Lockheed Martin, Responding To U.S. Marine Corps Needs, Converts Anti-Tank Missile For Urban Assault

Responding to an urgent request from warfighters, Lockheed Martinexpanded the capabilities of its Predator anti-tank weapon and delivered 400 rounds to the U.S. Marine Corps.

The U.S. Marine Corps requested Lockheed Martin to modify the shoulder- fired, short-range Predator anti-tank weapon into a direct-attack urban assault weapon. Renamed the Short-Range Assault Weapon-Multiple Purpose Variant (SRAW-MPV), the new urban assault missile has a multiple-purpose blast warhead, enabling it to defeat a variety of targets such as buildings and bunkers, as well as light-armored vehicles.

"The ability of the SRAW team to field the SRAW-MPV in less than six months in response to an urgent requirement is testimony to the professionalism and dedication of every member of the team," said Michael Woodson, SRAW project officer for the Marine Corps Systems Command in Quantico, VA. "I am confident that SRAW-MPV will provide a needed capability to our Marines who are engaged almost daily in urban combat operations in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom."

"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 current actions," said Andy Hawkins, SRAW-MPV program manager at Lockheed Martin Missiles and Fire Control. "Other current short-range assault weapon systems cannot meet the requirement."

"This variant of the Predator weapon system is uniquely suited to the urban warfare environment that is prevalent in military operations today," Hawkins added. "The SRAW-MPV is the only short-range soft-launch assault weapon in the world. It can be safely fired from buildings with single hearing protection, which protects the gunner by minimizing exposure to enemy counter-fire. In addition, its point-and-shoot, fire-and-forget inertial guidance system minimizes gunner operations and corrects for in-flight disturbances such as cross-wind."

The new weapon passed an acceptance test at the Naval Air Warfare Center (NAWC), China Lake, CA, in November, as well as successful man firings last December, demonstrating it can be fired safely even with minimal prior training.

The flight tests included two rounds that successfully breached a triple- brick target, leaving a gap wide enough for troop entry, and another round that disabled an armored personnel carrier. All shots were at a range of 200 meters.

Lockheed Martin previously delivered 344 Predator rounds under a Low-Rate Initial Production-I contract. Both the Predator and SRAW-MPV weapons are fully man-rated (all qualification, safety certification and gunner hazard tests are complete, any limitations on the use of the weapon are quantified and documented, and the weapon is tested as safe to fire within the defined limitations) -- ready to deploy.

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. U.S. allies also have urban warfare requirements that SRAW-MPV will meet.

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