Boeing Small Diameter Bomb Enters Operational Testing

Low Rate Production Continues With $38.3M Contract Award

Two months after development flight testing ended, the U.S. Air Force recently began operational testing of the Boeing [NYSE: BA] Small Diameter Bomb (SDB) with a series of tests at Eglin Air Force Base, Fla.

"While we've done our best to conduct development testing under realistic conditions, the operational tests are flown in scenarios that are as realistic as possible by crews with combat experience," said U.S. Air Force Col. Richard Justice, SDB program manager. "The weapons will be handled by 'blue suiters' from start to finish, just like they were in a combat zone."

Boeing completed SDB development flight testing on schedule and on cost Sept. 25. During the highly successful development program, 35 SDBs were successfully tested against a variety of fixed targets, each hitting within an average of four feet from its surveyed target aimpoint. Operational testing is expected to last approximately eight months.

SDB entered low-rate initial production last April and on Oct. 31 received a Lot 2 contract from the Air Force for $38.3 million to produce 567 additional SDBs and 140 carriages.

The all-weather SDB weapon system includes a carriage with four bombs and is compatible with every U.S. fighter and bomber aircraft. It has a standoff range of 60 nautical miles. At 71 inches long, this 250-pound class weapon quadruples the number of weapons each aircraft can carry. The system will first be deployed on the Boeing F-15E Strike Eagle in 2006.

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For further information:
Chris Haddox
Boeing Air Force Systems
office: 314-234-6447
mobile: 314-707-8891
chris.d.haddox@boeing.com