

Boeing Accomplishes Second Major Design Milestone on Project Wedgetail

With the successful completion of the preliminary design review (PDR) for the mission computing subsystem hardware, The Boeing Company [NYSE:BA] has achieved another design milestone for the 737 airborne early warning and control (AEW&C) system and Australia's Project Wedgetail.

Earlier this year, Boeing also successfully completed its first major design milestone with the radar and identification friend-or-foe PDR.

The mission computing hardware PDR included a review of the hardware elements of the mission computing subsystem against the requirements assigned to that hardware. The hardware includes the mission computers, the mission system operator consoles and a tactical display in the cockpit. The mission computing subsystem processes and integrates basic data provided by various mission system sensors; analyzes and presents it to the operators as an integrated situation display of the battlespace environment; and provides them with controls of the sensors and communications suite. BAE Systems, New York is the Boeing subcontractor providing the mission computing hardware for the 737 AEW&C system.

Steve Letter, Boeing Mission Computing Integrated Product Team leader, said the Boeing team reviewed all the elements of the mission computing subsystem hardware design and the functional and physical interfaces, and ensured the elements would work together to meet the requirements of Boeing and the Commonwealth. "We are very pleased with the results of this PDR," said Letter. "We have completed a thorough review of BAE Systems' preliminary design of the mission computing hardware and we have the confidence we can proceed into the detail design phase of this part of the mission system.

"BAE SYSTEMS has been a core team member with Boeing on the 737 AEW&C system for years and we once again demonstrated our synergies in design capabilities when working together. We are delighted to move rapidly ahead on the mission computing subsystem," Letter said.

After this hardware PDR the Boeing team moves into the detail design phase in which actual parts are literally defined to be manufactured and assembled for subsequent test and delivery. Additionally, some hardware, including some commercial-off-the-shelf hardware, will be purchased from suppliers to be integrated into the mission computing subsystem.

The 737 AEW&C system features the Next Generation 737-700 increased gross weight aircraft and a multi-role electronically scanned array (MESA) radar with integrated identification friend-or-foe capabilities. This radar is designed to provide optimal performance in range, tracking and accuracy, monitoring air and sea targets simultaneously and helping the operator maintain control of high-performance aircraft while continuously scanning the operational area.

The Boeing-led team, including Northrop Grumman's Electronic Sensors and Systems Sector, Boeing Australia Limited and BAE SYSTEMS Australia, signed a contract with the Commonwealth in December 2000 for the development and acquisition of Project Wedgetail, which will provide four 737 AEW&C systems plus options for up three additional systems.

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