



Northrop Grumman Flies First Production Smart Node Pod

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SAN DIEGO, April 3, 2014 /PRNewswire/ -- Northrop Grumman Corporation (NYSE: NOC) has completed a series of flight tests demonstrating the first production Smart Node Pod for the U.S. Air Force.

Smart Node Pod is an aircraft-mounted airborne communications system that allows real-time information to be exchanged among many disparate military and commercial radios and different datalinks, extends the network to the forward edge of the battlefield and relays full-motion video.

Northrop Grumman conducted five flights to certify performance characteristics in February in Virginia Beach, Va. During the flights, the Smart Node Pod demonstrated the ability to transmit full-motion video, imagery, voice and digital messages between warfighters both in the air and on the ground via various waveforms and datalinks and its interoperability with the proprietary and open source forward tactical handheld devices.

The company is under contract to produce Smart Node Pod systems for the Air Force, with deliveries scheduled through mid-summer of this year. Two different pod designs – a single-pod and a multipod architecture – are in production.

"This proven, reliable technology gives an extremely capable but lightweight communications, situational awareness, and command and control capability that can be readily mounted on many different military aircraft and controlled by the deployed commander," said Jeannie Hilger, vice president, Network Communication Systems, Northrop Grumman Information Systems.

Hilger said the pod can connect to the high-altitude Battlefield Airborne Communications Node (BACN) platforms, ground operational centers or other pods for beyond-line-of sight connectivity and provides access to high level intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance data and command and control information. "In this manner, Smart Node Pod has the capability to augment BACN in its anchor role as the persistent high altitude gateway of the Joint Aerial Layer Network (JALN) by providing connectivity at the lower tier. Working in unison, Smart Node Pod and BACN have the potential to expand warfighter benefits by building out a multitiered JALN architecture and providing network connectivity across the battlespace."

Smart Node Pod is based on BACN technology Northrop Grumman developed for the Air Force.

Northrop Grumman is the prime contractor for developing, deploying, operating and sustaining the BACN systems flying missions in support of U.S. Central Command. The company was awarded the first BACN contract in April 2005 by the U.S. Air Force Life Cycle Management Center, Hanscom Air Force Base, Mass. Since the system was deployed in 2008, it has delivered near 24/7 coverage in theater. Northrop Grumman initially deployed BACN to satisfy a joint urgent operational need. It is now a key enabler of surface and airborne missions theaterwide.

Northrop Grumman is a leading global security company providing innovative systems, products and solutions in unmanned systems, cyber, C4ISR, and logistics and modernization to government and commercial customers worldwide. Please visit www.northropgrumman.com for more information.

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