

Mode 5 / Enhanced Mode S – Mission Accomplished



DoD AIMS FLT Test Campaign – Deployment to FOL Øerland/NOR; 01-13 Aug 2018

On 20 Nov 2018, NAPMA received a formal letter from a US Department of Defense authority for Mark XIIA Mode 5 (Level 1) and Mode S Integrated Platform Level certification for the NATO E-3A AWACS marking the successful completion of the Mode 5/EHS project's Engineering, Manufacturing and Development (EMD) Phase.

NAPMA utilized a unique acquisition strategy that saw the agency perform as the Lead System Integrator with the Mission System Engineering Center (MSEC) from Geilenkirchen AB employed as the Software Integrator. Under this construct, this major project milestone was achieved without a single day slip in schedule and well within the allocated budget.

To commemorate this accomplishment, all stakeholders met at NAPMA on 28 Nov for a Mode 5/EHS EMD lessons Learned meeting followed by an EMD close-out party held at the International Conference Center in Brunssum for all those who made the Mode5/EHS project a success. Industry partners included Airbus Defense & Space, Boeing, Kongsberg, Telephonics and Plexsys along with their government counterparts from AFLCMC/HBIN, MSEC and the NAEW&C Force. The soon-to-be departing NAPMA General Manager, Brig Gen Mike Hain, praised the achievement of this milestone as a major success and highlighted that thinking “outside the box” from an acquisition perspective has enabled the agency to deliver a new capability that, under the original acquisition strategy, would not have been affordable.

Following successful completion of the flight test campaign that was flown out of FOL Øerland, Norway, retrofit of the NE-3A fleet began in Sep 2018 after approval by the Single Configuration Control Board. The fourth modified aircraft will be ready for operational use prior to the end of 2018. The remainder of the NE-3A fleet will be retrofitted throughout 2019 and will place the NATO E-3A on the leading edge of NATO's efforts to upgrade its weapon systems prior to the sunset date of 30 Jun 2020 for the current Mode 4 IFF system.