Boeing Delivers Final AESA-Equipped F-15 Aircraft to U.S. Air Force

The Boeing Company recently delivered to the U.S. Air Force the final three of 18 F-15C aircraft it refitted with Raytheon's APG-63(v)2 Active Electronically Scanned Array (AESA) radar, providing the Air Force the world's first operational fighter jets with the advanced-technology radar system.

The Boeing Phantom Works unit led a team that received a $250 million contract to install the AESA radar, upgrade the aircraft's environmental control systems and install an advanced identification friend or foe system. Honeywell Aerospace and BAE Systems, respectively, provided the latter systems. The Air Force F-15 System Program Office's Projects Team at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio, managed the program for the U.S. government.

"The AESA radar allows the pilot to detect, track and destroy multiple enemy aircraft at significantly longer ranges," said Chris Finnerty, Phantom Works F-15 AESA program manager. "This has been a very successful effort in fielding the latest in advanced radar technology."

In an AESA system, the traditional mechanically scanning radar dish is replaced by a stationary panel covered with an array of hundreds of small transmitter-receiver modules. Unlike a radar dish, these modules have more combined power and can perform different detection, tracking, communication and jamming functions in multiple directions simultaneously. An AESA offers greater precision to detect, track and eliminate multiple threats more quickly and effectively than traditional radar.

What's more, because the AESA eliminates the hydraulic and electrical systems associated with mechanically operated radars, its reliability and maintainability are dramatically improved.

In addition to the F-15C AESA, Raytheon is developing AESAs for the F/A-18E/F Super Hornet Boeing builds for the U.S. Navy, and the Joint Strike Fighter Boeing will build if it wins the competition for that program.

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