

Lockheed Martin To Retrofit Predator With New Warhead

Gives U.S. Marine Corps Needed Capability in Iraq

PRNewswire-FirstCall
ORLANDO, Fla.

Lockheed Martin will retrofit its Predator anti-tank weapon with a multi-purpose variant (MPV) blast fragmentation warhead, enabling the missile to defeat urban targets such as buildings and bunkers, as well as light-armored vehicles.

The U.S. Marine Corps gave Lockheed Martin the go-ahead to modify the shoulder-fired, short-range Predator anti-tank weapon into a direct-attack urban assault weapon. The conversion of Predator from a top-down anti-armor weapon to a direct-fire urban assault weapon was prompted by "the need for fire-from-enclosure assault weapons, which has become paramount to support Operation Iraqi Freedom," said Mike Woodson, Predator project officer, U.S. Marine Corps. Other current short-range assault weapon (SRAW) systems cannot meet the requirement.

"We are pleased to provide Marines in combat with a truly effective weapon that can be fired from enclosed spaces and engage and defeat urban targets," said Ron Woodard, SRAW program director for Lockheed Martin Missiles and Fire Control.

"This variant of the Predator weapon system is ideally suited to the urban warfare weaponry that is prevalent in military operations today," Woodard added. "The U.S. Army is evaluating options for upgrading its urban assault weapon capabilities for fire from enclosure and improved performance over the next few years, and SRAW-MPV, in its current configuration, will meet most of these upgrade requirements. Our allies also have urban warfare requirements that SRAW-MPV will meet."

The retrofit effort is already underway and will run through the end of 2004. It will include all Predator rounds already delivered under a Low-Rate Initial Production (LRIP) I contract as well as all rounds currently in production under LRIP II. Approximately 700 rounds will be retrofitted with the new warhead.

The resulting new weapon system will be renamed as the short-range attack weapon multi-purpose variant (SRAW-MPV).

Predator, a man-portable, inertially guided, point-and-shoot system originally designed to defeat advanced armor targets, can be fired safely from inside an enclosure, which is critical in close combat situations and urban warfare. The missile's inertial guidance system also provides "fire-and-forget" capability, which protects the Marine by minimizing exposure to enemy counter-fire.

Headquartered in Bethesda, MD, Lockheed Martin employs about 130,000 people worldwide and is principally engaged in the research, design, development, manufacture and integration of advanced technology systems, products and services.

SOURCE: Lockheed Martin

Web site: <http://www.lockheedmartin.com/>

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