

\$70.8M to Enhance US Army Prophets

Mar 03, 2009 14:37 EST

General Dynamics C4 Systems Inc. in Scottsdale, AZ received a \$70.8 million indefinite-delivery/ indefinite-quantity with firm-fixed-price contract.

This “face” value is based on the expected aggregate value of orders issued over the contract’s 6-year life. The basic contract and first delivery order cover 37 Prophet Enhanced (PE) B-Kits, 19 PE A-Kits, and associated spares. That initial order also provides quality management services, non-recurring engineering and first article testing and refurbishment. Work will be performed in Melbourne, FL (66%), Scottsdale, AZ (14%), San Diego, CA (12%), Huntsville, AL (0.5%), and Fairfax, VA (0.5%), with an estimated completion date of Feb 28/15. Bids were solicited on the Worldwide Web with 3 bids received by the CECOM Acquisition Center in Fort Monmouth, NJ (W15P7T-09-D-W401).

Prophet, which is being developed under the Army Program Executive Office, Intelligence, Electronic Warfare & Sensors (PEO IEW&S), is a lightweight tactical signals intelligence and electronic warfare system designed to support the US Army division and brigade forces...

Prophet will be the Army’s primary tactical ground signal intelligence/electronic warfare (SIGINT/EW) platform, and the HMMWV-mounted Prophet also has a dismounted manpack SIGINT version. It operates in stationary mode and on the move, and the 20 feet communications mast is erectable in less than 2 minutes vs. 2-3 hours for legacy systems. According to US military, the Prophet’s frequency coverage is a 10x improvement over current ground-based EW systems.

While the U.S. Marines use separate ground platforms for EW and electronic surveillance, Prophet uses one platform for the full tasking. The Prophet is replacing aging AN/TSQ-138 Trailblazer, AN/TRQ-32 Teammate, AN/TLQ-17A Trafficjam, and the AN/PRD-12 systems, and its procurement program is structured in five Blocks. Blocks IV and V will apply to the US Army Objective Force/Future Combat Systems requirements.

The US Army plans to procure around 80 Prophet Electronic Warfare (EW) systems, whose main contractor is L-3 Communications/Titan. Each division will be equipped with 6 Prophets, cavalry armored regiments will have 4, Stryker-equipped IBCTs will have 3, and independent brigades will have 2 Prophets.

Edmund Optics® Lands \$2.32 Million Defense Order to Boost Night Vision Techniques

Barrington, N.J. - Edmund Optics® (EO), leading producer of high quality precision optics for military and industrial applications for the past 66 years, has been awarded \$2.32 million in federal funding to improve manufacturing technology for infrared (IR) aspheric optics. The new Army funding will be used to help achieve superior contrast and clarity on the battlefield during extremely low light and environmentally challenged viewing situations, allowing both foot soldiers and defensive weapons guidance systems to effectively “see in the dark.”

The funding, part of the U.S. Army's RDT&E, Weapons and Advanced Technology Program, recognizes that future night vision technology requires a blend of both near- and far-infrared channels that are fused into a digitally stabilized image, at significantly reduced costs compared to what is currently available today. The work will be conducted under Edmund Optics' Precision Molding and Manufacturing Technology for Infrared Aspheric Molding proposal.

Infrared imaging technology is the only viable solution that can help both human soldiers and precision guidance systems to effectively see in total darkness and extremely dense fog and smoke. When integrated into such tools as night vision goggles and precision munitions guidance systems, they make possible new capabilities that enable our soldiers on the ground to detect and identify threats, and then engage and defeat the enemy at safe distances.

“We are thrilled to be awarded this opportunity to advance aspheric manufacturing techniques in support of the U.S. armed forces,” said Joseph Tipps, general manager of Edmund Optics Pennsburg. “We are grateful to the many Senators and Congressmen, as well as the President, for supporting Edmund Optics Pennsburg, and are pleased to be able to offer high-technology manufacturing positions here in the United States.” According to EO technical experts, a new breed of optical designs that will further improve night vision capabilities are expected to result from the introduction of new IR materials designed and custom engineered for superior performance at specific wavelengths. Under the new contract, EO will explore optical design matrices using newly developed IR materials as part of its precision aspheric glass molding manufacturing technology.

“Successfully molding precision glass aspheres will dramatically reduce costs and keep the manufacture of these critical defense articles in the United States,” said Dr. David Knapp, principal optical engineer of Raytheon's MANTIS Program, a defense initiative that has made possible helmet-mounted night vision systems that literally make it possible for U.S. soldiers to see in the dark. “Aspheric optics are highly desirable because they make possible lighter-weight, higher performance optical systems required by the next generation of night vision goggles, tracking and surveillance, and fire control systems” needed in today's battlefield environment. The new funding was contained in the Fiscal Year 2009 Continuing Resolution (HR 2638).

“With no viable domestic cost-effective techniques available for high-precision IR aspheres, support for this DoD effort is both apparent and strongly justified,” said Dr. Robert Dillon, chief science advisor at Benét Laboratories, the Army's principal government research laboratory for large-caliber munitions systems.

“We are fortunate to have cutting-edge, high-tech manufacturers like Edmund Optics in the Fifteenth District, supplying our military with crucial equipment,” said Congressman **Charlie Dent (PA-15)**. “I'm pleased to see this work being done in America, right here in our community, providing good jobs through innovation. Most importantly this technology will enhance the safety and effectiveness of our troops in the field.”