Boeing Receives Contract For AESA Low-Rate Initial Production

The U.S. Navy has awarded Boeing [NYSE: BA] a contract worth $49.5 million for low-rate initial production of the Active Electronically Scanned Array (AESA) radar for the F/A-18E/F Super Hornet and E/A-18G aircraft. The LRIP1 contract calls for production of eight of the AESA APG-79 radar systems. Production of the LRIP1 radar could begin as soon as next month, with delivery of the first LRIP1 radar scheduled for early 2005.

"This is an important first step in getting AESA radars into the Super Hornet," said Tony Parasida, vice president of the F/A-18 program for Boeing. "The AESA radar is an integral component of network centric warfare and pivotal to several upgrades designed into the F/A-18E/F."

The AESA radar is part of the F/A-18E/F Block II upgrade, which includes integration of advanced mission computers, high speed data network, cockpit controls and displays, environmental control system upgrade and forward fuselage affordability improvements. AESA radar works with several existing elements of the weapon system, such as the stores management system, the gun director, and AIM-120 and AIM-9 missiles, to enhance the lethality, survivability and affordability of the F/A-18E/F. The new radar replaces existing mechanically scanned antennas with a radar beam that can be steered at close to the speed of light. This rapid beam scan feature dramatically improves performance, and because the array is solid state, mechanical breakdowns will be virtually eliminated.

Aviation Week and Space Technology magazine recognized the AESA team of Boeing and Raytheon Corporation of El Segundo, Calif., with a 2002 Laureate Award in electronics for their innovation in developing AESA radar technology. With the radar currently being tested at NAVAIR China Lake, Calif. the program expects to begin operational evaluation of the AESA radar system in early 2006, with initial operational capability later that year.

A unit of The Boeing Company, Integrated Defense Systems is one of the world's largest space and defense businesses. Headquartered in St. Louis, Boeing Integrated Defense Systems is a $25 billion business. It provides systems solutions to its global military, government and commercial customers. It is a leading provider of intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance; the world's largest military aircraft manufacturer; the world's largest satellite manufacturer and a leading provider of space-based communications; the primary systems integrator for U.S. missile defense; NASA's largest contractor; and a global leader in launch services.

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