



For Your Information

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Sea-Based X-Band Radar Loaded onto Blue Marlin

Air Force Lieutenant General Henry "Trey" Obering, Missile Defense Agency Director, announced today the successful loading of the Sea Based X-Band Radar (SBX) onto the heavy lift vessel, mv Blue Marlin. The SBX was moved into position alongside the Blue Marlin at around 9 a.m. CST and secured during a roughly two hour operation. The Blue Marlin, a semi-submersible vessel, was ballasted down with the main deck under water for the maneuver, and de-ballasting was scheduled to be complete sometime tonight. When deballasting is complete preparations will begin for transit to the Pacific.

The SBX has completed many major milestones in its development, the two most recent being tracking satellites and completing sea trials. Early on October 12, 2005, the radar aboard SBX successfully tracked several orbiting satellites over a 3-hour period. The radar acquired each object and maintained tracks for several minutes, demonstrating this key functionality for the first time. Achieving this milestone demonstrates the radar software is able to control thousands of individual transmit and receive modules.

On October 14, SBX returned from a successful 52-day deployment in the Gulf of Mexico. While in the Gulf, SBX completed more than 100 major test activities, demonstrating the ability to achieve most major sustainment and operational capabilities including transferring personnel, supplies, and fuel; maintenance at-sea; and the ability to operate at sea for extended periods.

The final major step in the SBX assembly took place May 15 when the radome for the X-band radar was installed at Kiewit. The radome provides protection for the radar, which was installed on its ocean-going platform in April. That operation lasted approximately 17 hours and was performed by a combined Boeing, Raytheon, Vertex/RSI and Kiewit team. SBX stands more than 280 feet tall and displaces more than 50,000 tons.

Although home ported in Adak, Alaska, it will be capable of moving throughout the Pacific Ocean to support both advanced missile defense testing as well as defensive operations. SBX will provide missile tracking, discrimination and hit assessment functions to the Ground-based Midcourse Defense (GMD) element of the Ballistic Missile Defense System. It will support interceptor missiles located in Alaska and California if required to defend against a limited long-range missile attack on the United States. Over time, SBX will be able to support defense from missiles that may be used against our homeland, deployed forces, allies and friends.

The Boeing Company is the prime contractor for the GMD element. Boeing subcontractor Raytheon manufactured the X-band radar. The platform was purchased from Moss Maritime and was modified by Boeing and subcontractor Vertex/RSI at the Keppel AMFELS shipyard in Brownsville, Texas.

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