Boeing SLAM ER Completes Test Phase

The Standoff Land Attack Missile Expanded Response (SLAM ER) program successfully completed its final two combined development test/operational tests (DT/OT-2 and -3) June 19. The tests took place at the Land Test Range, China Lake, Calif. The first SLAM ER DT/OT was successfully completed June 2.

"The Navy is extremely pleased with the SLAM ER performance through both test phases," said Capt. A.J. Benn, U.S. Navy program manager for SLAM ER. "Beginning with first flight in March 1997, SLAM ER has turned in one flawless performance after another. The men and women of the fleet are another step closer toward having a significantly improved missile available to them."

DT/OT-2 demonstrated the SLAM ER ability to attack a hardened aircraft shelter, using a low impact angle to attack the shelter door. Lt. Cdr. Brenda Scheufele of the Weapons Test Squadron, launched the missile from an F/A-18 Hornet flying at 8,000 feet. Capt. Casey Travers, from Air Test and Evaluation Squadron Nine, controlled the SLAM ER from a second Hornet through a route that included more than 33 nautical miles of terrain-following mode, a terminal search altitude of 4,129 feet, and then maneuvered to attack the front of the target. The result was a direct hit.

The next test, DT/OT-3, also a long-range flight, demonstrated the SLAM ER capability against a high-altitude, land-based target. The target was a simulated portable radar installation situated atop China Lake's Coso Peak, at 8,063 feet. Launched by Lt. Grant Kowalchick of Air Test and Evaluation Squadron Nine, the missile flew a mission route that included a terrain-following flight profile on the way to the target. Lt. Rich Burr of the Weapons Test Squadron, controlled the missile after it climbed to a 13,170-foot search altitude and then executed a pop-up maneuver and a 50-degree dive toward the radar site. This test also resulted in a direct hit on the target.

Mission planning for both launches was conducted using the SLAM ER Mission Planning Module hosted on the U.S. Navy's Tactical Automated Mission Planning System. As the missiles approached their targets, they transmitted infrared seeker imagery to the standoff control aircraft via their weapon data links. Once the control pilots identified their targets and the specific aimpoints, they commanded the SLAM ERs into final attack using a combination of Stop Motion Aimpoint Updates and commanded track modes of the SLAM ER seeker.

The Boeing Company supports the Navy in this phase of the SLAM ER test program. The SLAM ER Operational Evaluation is scheduled to begin in August 1998.

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