U.S. Army Awards $90 Million HELLFIRE II Contract To Lockheed Martin For Latest Battle-Proven Configuration

The U.S. Army awarded a $90 million contract to Lockheed Martinfor continued production of the combat-proven HELLFIRE air-to-ground missile. More than 1,000 HELLFIRE II and Longbow HELLFIRE rounds have been fired by U.S. and allied troops during Operation Iraqi Freedom.

The latest order includes 900 semi-active laser-guided HELLFIRE II metal augmented charge (MAC) warhead missiles, 180 high-explosive anti-tank (HEAT) missiles, conversion of 100 HEAT missiles to the MAC warhead configuration, and training missiles along with corresponding training and support packages. The HELLFIRE Buy 11 contract extends production of the precision-strike HELLFIRE well into 2007 at Lockheed Martin's manufacturing plants in Ocala, FL (seeker electronics), and Troy, AL (missile final assembly).

"HELLFIRE is the world's best air-to-ground weapon system," said Mark Stenger, director of the Air-to-Ground Missile Systems program area at Lockheed Martin Missiles and Fire Control. "Its lethality and combat-proven performance, coupled with its precision-strike capability, have proved superior in Afghanistan and Iraq. HELLFIRE has been extremely effective against ships, light armor and urban targets."

HELLFIRE II is available in the following configurations: the AGM-114K (HEAT), used against armored targets; the AGM-114M (blast fragmentation version), effective against ships, caves, light-armored vehicles, buildings, bunkers, and other urban targets; and the AGM-114N (MAC), used against enclosed structures. In addition, the AGM-114L, or Longbow HELLFIRE, uses the HEAT warhead and a millimeter wave seeker for adverse weather and fire-and- forget capability. All four versions have been used in Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld reported in a press briefing that the AGM-114N missile "can take out the first floor of a building without damaging the floors above, and is capable of reaching around corners, striking enemy forces that hide in caves or bunkers and hardened multi-room complexes."

Army users reported excellent HELLFIRE II missile performance and durability in the desert environment. According to the U.S. Army HELLFIRE II Durability Field Report from Operation Iraqi Freedom, "With the amount of dust, impact shock from bouncing on the metal floor of a truck traveling at 30, 40, 50 ... mph across bumpy, off-road terrain, being dropped or thrown down, seeker domes exposed to dust/wind, fins grabbed in awkward ways, etc. ...the missiles...have been superb."

With more than 18,000 rounds produced for the U.S. and 14 international customers, HELLFIRE has been successfully integrated with every leading attack helicopter in the U.S. and Allied fleets. It is approved for international sales both through the foreign military sales system and direct commercial sales.

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.

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