Lockheed Martin Hellfire Scores Perfect 6-For-6 In British Army Live-Fire Tests

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The British Army Air Corps recently fired Lockheed MartinAGM-114K Hellfire missiles in a live-fire training exercise at the British Army Training Unit-Suffield (BATUS) in Alberta, Canada. The missiles scored six hits in six launches in their first live-fire tests with the British Army Air Corps.

This was the first live-fire event for the Hellfire missiles using the Westland Apache AH-Mk1 (Longbow Apache) helicopter. The Canadian government granted permission to fire the rounds in BATUS. During the first two Hellfire exercises, targets were tank-size mockups and both tests were successful. In the second exercise, all four Hellfire missiles also hit their targets.

"We are extremely pleased with Hellfire's 100 percent mission success in its first live-fire tests with the British Army Air Corps," said Andy Marshall, program manager of international Air-to-Ground Missile Systems (AGMS). "The Apache AH Mk1 and M299 launcher can carry any combination of anti-tank and blast fragmentation Hellfire II rounds as well as the fire-and-forget Longbow Hellfire."

The six engagements employed Hellfire in a wide range of modes, including autonomous designation, remote ground designation, and designation by a second aircraft. The high-explosive anti-tank (HEAT) rounds used were manufactured by Thales, near Belfast, Northern Ireland, under a UK industrial partnership with Lockheed Martin under contract from INSYS Ltd. as the UK Apache munitions prime contractor.

"The precision-strike semi-active laser seeker of the Hellfire II, plus the all-weather millimeter wave seeker of the Longbow Hellfire, gives the British Army Air Corps operational flexibility in combat," Marshall said. "The Apache AH Mk1 has unmatched lethality, and the Hellfire missile family gives it the ability to defeat a wide range of targets in all kinds of battlefield conditions."

The Longbow missile is the product of a Lockheed Martin/Northrop Grumman joint venture.

Baltimore-based Northrop Grumman Electronic Systems is a world leader in the design, development, and manufacture of defense and commercial electronic systems and sensors, including airborne radar, navigation systems, electronic countermeasures, precision weapons, airspace management systems, communication systems, space sensors, marine and naval systems, government systems and logistics services.

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