



Photo Release -- US Air Force, Northrop Grumman Craft Plan to Increase B-2 Operational Availability

September 14, 2015

PALMDALE, Calif., Sept. 14, 2015 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- The U.S. Air Force expects to increase the number of B-2 stealth bombers available for combat by one full jet and reduce fleet sustainment costs significantly under a new maintenance agreement worked out with B-2 prime contractor Northrop Grumman Corporation (NYSE:NOC).

A photo accompanying this release is available at: <http://media.globenewswire.com/noc/mediagallery.html?pkgid=36018>

Under the contract modification signed in April, Northrop Grumman will give each B-2 a major, end-to-end overhaul – a process called programmed depot maintenance (PDM) – once every nine years. Each jet currently undergoes PDM once every seven years. The PDM process, which includes a complete restoration of the jet's exterior surfaces, is performed at the company's Aircraft Integration Center of Excellence in Palmdale.

"This new approach to B-2 maintenance is a win-win for the Air Force and the nation," said Brig. Gen Eric Fick, Program Executive Officer for Fighters and Bombers within the Air Force Life Cycle Management Center, Wright Patterson AFB, Ohio. "It will enhance the jet's readiness to conduct global security missions, and is expected to save taxpayers about \$900 million in maintenance costs over the life of the fleet."

"The nine-year PDM cycle is part of an aggressive on-going effort by Northrop Grumman and the Air Force to increase bomber availability," said Pat McMahon, sector vice president and general manager for military aircraft systems, Northrop Grumman Aerospace Systems. "Our experienced work force has critically reviewed every PDM material and process for potential improvements. As a result, we've been able to reduce the length of the PDM process, and increase the time between PDM periods."

Bolstered by the adoption of USAF best practices used by other Northrop Grumman programs, the new nine-year overhaul cycle will reduce the average length of B-2 PDM to 365 days, down from more than 400 days in previous years. Under the new rhythm, Northrop Grumman will induct a B-2 into PDM approximately once every six months.

"Our delivery of the B-2 *Spirit of Ohio* back to the Air Force in August marked the last time we expect to have more than two jets in PDM at any one time," said McMahon. "Fewer jets undergoing PDM in Palmdale will keep more B-2s ready to serve the nation's security needs."

The B-2 is the only long-range, large-payload U.S. military aircraft that can penetrate deeply into denied access enemy air space. It can fly 6,000 nautical miles unrefueled and more than 10,000 nautical miles with just one aerial refueling, giving it the ability to reach any point on the globe within hours and hold at risk an enemy's most heavily defended targets.

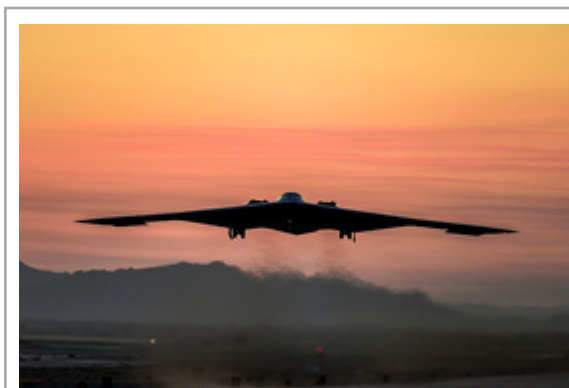
The latest B-2 product news and information from Northrop Grumman is available at <http://www.northropgrumman.com/B-2>.

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Northrop Grumman Corp.



B-2 Spirit of Ohio lifts off from U.S. Air Force Plant 42 for one of its final pre-delivery flight tests.