Boeing Receives Contract for Advanced Targeting Forward Looking Infrared Systems

The U.S. Navy has awarded a $69 million contract to The Boeing Company for low-rate initial production of 15 Advanced Targeting Forward Looking Infrared (ATFLIR) systems and spares. The contract covers production of 14 ATFLIRS for the F/A-18E/F Super Hornet and one for thew F/A-18C/D Hornet. Developmental testing on this third-generation FLIR has been under way at Boeing facilities since 1998.

"The ATFLIR will be more reliable than today's system and significantly more capable," said Tony Parasida, Boeing vice president for the F/A-18 program. "Pilots are looking forward to the ATFLIR's enhanced detection ranges and greater designation and standoff ranges."

The ATFLIR will replace the existing electro-optic sensor suite, combining separate navigation FLIR and targeting FLIR pods into one pod, freeing up one weapon station. The ATFLIR also includes a visible light camera (electro-optic sensor). The third-generation FLIR will provide the capability to detect, classify and track both air-to-air and air-to-surface targets; it supports the autonomous delivery of existing laser-guided weapons and emerging standoff weapons.

Boeing awarded a contract for development of the ATFLIR to Raytheon, then Hughes Aircraft Co., in 1998. The program, potentially worth more than $900 million over its life, is expected to produce 574 units. Early operational capability is planned for mid-2002 in conjunction with the first deployment of the F/A-18E/F Super Hornet.

Boeing has delivered 44 Super Hornets to the U.S. Navy, all on time or ahead of schedule. Boeing has orders for 284 Super Hornets. The Navy plans to buy a minimum of 548 of the aircraft.

An industry team led by Boeing builds the Super Hornet. Boeing builds the forward fuselage and wings, and completes final assembly. Northrop Grumman Corp. is the principal airframe subcontractor, supplying the center and aft fuselage. General Electric Co. produces the engines, and Raytheon Co. manufacturers the aircraft's radar.

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