Lockheed Martin Awarded $15 Million Production Contract To Upgrade Military Helicopter Sensor System

ORLANDO, Fla., Jan. 6, 2011 /PRNewswire/ -- The U.S. Army awarded Lockheed Martin (NYSE: LMT) a $15 million contract for production of a low-light-level TV capability, called VNsight, for the Apache's combat-proven Modernized Target Acquisition Designation Sight/Pilot Night Vision Sensor (M-TADS/PNVS), also known as Arrowhead®. The new VNsight visible/near infrared sensor is integrated into the Modernized PNVS, providing the Warfighter with significant tactical advantages, particularly in low-light-level conditions.

The VNsight Lot 1 production contract for 65 sensors and spares will equip two Apache battalions. It will also provide an initial quantity of cameras and spares to outfit a Foreign Military Sales customer. The M-TADS/PNVS systems will be upgraded as a field retrofit. Lockheed Martin Missiles and Fire Control will produce the VNsight lens and serve as the system integrator, while Lockheed Martin Mission Systems and Sensors in Akron, OH, will provide the sensor's camera.

"The VNsight completes a commitment to the Warfighter to deliver a blended image capability in the Apache to support both situational awareness for the pilot and improved air-to-ground coordination," said U.S. Army Apache Sensors Product Manager Lt. Col. John Vannoy. "After thorough testing of this system with pilots experienced in both combat theaters, I'm confident that their appraisal of the system as a must-have capability will result in the Apache becoming even more lethal on the battlefield."

"The VNsight camera upgrade represents a mission enhancing capability improvement for the Lockheed Martin produced Apache sensor," said Monty Watson, VNsight program manager at Lockheed Martin Missiles and Fire Control. "VNsight provides an increase in pilot situational awareness, flight safety and mission flexibility."

By blending VNsight imagery with the M-PNVS forward looking infrared (FLIR) imagery, pilots can see cultural and military lighting (lasers, markers, beacons, tracer rounds, etc.) accurately registered within the thermal image over the full 30-by-40 degree field of view of the sensor. This ensures safer flying conditions and enhanced mission capability by improving situational awareness in low-light-level conditions and situations where existing light sources cannot be imaged by the FLIR.

The capability to image light sources in-band with the VNsight sensor allows aviators to see some laser pointers, improving coordination with ground units. It also allows the aircrew to see their own laser spot while designating targets for laser-guided munitions engagements, providing an extra level of certainty that the correct target and aim-point are designated. Enhanced air-to-ground situational awareness reduces the potential for fratricide.

Headquartered in Bethesda, Md., Lockheed Martin is a global security company that employs about 133,000 people worldwide and is principally engaged in the research, design, development, manufacture, integration and sustainment of advanced technology systems, products and services. The Corporation's 2009 sales from continuing operations were $44.0 billion.

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