Lockheed Martin Upgrades Eight Radars For German Air Force

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Lockheed Martin has completed upgrading computer software and hardware on eight AN/FPS-117 long-range, air surveillance radars used by the German Air Force.

Under a November 2003 contract, Lockheed Martin upgraded the synthesizers and preprocessors on the eight German ground-based radars to avoid obsolescence and extend their usefulness for an additional 20 to 30 years beyond their expected 20-year lifecycle. The Bundesamt fuer Wehrtechnik und Beschaffung (Germany's Federal Office of Defense Technology and Procurement) originally acquired the radars from Lockheed Martin under a 1988 contract. The systems have been operational and providing air surveillance for the country since the early 1990s.

Besides the technology upgrade, the actual upgrade schedule required deft coordination to ensure that each time a radar was being upgraded that the operational availability of the other seven was maximized.

"The program management and engineering teams stuck to an ambitious schedule and were a highly effective team," observed Frank Mekker, Lockheed Martin's program manager. "In addition to the help that subcontractors provided to the German and Lockheed Martin field teams, the German Air Force's Material Command was supported by experts from its Depot and the 2nd German Air Division. The Procurement office was supported by the Bundeswehr Technical Center for Information Technology and Electronics.

"With all the upgrades now complete, the German Air Force has an even more reliable air surveillance capability that is easier to maintain," he added.

The AN/FPS-117 is the world's most successful three-dimensional (3-D) solid-state radar design. This L-band radar provides continuous high-quality surveillance on air targets at ranges out to 250 miles. There are 127 AN/FPS- 117 systems operational in 14 countries. Many have operated for years in remote areas, completely unmanned and in a wide range of operational environments.

Headquartered in Bethesda, MD, Lockheed Martin employs about 135,000 people worldwide and is principally engaged in the research, design, development, manufacture, integration and sustainment of advanced technology systems, products and services.

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