Lockheed Martin's Second Pacific Alaska Range Radar Immediately Deployed After U.S. Air Force Test

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Lockheed Martin 's second AN/TPS-77 radar for the U.S. Air Force's Pacific Alaska Range Complex (PARC) passed its Site Acceptance Test (SAT) and was deployed to improve safety and surveillance at the nation's largest contiguous supersonic training area.

Under a 2004 contract, Lockheed Martin provided the Air Force with a second transportable AN/TPS-77 system, along with associated supplies, equipment and services. Together, the two PARC radars, produced at Lockheed Martin's Syracuse, NY facility, will keep watch over the PARC area, which has 68,000 square miles of military training airspace and 25 separate ground targets. During air combat training exercises held over the PARC, up to 70 jet fighters can operate in the same airspace at one time.

Both PARC radars keep watch over the aerial training area from rocky, barren mountaintops approximately 200 miles apart. A nine-mile-long road was constructed up a 5,000-foot mountain where the newest PARC radar sits. Both radars operate within radomes - domed shelters that protect radar arrays from harsh environments - and are powered by on-site generators. The Air Force will control the radars remotely from Eielson Air Force Base near Fairbanks, which is about 40 miles from the first PARC radar and about 200 miles away from the second one.

Capt. Aubrie Ireland of the 353rd Combat Training Squadron, which is responsible for training in Alaska, observed: "Considering the requirements that are placed on these systems and the high level of capability we expect from the time they begin operating on their platforms, it was an unexpected, yet most welcome, surprise to participate in a Site Acceptance Test in which there were no issues with the system, enabling the Air Force to immediately deploy the radar."

"One of the challenges these radars help us address is the so-called 'speed bump' that splits the range down the middle," said Capt. Kevin Sova, also from the 353rd Combat Training Squadron. "The Federal Aviation Administration and State of Alaska agreed to a five-mile corridor where civilian and commercial aircraft can fly through our test range, so our pilots end up flying 20,000 feet over the speed bump. The Air Force needs to be able to see what's going on in that corridor and we will use the AN/TPS-77s to do that."

"We are proud that our second PARC radar system easily passed its acceptance test and is carrying out an important surveillance mission for our Air Force customer," said Steve Barron, Lockheed Martin's deputy program manager for the AN/TPS-77 program in Alaska. "These pilots are training for dangerous missions and we consider it an honor to provide them with the best long-range radar capability in the world."

The AN/TPS-77 is the latest configuration of the world's most successful 3-D solid-state radar design. This L-band, tactical radar provides continuous high-quality 3-D surveillance on aircraft targets at ranges out to 250 nautical miles. The second PARC radar represents the 26th AN/TPS-77 off the production line.

The AN/TPS-77 shares commonality with the AN/FPS-117 radar with regard to maintenance activity and Line Replaceable Units (LRUs). There are 127 AN/FPS- 117 systems operational in 14 countries. Many have operated for years completely unmanned in remote areas, 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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