Lockheed Martin Receives Key Defense Award For Naval Aviation Systems Engineering Excellence

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Lockheed Martin and the U.S. Navy have received a Top 5 Department of Defense Program Award for their collaborative effort to integrate the Link 16 tactical data link system into the Navy's new MH-60R and MH-60S multimission helicopters.

Representatives of Lockheed Martin Systems Integration in Owego, NY, and the Naval Air Systems Command accepted the award during the recent National Defense Industrial Association's (NDIA) Systems Engineering conference in San Diego, CA. Given annually by the Department of Defense and the NDIA, the Top 5 DoD Program awards recognize up to five defense programs that have demonstrated excellence in systems engineering.

"We are very pleased to receive a Top 5 DoD Program Award," said Jack M. McCreary, director of engineering for Naval Helicopter Programs at Lockheed Martin. "Our challenge was two-fold: to integrate Link 16 capability into the MH-60 aircraft's mission systems on schedule, and then ensure aircraft interoperability with the Link 16 tactical network. We achieved these goals by applying detailed systems engineering processes and practices to well-defined user requirements. As a result, the Navy Fleet began flying Link 16 ahead of schedule."

Link 16 is a secure, jam-resistant high speed digital radio system used by military aircraft, ships and ground troops to exchange text, imagery and voice messages across a long-range, line-of-sight network. Automatic sharing of battlefield information in near real time across the network allows friendly forces to electronically see the tactical picture and coordinate a response to assigned targets and threats.

"The members of the Navy and Lockheed Martin Link 16 team applied a disciplined approach to overcome complex requirements and deliver ahead of schedule this critical capability with virtually no follow-on development and retest," said Capt. Dean Peters, MH-60 Multi-Mission Helicopter program manager. "Upgrading our Navy helicopters to the Link 16 network brings an unprecedented level of situational awareness to the aircraft carrier strike group they are assigned to protect."

To date, Link 16 has been fully integrated with all 11 MH-60R aircraft that comprise HSM-71, the recently-commissioned helicopter maritime strike squadron responsible for anti-submarine and anti-surface warfare. The tactical data link also is being integrated aboard MH-60S anti-surface warfare helicopters belonging to HSC-8, the Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron. Based at Naval Base Coronado, San Diego, CA, both squadrons will deploy next year with the USS John C. Stennis carrier strike group.

Lockheed Martin is the systems integrator for the MH-60R and provides the Common Cockpit(TM) avionics suite, which is common to all MH-60R and MH-60S helicopters. Sikorsky Aircraft Corporation designs and manufactures both aircraft and is responsible for the mechanical and electrical modifications on the airframes. The Navy is expected to purchase a total of 300 MH-60R and 273 MH-60S helicopters.

This is the second consecutive year that Lockheed Martin Systems Integration - Owego has won a Top 5 DoD Program award. Last year, the company was recognized for modifying the U.S. Air Force's A-10 close air support fighter jet from an analog to a digital aircraft with precision weapons capability. Lockheed Martin Mission and Combat Support Solutions, Valley Forge, PA-based also won a Top 5 award last year for the Mission Control Segment of the Advanced Extremely High Frequency program, a new constellation of military communications satellites. The U.S. Air Force was the co-recipient for both awards.

Headquartered in Bethesda, MD, Lockheed Martin is a global security company that employs about 140,000 people worldwide and is principally engaged in the research, design, development, manufacture, integration and sustainment of advanced technology systems, products and services. The corporation reported 2007 sales of $41.9 billion.

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