SPECIAL MISSIONS GULFSTREAM 550S FOR THE RAAF?

News / Business aviation



L-3 Communications will modify an unspecified number of Gulfstream G550 aircraft for Australia under a US$93.6 million foreign military sales deal announced by the US Department of Defense on December 28.

“L-3 Communications Mission Integration, Greenville, Texas, has been awarded a $93,632,287 firm fixed-price undefinitised contract action task order (1648) for Australia Government G550 aircraft procurement and maintenance,” the short contract award notice reads.

“Work will be performed at Greenville, Texas, and is expected to be complete by November 30, 2017.”

The Australian Government has yet to publicly announce a requirement for special missions aircraft – presumably to be operated by the RAAF – but such a project could be confirmed by the forthcoming Defence White Paper.

The Gulfstream 550 is better known as a 14-19 passenger, 6,750nm range corporate jet, but various special missions variants are in military service, most notably in both CAEW ‘Conformal Airborne Early Warning’ and SEMA ‘Special Electronic Missions Aircraft’ ELINT forms with the Israeli Air Force. Singapore also operates G550 CAEWs, while the type has also been ordered by Italy and the US Navy (as a range monitoring aircraft).

L-3’s Mission Integration unit at Greenville (formerly E-Systems), meanwhile, specialises “in the modernisation and maintenance of aircraft of all sizes, and the study, design, development, and integration of special-mission systems for military and commercial applications”, according to the

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company’s website.

L-3 is also part of a Northrop Grumman-led teaming to offer a variant of the G550 for the US Air Force’s E-8C JSTARS replacement program.

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