guidance set control, and gyro-stabilized platform modules, as well as integration and testing of the components and the assembled missile guidance set. GRP employment at the El Paso facility is expected to reach approximately 250 during full rate production. The missile guidance computer will be integrated and tested, and several modules will be manufactured, at Honeywell's Clearwater, Fla., facility. Honeywell is a team member and major subcontractor on the program.

The initial production award follows extensive engineering and development work that began in 1993 with the first Minuteman III GRP contract. The early phases of the GRP correct age-related degradation and supportability problems in the current D37D flight computer, P92 amplifier assembly, missile guidance set control, gyro-stabilized platform electronics, and replace associated system software. The overall program goal is to replace aging guidance system electronics to maintain weapon system reliability and supportability beyond the year 2020.

Boeing Autonetics Guidance, Navigation & Sensors provides products and services to customers in its addressed markets of strategic missiles, missile defense systems, marine system products, as well as sensors and acquisition systems for global defense and commercial markets. With headquarters in Anaheim, Calif., the organization employs approximately 3,500 people nationwide.

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