

Boeing to Deliver Second Batch of Net-Enabled Harpoons to Navy in 2020

ARLINGTON, Va. – Boeing will be delivering a second production run of Block II+ kits for the Navy's AGM-84 air-launched Harpoon cruise missiles in 2020, a company official said.

Jim Bryan, director of Cruise Missile Systems for Boeing Missile & Weapon Systems, in a Jan. 16 conversation at the Surface Navy Association symposium, said the second batch will follow the 15 missiles delivered in 2018. The quantity to be delivered in 2020 will depend on options selected by the Navy.

The Block II+ version of the Harpoon is a net-enabled weapon that can receive target updates via data link to more refine the missile's radar acquisition. Bryan said a Block II+ kit runs in the range of a couple hundred thousand dollars, much cheaper than delivering a new missile.

The Block II+ kits are being delivered to Naval Air Systems Command for airborne weapons. Bryan said Boeing stands ready to build kits for the surface-launched and submarine-launched versions of the Harpoon should the Navy determine a requirement.

Last summer, the Navy launched a Harpoon from the submarine USS Olympia during the Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) exercise for the first time in almost two decades. Bryan said that the Navy pulled it out of storage and Boeing inspected and recertified the missile for the shot.

He said the company would be interested in a contract to conduct similar re-certifications on other submarine-launched Harpoons and modernize them as well.

Six Harpoon missiles were fired during RIMPAC and all six were successful shots.

Bryan also pointed out the long shelf life and reliability of the existing Harpoon inventory.

He said the Navy's plan to increase the size of its battle force to 355 ships offers opportunities to Boeing to sell more Harpoons. The Harpoon is under tough competition from other cruise missiles with passive seekers, but he pointed out that only an active radar can give a sea-skimming missile a true all-weather capability.

The Harpoon is now fielded by more than 30 nations. The Block II, version which is not net-enabled, is marketed to international customers. Bryan said Boeing has the largest order backlog in the Harpoon program's history and will be meeting demand by expanding its manufacturing facilities.