

ENGINEERED ARRESTING SYSTEMS CORPORATION

PRESS RELEASE

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ESCO Launcher joins Sand Dragon unmanned aircraft program to defeat improvised explosive devices (IEDs)



Posted by Gary Ell

Unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) designers at Northrop Grumman Aerospace Systems sector in San Diego are joining the U.S. Air Force Sand Dragon UAV program to defeat improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and other roadside bombs.

Northrop Grumman won a \$26.2 million contract Friday for the Air Force Sand Dragon B program to develop and deploy a UAV with counter-IED capability. Apparently Northrop Grumman is joining the Chandler May Inc. AME Unmanned Air Systems segment in San Luis Obispo, Calif., which since early 2010 has been working on the Air Force's Sand Dragon medium-altitude, long-endurance unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) for route surveillance on missions as long as 24 hours.

Awarding the contract Friday to Northrop Grumman were officials of the Air Force Research Laboratory at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio -- the same organization providing funding to Chandler May's AME Unmanned Air Systems of \$16.4 million in 2010 and \$2.14 million this year for the Sand Dragon UAV program.

The U.S. military has struggled for years to find an antidote to the homemade explosives. IEDs - concocted primarily of fertilizer and lacking metal or electronic parts that would make them easier to detect - are the largest single cause of casualties for U.S. troops, by a wide margin. Afghan insurgents planted 14,661 IEDs last year, a 62 percent increase over 2009 and more than three times as many as the year before.

Today's News alone: Roadside Bomb kill 24 in western Afghanistan

-8/18 -- *Two minibuses were struck by roadside bombs in the western Afghanistan province of Herat on Thursday. Twenty-four people, including women and children were killed and 11 were injured, statements from President Karzai and local officials said. The minibuses were traveling from the Obe district to Herat city.*

"Two landmines placed by the enemies of the Afghan people on the road in the Kotali Tark Abad district of Herat struck two minibuses at 8:30 today. As a result, 24 innocent civilians — including women and children — were killed and 11 others injured," President Karzai said.

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About Engineered Arresting Systems Corporation

Engineered Arresting System Corporation (ESCO) is the world leader in the design and manufacturing of military aircraft arresting systems. Since 1937, ESCO has developed products for the controlled deceleration of every type of military fighter aircraft flown worldwide.