

Lightweight MEADS Launcher Arrives At White Sands For Initial Flight Test

ORLANDO, Fla., MUNICH and ROME, Oct. 24, 2011 [/PRNewswire/](#) -- After completing extensive system integration testing, the first Medium Extended Air Defense System (MEADS) launcher has arrived at White Sands Missile Range, N.M., ready to demonstrate its advanced capabilities.

(Photo: <http://photos.prnewswire.com/prnh/20111024/FL91849>)

The lightweight MEADS launcher is easily transportable, tactically mobile and capable of rapid reload. It carries up to eight PAC-3 Missile Segment Enhancement (MSE) Missiles and achieves launch readiness in minimum time.

Through improvements in range, interoperability, mobility and full 360-degree defense capability against the evolving threat, MEADS improves the ability to defend troops, friends and allies in critical areas around the globe.

At White Sands Missile Range, MEADS will demonstrate an unprecedented over-the-shoulder launch of a PAC-3 MSE against a simulated target that attacks from behind. The test will demonstrate a 360-degree capability that current air and missile defense systems cannot provide. 360-degree coverage is necessary to protect soldiers and critical assets from highly maneuverable cruise missiles and easily re-locatable short- and medium-range tactical ballistic missiles. Integration and checkout tests are continuing in preparation for a November flight test.

"The lightweight MEADS launcher is one of the most advanced mobile launchers in existence today, and it is easily adaptable to different nations' vehicles," said NATO MEADS Management Agency (NAMEADSMA) General Manager Gregory Kee. "With this upcoming test, we will demonstrate the ability to launch an interceptor 360 degrees from a single launcher thereby providing more capability to the warfighter at a lower cost to protect our soldiers against a growing air and missile threat."

Using its 360-degree defensive capability and advanced radars, MEADS will defend up to eight times the coverage area of other systems while using far fewer system assets. This reduces deployed personnel, equipment and demand for airlift to a fraction of that for current systems.

"MEADS can see and intercept 21st century threats from farther away without blind spots," said MEADS International President Dave Berganini. "MEADS' open architecture with non-proprietary software and 'plug-and-fight' capability allows for flexible unit configurations and growth potential. A digital design with modern hardware and software ensures high reliability rates and dramatically reduces operational and support costs."

The MEADS system combines superior battlefield protection with new flexibility to protect forces and critical assets against tactical ballistic missiles, cruise missiles, unmanned aerial vehicles and aircraft. It improves capability to defend troops and critical assets through improvements in range, interoperability, mobility and full 360-degree defense capability against the evolving threat.

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.

The MEADS program management agency NAMEADSMA is located in Huntsville, Ala.

SOURCE MEADS International