First Live Warhead Flight For Lockheed Martin's Multi-Purpose Hellfire II Missile

Lockheed Martin's multi-purpose AGM114R HELLFIRE II missile scored another success in its second proof-of-principle (POP) flight test, the first armed with a live warhead. The Rmodel, or "Romeo" missile, features a multi-purpose warhead that enables a single HELLFIRE missile to cover all of the target sets of the currently fielded laser-guided variants.

The POP 2 flight test, conducted at Eglin Air Force Base, FL, featured a lock-on-after-launch engagement of a stationary target board at 1.6 miles (2.5 km). The team used a ground-based laser designator to illuminate the target. The multi-purpose warhead was set with a delayed fuze that allows the missile to penetrate the target before detonating.

The missile was launched with a low trajectory suitable for a military operation in urban terrain scenario and struck the target board precisely designated by the laser aimpoint. The precursor warhead detonated on impact, while the primary warhead successfully detonated a short distance beyond the target.

"This test successfully demonstrates the Romeo's multi-purpose warhead and electronic safe, arm and fire, or ESAF, module, which provides the pilot-programmable delayed fuzing function," said Ken Musculus, director of Air-to-Ground Missile System programs at Lockheed Martin Missiles and Fire Control. "It's an important milestone for the HELLFIRE program, bringing us one step closer to providing the Warfighter with one missile that can defeat hard, soft and enclosed targets. In this case, we tested the Romeo's ability to penetrate and then detonate within a target vehicle or structure, a critical capability against today's threats."

"Both the multi-purpose warhead and ESAF module are new to the HELLFIRE," Musculus said. "Video imagery of the test clearly shows these systems functioned exactly as designed."

The multi-purpose HELLFIRE II missile can be carried on both rotary-wing and UAV platforms, can be launched from higher altitudes--increasing the impact angle and enhancing stealth and lethality--and provides a wide engagement zone to properly equipped platforms, enabling them to target and fire upon targets to the side and behind them.

With more than 26,000 rounds produced for the U.S. and 15 international customers, HELLFIRE II has been successfully integrated with attack helicopters in the U.S. and many Allied fleets. It is also capable of surface launch from ground vehicles, tripods and small vessels. More than 10,000 HELLFIRE missiles have been successfully fired in combat.

Lockheed Martin performs all work on behalf of the HELLFIRE Systems, Limited Liability Company and will produce the missiles at its manufacturing facilities in Troy, AL, and Ocala, FL.

Headquartered in Bethesda, Md., Lockheed Martin is a global security company that 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. The Corporation reported 2009 sales of $45.2 billion.

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