

NAVAIR Awards Leonardo DRS \$120M for DAIRCM Aircraft Protection Systems



A U.S. Marine Corps UH-1Y Venom assigned to Marine Aviation Weapons and Tactics Squadron 1 lands at Bull Attack Forward Arming and Refueling Point in support of Weapons and Tactics Instructor Course 2-18 at Chocolate Mountain Aerial Gunnery Range, California, Aug. 2. U.S. MARINE CORPS / Lance Cpl. Cody Rowe

ARLINGTON, Va. — Leonardo DRS Inc. has received a contract from the U.S. Naval Air Systems Command to provide engineering design and test hardware for AN/AAQ-45 Distributed Aperture Infrared Countermeasure (DAIRCM) advanced aircraft protection systems, the company announced in a July 20 release. The mixed cost-plus-incentive-fee and firm-fixed-price, contract is worth \$120 million.

This contract follows the previous Joint Urgent Operational Needs program that resulted in the system being fielded on U.S. Air Force, Army and Navy platforms. This Engineering and Manufacturing Development program will continue to develop, integrate and test improved capabilities to keep pace with enhanced and future threats.

Under the newly awarded follow-on contract, Leonardo DRS will provide non-recurring engineering to design, develop, integrate and test engineering development models as well as production representative models of weapons replaceable assemblies for government testing. The system has an open and scalable architecture that allows it to be optimized for various type/model/series aircraft. The low size, weight and power design of the system supports a range of rotary and tilt-wing aircraft throughout the services, including application to the emerging future vertical lift programs.

“Leonardo DRS is proud to provide these state-of-the-art systems to enhance aircraft protection throughout the fleet,” said John Baylouny, executive vice president and chief operating officer of Leonardo DRS. “This continued strong partnership with our customer has produced technologies that will offer advanced capabilities, including combat survivability for flight crews while supporting their ability to accomplish diverse mission sets for years to come.”

The AN/AAQ-45 DAIRCM is at the forefront of aircraft defensive protection technology and was developed by Leonardo DRS through three of its business units: Airborne & Intelligence Systems, Daylight Solutions, and Electro-Optical & Infrared Systems. As missile and other anti-aircraft threats continue to evolve and expand around the world, frontline helicopters will require a small but capable system to defeat these threats.

Work on this contract will be performed in the Leonardo DRS facilities in Dallas, San Diego, and Fort Walton Beach and Melbourne, Florida, and is expected to be completed in 2024.