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Boeing has completed delivery of high-frequency (HF) radio kits to the U. S. Air Force as part of Extend Sentry, a major upgrade program to the Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS) fleet.

Thirty-three kits have been delivered, with 20 installed on operational aircraft to date. Installation on the entire fleet will be completed in 2000. Boeing manufactured the equipment to install the kits as well as produced the logistics and technical publications data. Under subcontract to the company, Rockwell Collins Government Systems built the kits and Raytheon Support Services is doing the installation.

The new HF radios are more reliable, more capable and easier to maintain and operate.

"This project has been a major success," said Jack Sperry, Boeing U.S. AWACS program manager.

"We accomplished our goals by producing a better product, at a reasonable cost with a reliable schedule. We did it through acquisition and cost reforms and incredible teamwork among the Air Force, Boeing and our subcontractors," Sperry said.

The radio kits are part of the Extend Sentry program designed to upgrade and extend the life of the U.S. E-3 AWACS fleet through the year 2025. The program will help meet immediate Air Force sustainment needs as well as future performance and mission requirements.

Extend Sentry, with more than 100 projects, is addressing issues such as obsolete parts, increase maintenance, repair downtime, and a shrinking supplier base. The overall goal is to drive down mission aborts and break rates, and increase mission-capable rates for the 552nd Air Control Wing at Tinker Air Force Base, Okla.

In developing the Extend Sentry approach, aircraft component problem areas were identified and analyzed for each aircraft subsystem. A replacement and modernization strategy was then formulated based upon a comprehensive project-by-project, return-on-investment ranking.

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