Boeing Joint Helmet System Begins F-16 Flight-Testing

The Boeing-Vision Systems International Joint Helmet-Mounted Cueing System (JHMCS) recently began flight-testing on its third platform -- the U.S. Air Force's F-16 -- as testing on the Air Force's F-15 and the U.S. Navy's F/A-18E/F nears completion.

The Air Force initiated flight-testing on the F-16 with two missions at Edwards Air Force Base, Calif., Dec. 6 and 7. Those focused on the system's air-to-air and air-to-ground operation.

"F-16 flight-testing continues our progress toward providing the transformational capabilities of the JHMCS," said Stephen Winkler, Boeing's JHMCS program manager.

Alan Brown, F-16 JHMCS integration team leader at Lockheed Martin Aeronautics in Ft. Worth, Texas, added, "The main helmet functions operated as expected, and the missions went well."

F-16 manufacturer Lockheed Martin is responsible for integrating the system on that aircraft.

The JHMCS displays flight information on the inside of helmet visors, keeping that data in sight at all times. It also allows aiming or deploying sensors and air-to-air or air-to-ground weapons with little more effort than looking at a target and pressing a switch.

In addition to being the JHMCS prime contractor, Boeing integrates the system on its F-15 and F/A-18. Vision Systems International is the principal subcontractor and supplier of JHMCS system components. A joint program office at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio, manages the JHMCS program.

Last year, Boeing was awarded a second low-rate production contract for 131 JHMCS systems, with units ordered for all three aircraft. Customers outside the United States include Greece's Hellenic Air Force and Australia's Royal Australian Air Force.

A third low-rate production order is expected in March.

JHMCS flight-testing on the F-15 and F/A-18 is to be completed by March.

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