Lockheed Martin Receives $96 Million Contract To Enter Low-Rate Production Of Transformational HIMARS

Lockheed Martin has received a $96.4 million contract to commence Low-Rate Initial Production (LRIP) of the High Mobility Artillery Rocket System (HIMARS) for the U.S. Army and Marine Corps. HIMARS, viewed as a transformational capability that will support lighter, more mobile fighting forces, received approval from the Army Systems Acquisition Review Council (ASARC) to transition from testing to production in March 2003.

During LRIP the Army plans to buy 89 HIMARS launchers and the Marines will buy four launchers. Total joint procurement of the system is expected to be more than 900 launchers, which can accommodate the entire family of Multiple Launch Rocket System (MLRS) munitions, including the Army Tactical Missile System (ATACMS) missile and Guided MLRS rocket. The First Unit Equipped (FUE) is on schedule for early calendar year 2005.

"We move forward into HIMARS production focused on delivering the highest quality product that meets the vision and needs of our customers in the U.S. Army and Marine Corps," said Ron Abbott, Lockheed Martin vice president of Tactical Missiles. "HIMARS is C-130 transportable, supports existing and new munitions, and meets all of the requirements of the Objective Force System."

Because of its C-130 transportability, HIMARS can be deployed into areas previously inaccessible to larger launchers. It also incorporates the self- loading, autonomous features that have made MLRS the premier rocket artillery system in the world. HIMARS carries a single six-pack of MLRS rockets, or one ATACMS missile. Its fire control system, electronics and communications units are interchangeable with the existing MLRS M270A1 launcher, and the crew and training are the same.

Additionally, HIMARS will be capable of launching the new Guided MLRS, the next major step in the evolution of the MLRS Family of Munitions, offering advanced capabilities, reduced logistics support and precision attack. Designed to enable troops to engage and defeat artillery, air defense concentrations, trucks, light armor and personnel carriers, as well as support troop and supply concentrations, after launching, HIMARS can move away from the area at high speed before enemy forces are able to locate the launch site.

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