

Second MEADS Launcher Passes Key Acceptance Test

ORLANDO, Fla., MUNICH, and ROME, June 20, 2011 /PRNewswire/ -- The Medium Extended Air Defense System (MEADS) successfully passed another hardware milestone when its second Launcher Platform Group (LPG) completed formal acceptance testing during March in Dello, Italy.

(Photo: <http://photos.prnewswire.com/prnh/20110620/FL22141>)

MEADS is a ground-mobile air and missile defense system that incorporates the hit-to-kill PAC-3 Missile Segment Enhancement (MSE) Missile, 360-degree radars, netted-distributed battle management/communication centers and high-firepower launchers. The system combines superior battlefield protection with extensive flexibility, allowing it to protect forces and critical assets against tactical ballistic missiles, cruise missiles, unmanned aerial vehicles and aircraft.

Designed by MBDA Italia and produced by subcontractor ATIB, the tested LPG is carried on a German MAN Prime Mover. Following integration with an Integrated Launcher Electronics System, Launcher Power System and Internal Communication System (MICS), the completed launcher will begin system-level integration with other MEADS elements. MEADS is scheduled to begin flight tests at White Sands Missile Range, N.M. later this year.

The lightweight MEADS launchers are easily transportable and tactically mobile. Each carries up to eight PAC-3 MSE Missiles and achieves launch readiness in minimum time. A Palletized Load Handling and Elevation System allows MEADS launchers to autonomously and rapidly reload.

During the acceptance tests, the LPG demonstrated compliance with all expected capabilities, including:

- Automatic missile upload/offload reload that is unmatched among existing air defense systems
- Verification of LPG emplacement from 'road march' configuration to 'ready-to-fire' position and back
- Quick and automatic detachment of main components from the prime mover in preparation for helicopter transport.

Through improvements in range, interoperability, mobility and full 360-degree defense capability against the evolving threat, MEADS improves capability to defend troops and critical assets. MEADS defends up to eight times the coverage area with far fewer system assets. This allows for a substantial reduction in deployed personnel and equipment, with less demand for airlift.

MEADS International, a multinational joint venture headquartered in Orlando, Fla., is the prime contractor for the MEADS system. Major subcontractors and joint venture partners are MBDA in Italy, LFK in Germany and Lockheed Martin in the United States.

SOURCE MEADS International

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