SLAM ER Continues to Demonstrate Expanded Response

The Boeing SLAM ER (Standoff Land Attack Missile Expanded Response) successfully completed the fourth of five developmental test flights at the Pacific Missile Test Range at Pt. Mugu, Calif, today.

"The continued success of the program is a tribute to the long hours and hard work of the entire Navy-Boeing team," said Capt. Rob Freedman, U.S. Navy SLAM ER program manager. "It is exciting to be coming into the 'home stretch' on cost, on schedule and exceeding performance requirements." The SLAM ER's target was a simulated fighter aircraft within a revetment. Revetments are walled enclosures that closely surround aircraft or other high-value targets and form an elevated protective barrier to shield them from nearby explosions.

An F/A-18 Hornet launched the test SLAM ER from 40,000 feet. The missile then descended to a low-altitude and flew a maximum range trajectory to the target. As it neared the target, the missile performed an aggressive pop-up maneuver from low altitude and then executed a steep dive to the target.

During the terminal phase of the mission, the SLAM ER transmitted an infrared video image of the target to a controlling F/A-18. The controlling pilot identified the target aircraft, employed the SLAM ER's new stop-motion aimpoint update feature to freeze the video of the target scene, and precisely selected a target aimpoint. The missile scored a direct hit. Depending on target conditions, the pilot has the option to track the target or simply refine the aimpoint as the weapon approaches impact.

The Boeing-built SLAM ER is the U.S. Navy's next-generation multimission cruise missile. It provides the U.S. Navy with surgical strike capability against high-value fixed land targets, ships in port, or ships at sea. Designed for deployment from carrier-based and land-based aircraft, the SLAM ER can easily be adapted for ship launch. The missile can be launched from safe standoff ranges greater than 150 nautical miles.

The SLAM ER incorporates a new titanium unitary warhead designed to more than double the penetration of the original SLAM; this increases the overall number of target opportunities for the new missile. The SLAM ER's new planar wings provide more than double the standoff range of SLAM, allow the missile to perform adaptive terrain following at low altitude, increase missile survivability, and provide superior performance for attacking targets located at high altitudes.

The stop-motion aimpoint update improves the missile's operator interface and substantially reduces pilot workload and training. The SLAM ER's mission planning relies largely on the solid foundation of the in-service SLAM automated mission planning module and includes updated software consistent with the new capabilities found in the SLAM ER.

The SLAM ER will be the first production weapon system to incorporate automatic target acquisition. Automatic target acquisition uses a general pattern matching algorithm to match a reference photographic image of the target with the infrared seeker's image of the target. The algorithm determines a match using the entire scene and directs the missile to the intended aimpoint. Automatic target acquisition is fully funded and is expected to enter service in 1999. The SLAM ER's flight test schedule calls for the fifth and final development test flight to take place later this month.

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For further information:
Pat Frost
(314) 234-6996