France Selects Lockheed Martin HELLFIRE II Missile To Equip HAD Tiger Helicopter

The Government of France has selected Lockheed Martin's HELLFIRE II(R) missile system to equip its Helicoptere d'Appui Destruction (HAD) Tiger attack helicopter fleet. The precision-strike missiles will be purchased under a foreign military sale for the French Army, which is fielding 40 HAD Tiger helicopters. The fielding is expected to be completed by 2012.

"HELLFIRE II missiles will provide the French HAD Tigers a highly effective precision strike capability," said Doug Terrell, international business development director for Tactical Missiles at Lockheed Martin Missiles and Fire Control. "HELLFIRE II has an extensive combat record, with more than 3,000 rounds expended in the Global War on Terrorism. Its modular design not only lends itself to future upgrades, but enables HELLFIRE to engage a broad target set."

The modular HELLFIRE II includes three semi-active laser warhead variations - (1) the high-explosive anti-tank (HEAT) missile, or AGM-114K, which defeats all known and projected armored threats; (2) the AGM-114M blast fragmentation missile, which defeats "soft" targets such as boats, buildings, bunkers and light-armored vehicles; and (3) the metal augmented charge (MAC) missile, or AGM-114N, which defeats enclosures, caves and enemy personnel housed therein.

Another key factor influencing the French decision to procure HELLFIRE includes the missile's employment flexibility. HELLFIRE missiles are guided precisely to the laser spot on the target by HELLFIRE's proven semi-active laser seeker. This technology enables last-second diversion of the missile should the need arise. Additionally, HELLFIRE's semi-active laser seeker responds to both remote and autonomous laser designators, enabling HAD Tiger pilots to achieve positive target identification prior to missile launch. This feature, combined with HELLFIRE's diversion capability and three interchangeable warheads, ensures strict rules of engagement are met while minimizing collateral damage.

"HELLFIRE is one of the premier air-to-ground missile systems in use today, and we're looking forward to adding the HELLFIRE capability to the French HAD Tiger, in addition to Australia," said Terrell.

Eurocopter, under contract with the multi-national European Organisation for Joint Armament Cooperation, has already begun integration of HELLFIRE II on the HAD Tiger at its facility in Marignane, France, with Lockheed Martin's support. Ground tests are scheduled for October 2007, with flight tests beginning in March 2008.

HELLFIRE II is currently fielded with the armed forces of the U.S. and 14 other nations by HELLFIRE Systems, Limited Liability Company (HSLLC). Lockheed Martin performs all of the work scope on behalf of HSLLC.

HELLFIRE II is launched from a wide array of platforms, including the U.S. Army's Apache (AH-64A and AH-64D), the U.S. Marine Corps' Cobra (AH-1W and AH- 1Z), and the UK's Apache (AH-MK1) attack helicopters; the U.S. Navy's Seahawk armed reconnaissance helicopter (SH-60B); the U.S. Army's Kiowa Warrior scout helicopter (OH-58D); and the U.S. Air Force's Predator unmanned aerial vehicle. Norway and Sweden also employ HELLFIRE missiles launched from tripods in a coastal defense mode.

With more than 20,000 rounds delivered, HELLFIRE II is licensed for international sales, via government-to-government or direct commercial sales contracts.

Headquartered in Bethesda, Md., Lockheed Martin employs about 140,000 people worldwide and is principally engaged in the research, design, development, manufacture, integration and sustainment of advanced technology systems, products and services.

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