AVIATION WEEK
PROGRAM EXCELLENCE AWARDS

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Gregory Hamilton
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Acknowledged, agreed, and submitted by

Wayne Montag — Digitally signed by Wayne Montag Date: 2025.07.01 12:23:33 -04'00' — 1 July 2025

Nominee's Signature — Date

Nominee's Name (please print): Wayne H Montag

Title (please print): Vice President & Technical Director

Company (please print): Kratos Space & Missile Defense Systems

NOMINATION FORM

Name of Program: Erinyes™ Hypersonic Test Bed

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☒ Customer Approved

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- Date: 30 June 2025
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☐ Supplier Approved (if named in this nomination form)

- Date:
- Supplier Contact (name/title/organization/phone): N/A

PLEASE REFER TO PROGRAM EXCELLENCE DIRECTIONS AS YOU COMPLETE THIS FORM.

SECTION 1: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Make the Case for Excellence

Value: 10 points

What is the vision for this program/project? What unique characteristics and properties qualify this program for consideration?

The Erinyes™ Hypersonic Test Bed (HTB) project, executed by Kratos over the past three years, has demonstrated groundbreaking achievements in hypersonics, positioning it as a standout in the field. The flight of Erinyes™ represented Kratos' successful deployment of a guided hypersonic boost glide flyer, setting a new standard in hypersonic technology. This monumental accomplishment opened new avenues for Kratos, propelling the company to the forefront of advanced aerospace solutions and enabling further innovations in the defense sector. Achieving the flight of a hypersonic flyer has only been accomplished by a few countries, and it is rarely successful on the first flight; however, Kratos defied the odds by successfully flying two for the Missile Defense Agency (MDA) within only 6 months of each other.

The development of Erinyes™ utilized a first-principles approach that emphasized affordability and robustness. This methodology diverged from the low-margin, exotic material basis for existing weapon concepts, fostering significant progress in hypersonics. Furthermore, Erinyes™ is designed with experimenters in mind, featuring a modular architecture that allows rapid assembly and checkout, thus enhancing flexibility and efficiency in experimentation options. This approach prioritizes both innovation and cost-effectiveness, essential for driving the rapid advancements needed in the field.

Kratos leveraged twenty years of robust launch vehicle design experience with a mindset that its vehicle solutions needed to be the lowest risk part of any mission, thus making the test payloads, the interceptors chasing the targets, or the sensors observing the flights the true systems under test. By coupling that foundation with Kratos' basic vehicle design for hypersonic launches, a framework for a hypersonic test bed was created. This test bed, named Erinyes™, accommodates and safeguards both onboard and off-board experiments, ensuring that all collected data is reliable and actionable. Additionally, Erinyes'™ first flight offered the first hypersonic test viewing opportunity for the MDA's Hypersonic and Ballistic Tracking Space Sensors (HBTSS), providing a unique opportunity for the new system to collect unprecedented data for next-generation sensor development. The capability unlocked by Erinyes™ is vital for validating hypersonic flight dynamics and sensor performance, contributing to the overall enhancement of defense technologies.

Kratos selected OEM/Prime Contractor System Design and Development as the award category for this entry, as this program is novel, cutting-edge, and has the potential to continue transforming the industry from a technological and cost perspective. Erinyes™ supports a broad range of experiments, delivering over ten times the hypersonic flight exposure time available from prior testing systems. It is also supremely versatile offering adaptability to a range of Kratos launch vehicles as well as commercial orbital launch and air-launched platforms, underscoring its autonomous nature. This adaptability ensures that Erinyes™ can seamlessly integrate into various mission profiles, providing unmatched flexibility and reducing logistical constraints.

Moreover, being unclassified, the flyer enables data to be shared readily between government entities, laboratories, industry partners, and experimenters without the risk of disclosing operational data from offensive or defensive weapon systems. By enabling cross-domain sensor testing (ground, air, sea, space) using an unclassified platform, collaborative efforts in research and development are enhanced, accelerating the pace of innovation across multiple domains.

The program's efficiency is exemplified by its recurring production lead time of less than a year, significantly reduced costs and accelerated schedules compared to traditional hypersonic systems. The platform also provides flexible insertion points, ranging from Mach 8 to Mach 14, without necessitating risky design or assembly changes. This allows for a wide range of testing scenarios, ensuring the system can meet diverse experimental requirements effectively.

In summary, the Erinyes™ Hypersonic Test Bed project represents a significant milestone in hypersonic technology. The project's success is a testament to Kratos's innovative approach, commitment to affordability, and ability to deliver solutions tailored to the evolving needs of the defense sector. Through Erinyes™, Kratos continues to advance the boundaries of what is possible in aerospace technology, providing industry leadership and contributing to the strategic advancement of national defense capabilities. With the two successful flights completed for the MDA, the flyer now transitions to become a flight-proven test bed asset for the Test Resource Management Center (TRMC)'s Multi-Service Advanced Capability Hypersonic Test Bed (MACH-TB) program.

SECTION 2: VALUE CREATION

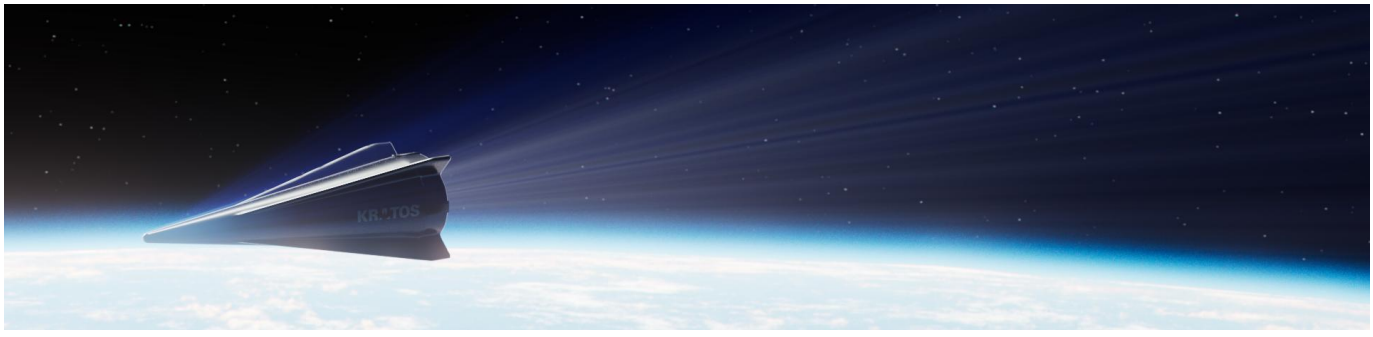
Value: 15 points

- **Clearly define the value of this program/project for the corporation; quantify appropriately**

Erinyes™ HTB transformed Kratos and the defense industry, establishing a new product category and paving the way for low-cost hypersonic tests, low-cost interceptors, hypersonic strike weapons, and hypersonic targets. The innovative and low-cost final product and program created a strategic advantage for Kratos and opportunities within the industry, paving the way for sustainable long-term corporate growth and laying the groundwork for future technological developments. The development and success of Erinyes™ HTB opened new market opportunities, potentially increasing revenue streams and enhancing Kratos's market position in the defense sector.

Firstly, the flyer transitioned to the MACH-TB program as a qualified, flight-proven test bed — the first dedicated test bed of its kind with a greater than Mach 5 flight capability. The Erinyes™ product will enter low-rate production led by MACH-TB and with additional sponsors from the U.S. DoD, foreign allies and industry. Kratos foresees Erinyes™ flying regularly on Kratos suborbital and commercial orbital launch vehicles over the next five to ten years. The increased demand for testing using Erinyes™ and Kratos launches will further drive down costs, creating opportunities for businesses and organizations of all sizes to advance their technologies and test their products in true prolonged hypersonic test conditions.

Next, the Erinyes™ design paradigm has enabled new ways of thinking about offensive and defensive hypersonic weapon systems. Kratos is in discussions with multiple DoD organizations related to leveraging this design paradigm to dramatically decrease the cost and lead-time for operationally effective hypersonic systems. The current concepts and design models point to a portfolio of Kratos hypersonic flyers being created for various applications across several government sponsors.



- **Clearly define the value of this program/project to your customer**

For the MDA specifically, Erinyes™ promises a low-risk platform for extensive hypersonic experimentation, significantly enhancing operational capabilities and viewing opportunities for off-board sensor development. By providing an unclassified test bed platform, Erinyes™ promotes crucial data sharing leading to collaborative advancements across multiple domains and experiment sponsors. This capability supports the MDA in executing future projects with improved efficiency and reduced risks, ultimately contributing to mission success. Kratos foresees additional flight tests with MDA experiment sponsorship, and these tests will mature technologies and validate critical models for next generation missile interceptors and sensors.

Finally, TRMC's MACH-TB program is transitioning the product to enable hypersonic experiments from across the DoD to participate in flight tests; thus, Kratos anticipates flying experiments from the Army, Navy, Air Force, Space Force, DARPA, and others. No other program provides these opportunities, and no other platform is flight proven as a test bed across these Mach regimes. By integrating and flying experiments on Erinyes™, sponsors are now able to evaluate emerging technologies and retire risk from weapon system programs of record. In other words, these customers will no longer need to fly new hypersonic technologies for the first time on costly, highly complex and "zero risk" flight test missions, often conducted using a variant of the actual weapon system. New technologies can now be matured rapidly on Erinyes™ flights and transitioned to the weapon system program of record when the technology risks are sufficiently mitigated. Furthermore, this ability to fly on a hypersonic test bed will allow technologies to successfully transition through the Technology Readiness Level (TRL) 'Valley of Death' to prove military utility in relevant operational environments.

- **Clearly define the value of this program/project to members of your team; quantify if possible**

The Erinyes™ project significantly engaged Kratos's engineering talent, promoting a culture of innovation and knowledge transfer. Senior engineering leaders were able to leverage decades of experience to bring about this new design paradigm. Junior members benefited immensely from mentorship and practical experience, equipping them with the skills and expertise needed for future leadership roles. College interns were provided the rare opportunity to witness the flyer assembly, checkout, and first flight within a single summer. This engagement has led to a higher skilled and diversified workforce, enhancing overall productivity and fostering an exciting and dynamic work environment.

Additionally, the engineering and technician teams were challenged across multiple disciplines throughout the project, in some cases tackling designs and establishing processes that had not been performed previously. The best ideas for design, manufacturing, assembly, testing and materials were selected from across the team. Because so many new innovations were required in this single product, each functional group became more aware of the interfaces between disciplines and learned to adapt, mitigate complex risks, and act as a single team. As an example, the flight performance, mechanical, electrical, and Guidance, Navigation, & Control (GNC) engineering teams had to approach problems in a holistic systems engineering mindset as they worked from initial requirements definition to final verification. This additional awareness and the skills gained by the team across all experience levels has enabled Kratos to establish new diverse mission teams and support more complex launch vehicle missions for U.S. DoD customers.

- **Clearly define the contribution of this program/project to the greater good (society, security, etc.)**

Erinyes™ has grown beyond its initial mission set for MDA and become an asset for the entire DoD, most recently under the TRMC's MACH-TB program, enabling targeted technology development independent of weapon systems. This initiative mitigates risks and fosters a safe and low-cost environment for technological experimentation to advance hypersonic research. The resulting advances are sure to contribute significantly to national security and technological progress, ensuring that the United States remains at the forefront of hypersonic capabilities and defense technologies. Through these contributions, the Erinyes™ test bed not only promises to enhance national security but also to benefit academia and drive innovation that may one day lead to faster and more efficient travel. In addition to Erinyes™ enabling the U.S. hypersonics industry to fly more often and mature technologies faster, Kratos foresees significant international collaboration benefitting the hypersonic programs of our allies and promoting greater global security and threat deterrence.

SECTION 3: ORGANIZATIONAL BEST PRACTICES AND TEAM LEADERSHIP

Value: 35 points

- ***15 points:*** **Describe the innovative tools and systems used by your team, how they contributed to performance and why**

The development of the Erinyes™ HTB utilized a first-principles approach that emphasized affordability and robustness, diverging from the traditional slow and expensive development programs that have plagued our national efforts to field hypersonic weapons. Erinyes™ is designed with experimenters in mind, featuring a modular architecture that allows rapid assembly and checkout, thus enhancing flexibility and efficiency in experimentation options. This approach prioritizes both the innovation and cost-effectiveness that are essential for driving the rapid advancements desperately needed in the field.

By focusing on critical analytical margins and allocating effort and resources to tackle "high stakes" scenarios, the team managed risks efficiently and effectively. A comprehensive risk register was developed early in the project, yielding significant benefits throughout the program. These risks and their mitigation plans were frequently reviewed and adapted as the program's knowledge base expanded. For the most critical analyses, MDA-sponsored partners conducted independent, concurrent reviews that validated the robust design without hindering the program. This approach and the corresponding risk management toolsets will continue to be leveraged for future Erinyes™ flights and will also be transitioned to other programs with Erinyes™ flight data providing the basis to assess and validate new design approaches.

- ***10 points:*** **Define the unique practices and process you used to develop, lead and manage people?**

Kratos maintained daily communication with stakeholders, ensuring seamless collaboration among suppliers, customers, and the design team. The uniqueness of the communication was not just in how often the stakeholders and project team communicated but in the manner that they did it. The team used ad-hoc frequent design collaboration sessions without time limits to focus on making efficient and well thought out progress. These informal sessions culminated in technical interchange meetings, reviewing all progress to date, often using raw test data or hardware for validation instead of highly reviewed and edited presentations. Formal design reviews were not held in favor of less formal technical team meetings organized to encourage real-time communication and stricter focus on the current critical tasks.

Senior engineers played a pivotal role in mentoring junior workforce members, documenting mission objectives, and engaging directly with the team to ensure effective knowledge transfer. This practice not

only developed the next generation of talent but also ensured the team stayed aligned and focused on the project's goals and customers' expectations. The continuous engagement and mentorship by senior leaders fostered a collaborative and supportive work environment, enhancing team cohesion and productivity. Furthermore, the customer was always present at development and qualification testing, not just as an overseer but as an active contributor to the team. This interaction particularly accelerated decision making and problem resolution throughout the program's lifecycle contributing to its tremendous success.

- ***10 points:*** **How did you leverage skills and technologies of your suppliers?**

Kratos identified and leveraged non-traditional materials and advanced manufacturing techniques by collaborating closely with suppliers. The design focus was on delivering acceptable outcomes rather than over-engineered solutions. Throughout the program, multiple contingency plans were continuously developed and refined. By mitigating risks through multiple material and manufacturing process options, the team made continual progress without compromising goals or mission success. This strategic approach allowed Kratos to tap into the unique skills and technologies of suppliers, who in turn facilitated the successful execution of the Erinyes™ project. The close and continuous collaboration with suppliers was instrumental in rapidly integrating innovative materials and processes and directly contributed to the project's stunning success.

Additionally, it is worthy of note that the first two years of the project occurred during the supply chain crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Multiple material and vendor options were considered and dropped from the baseline due to material availability, the inability of the supplier to meet the schedule, or unwillingness by the supplier to support the project due to other priorities. If the team had not leveraged such a rigorous yet flexible supplier risk management approach, the time to first flight would have been significantly longer and the program costlier.

SECTION 4: DEALING WITH PROGRAM COMPLEXITY

(VOLATILITY, UNCERTAINTY, COMPLEXITY, AMBIGUITY, or VUCA)

Value: 25 points

- ***10 points:*** **Describe UNIQUE areas of VUCA faced by your program and why. (Please avoid the issues surrounding Covid-19 pandemic, which was faced by all programs.)**

The Erinyes™ HTB project encountered several unique VUCA (Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, and Ambiguity) challenges that significantly impacted its development and execution phases. One of the primary areas of volatility was the rapidly evolving technological landscape. As the project aimed to integrate cutting-edge technologies, the team had to continuously adapt to new advancements and unforeseen technical issues, necessitating agile responses and iterative improvements.

In terms of uncertainty, the project began without predefined designs, which required innovative thinking and strategic risk management. The lack of established design frameworks meant that the team had to navigate through numerous unknowns, including potential conflicts between new components and existing systems. This uncertainty was compounded by the need to meet stringent safety and compliance standards.

The complexity of the project was evident in the integration of multi-disciplinary expertise, which involved coordinating efforts across various engineering domains, software development, and project management. The intricate interdependencies between these disciplines created a highly complex environment requiring meticulous planning and robust communication channels to ensure alignment and coherence.

Ambiguity arose from the need to engage with skeptics and stakeholders who had differing perspectives on the project's feasibility and design approaches. Kratos met with each skeptic and stakeholder during the

course of the project to ensure that each person's concern and experience were understood, validated and evaluated against the design methodology. Ambiguities often occurred due to a lack of understanding of the sceptics' concern, which required the team to continuously consider and incorporate diverse insights and validate their approaches against these concerns. This inevitably added layers of complexity to the decision-making processes but also contributed to the successful outcome of the program.

- ***15 points:*** **Explain how your team responded to these challenges. What changes did you make, what were the results?**

To address the VUCA challenges, the Erinyes™ HTB project team implemented several strategic actions and adaptive measures, effectively navigating the complexities. Key responses included:

1. **Innovative and Iterative Design Approaches:**
   The team adopted an iterative design process that allowed for continuous refinement and adaptation to new technological advancements. This approach facilitated the integration of the latest technologies while mitigating risks associated with rapid changes in the technological landscape.
2. **Comprehensive Risk Management:**
   An extensive risk register was developed before creating a design concept. This risk register acted as a check against trade studies, design processes, procurement decisions, and test results. This approach ensured that mission success remained a priority for the engineering team without causing any individual step to be over-engineered. This risk register was reviewed frequently, both internally and with the customer, to evaluate new information from the team and determine if the risk approach should change. This risk register was also categorized separately for the baseline flyer to be successful and for the experiments to be successful. This distinction allowed the team to focus both on risks impacting overall mission success and those affecting an experiment's ability to perform nominally in flight and collect sufficient data.
3. **Inclusive and Multi-disciplinary Collaboration:**
   Kratos's multi-disciplinary team fostered an inclusive environment where every member had an active voice. This collaborative approach ensured that diverse perspectives were considered, leading to more robust problem-solving and innovation. Regular cross-functional meetings and workshops were conducted to maintain alignment and coherence across disciplines.
4. **Strategic Hiring and Talent Development:**
   To address the lack of predefined designs and encourage innovation, the team strategically hired individuals with specialized skills and expertise matched to the desired program outcome. This targeted recruitment enhanced the team's capabilities, allowing them to tackle complex challenges more effectively.
5. **Engagement with Stakeholders and SMEs:**
   The project team actively engaged with stakeholders and Subject Matter Experts and incorporated their insights into the development process. This engagement not only strengthened the project's mission assurance posture but also ensured that safety measures were thoroughly validated and adjusted as necessary. Transparent communication and stakeholder involvement were prioritized to build trust and consensus.
6. **Flexibility in Design and Execution:**
   The team remained focused on flexibility throughout design and execution, allowing for continuous adjustments based on emerging insights and changing requirements. This adaptability was crucial in navigating the ambiguous aspects of the project and ensuring responsiveness to unforeseen challenges.

Results: The combination of these strategic actions led to the successful execution of the Erinyes™ HTB project in only three years. The innovative design approaches and comprehensive risk management process resulted in a robust and adaptable project framework. The inclusive collaboration and strategic hiring contributed to a highly skilled and cohesive team capable of overcoming significant uncertainties. Engaging with skeptics and maintaining flexibility ensured that the project remained aligned with safety and compliance standards. Ultimately, these efforts culminated in a successful project that met its objectives, demonstrated resilience in the face of VUCA challenges, and delivered value to all stakeholders involved.

SECTION 5: METRICS

Value: 15 points

- **What are your predictive metrics?**

Threshold and Objective Requirements:

Predictive metrics were a cornerstone for ensuring the effective management and successful delivery of the Erinyes™ Hypersonic Test Bed program. Threshold and objective requirements were established to maintain focus and alignment with mission goals. These benchmarks were crucial in maintaining a clear reference point for mission performance, keeping the team focused on achieving specific goals. Setting thresholds enabled the team to measure performance and ensure alignment with the original design reference points.

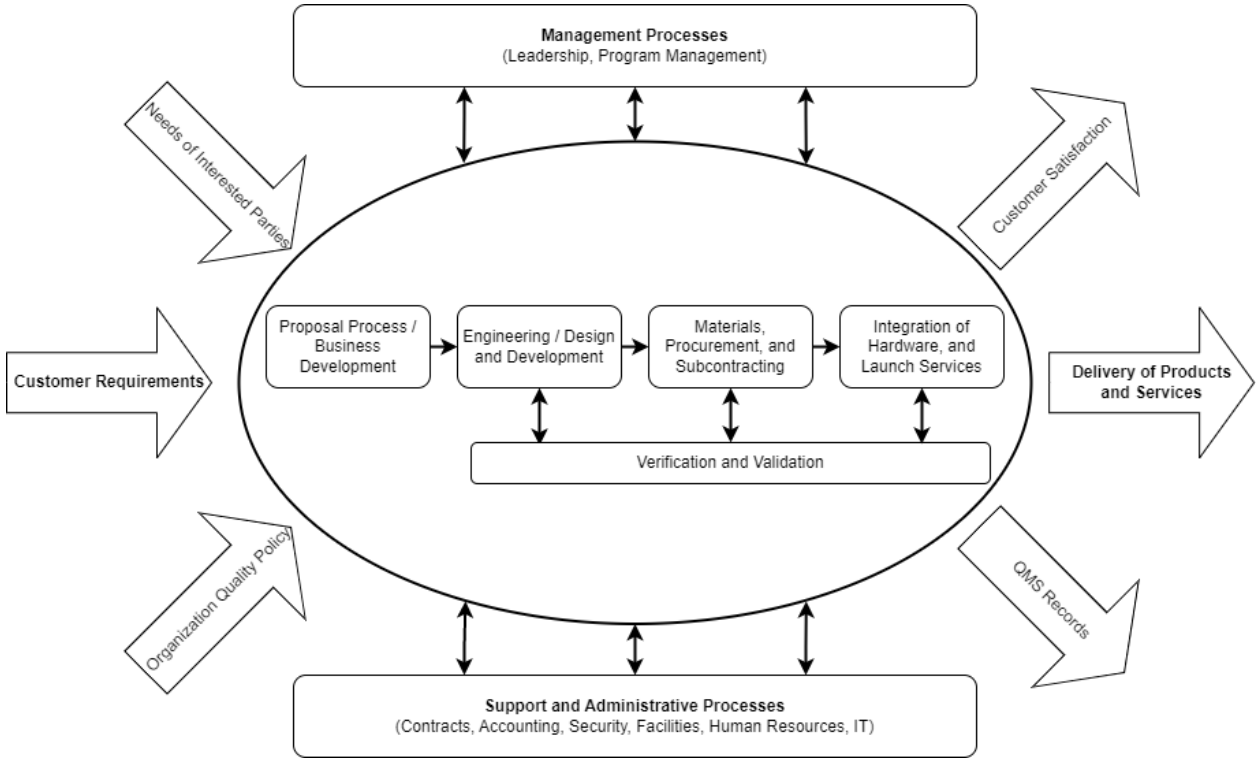
Mission Performance Requirements:

All mission performance requirements were derived from the original design reference points, ensuring the team remained concentrated on the primary objectives. This approach helped in consistently aligning past and current activities with long-term goals, effectively predicting the impact of actions on future timelines, costs, and other requirements. Using these metrics ensured continuous alignment with mission goals throughout the program's duration.

Active Risk Management:

Active risk management was integral to our approach. By continuously monitoring potential risks, the team was well-prepared to mitigate issues as they arose. High and moderate risk items were prioritized based on their likelihood and impact against the primary mission objectives, ensuring potential challenges were preemptively addressed, thereby safeguarding the program's success. This proactive stance on risk management fortified our ability to navigate uncertainties effectively.

In addition, the accompanying graphic (on the following page) illustrates the comprehensive management processes leveraged throughout the Erinyes™ HTB program, ensuring thorough integration and continuous alignment with project objectives and customer requirements.



Quality/Mission Assurance for Erinyes™:

The Kratos Space & Missile Defense Systems (KSMDS) quality management system (QMS) is based on and certified to ISO9001:2015. The QMS utilizes a customer-focused approach to delivering quality products and services and contains processes spanning design and development, procurement, production, and assembly, all leveraged for the Erinyes™ vehicle.

The design and development of the Erinyes™ flyer followed discipline-specific checklists to ensure thorough design verification, validation, and review. Parts and subassemblies were procured from suppliers on the Kratos Approved Supplier List (ASL) and evaluated for requirements compliance by quality inspectors according to supplier quality processes.

Production and assembly of the Erinyes™ platform adhered to QMS production processes, employing vehicle-specific work procedures. These procedures were reviewed and approved by relevant engineering, management, and safety personnel and observed by MDA for both HTB-1 and HTB-2. Any discrepancies during these processes resulted in nonconformance reports by the quality team, documenting disposition, root cause, and corrective actions.

HTB Quality Metrics:

The following table identifies the baseline KSMDS quality objectives, and performance of the program against them.

HTB-1 Quality Metrics			
Quality Objective	**Measurement Method**	**Target**	**Result**
Compliant Hardware	# of Customer Escapes*	≤1	4
Successful Flight Test	# of Failures in Mission Requirements	0	0
Customer Satisfaction	# of Customer Complaints	0	0
HTB-2 Quality Metrics			
Quality Objective	**Measurement Method**	**Target**	**Result**
Compliant Hardware	# of Customer Escapes*	≤1	2
Successful Flight Test	# of Failures in Mission Requirements	0	0
Customer Satisfaction	# of Customer Complaints	0	0

*Customer Escapes are nonconformances identified after customer ownership of a product or service, or after the mission Test Readiness Review (TRR) is complete.

HTB-1 exceeded the compliant hardware quality objective baseline for KSMDS flight test missions. Lessons learned from HTB-1 included setting more realistic targets for new vehicles and significant research and development test flights. Considering the program's overall complexity, efforts by the operations and engineering teams to limit escapes to only four demonstrated commendable effort.

HTB-2 also exceeded the compliant hardware quality objective but showed tremendous improvement with only two escapes. Furthermore, these escapes related to HTB-2 specific experiments and not the Erinyes™ vehicle.

- **How did you perform against these metrics?**

The Erinyes™ HTB team rigorously monitored these metrics through regular checkpoints, ensuring both threshold and objective requirements were met. High-risk items were prioritized based on their likelihood and impact on mission success. The team's meticulous approach ensured the following achievements:

1. **Schedule Adherence:**
   Maintaining an average of 95% adherence to the planned milestones demonstrated the team's capacity to stay on track with the project timeline.
2. **Cost Variance:**
   Controlled cost overruns, keeping them within 5% of the projected budget. This financial discipline ensured effective allocation and utilization of resources.
3. **Risk Impact Assessment:**
   Successfully mitigated high-risk items, reducing their potential likelihood by 70% in several cases. Some Erinyes™ elements were redesigned with a new approach to reduce potential impacts to acceptable levels. Proactive risk management techniques minimized disruptions and maintained project integrity.
4. **Quality Metrics:**

   The Kratos Team achieved a defect rate of less than 2%, maintaining high technical compliance despite the rapid development cycle. Focusing on quality control ensured that the project outputs met the required standards.

- **How do your predictive metrics drive action toward program excellence? Please provide examples.**

Our predictive metrics were instrumental in driving actions that enhanced program excellence by offering real-time insights and facilitating rapid, informed decision-making. Here are a few examples:

Proactive Issue Resolution:
For instance, during a critical phase of the program, our predictive metrics indicated a potential delay in meeting a key objective. By identifying this risk early, we redirected resources and adjusted timelines to ensure the threshold requirement was met without compromising quality. This proactive approach minimized the impact of the delay and maintained program integrity.

Focused Team Efforts:
By continuously aligning our mission performance requirements with the original design reference points, the team remained focused on primary objectives. This consistent alignment ensured that every action taken was strategically directed toward achieving the overall mission goals, enhancing team productivity and efficiency.

Improved Risk Mitigation:
Active risk management allowed us to preemptively address high-priority risks. For example, when our predictive metrics flagged a significantly likely system performance issue, we immediately investigated and rectified the underlying cause. This action prevented potential system failures and demonstrated our ability to manage and mitigate risks effectively.