Boeing Demonstrates First JDAM For 500-Pound Bomb

The U.S. Air Force and Boeing successfully launched the first Boeing-developed Joint Direct Attack Munition kit for a MK82 500-pound bomb recently at Eglin Air Force Base, Fla.

The JDAM kit, which converts gravity bombs into smart munitions by providing guidance, navigation and control, was originally developed for 1,000 and 2,000-pound warheads. The new kit was developed to take advantage of the huge inventory of 500-pound warheads worldwide. Boeing funded the development of the smaller JDAM kit using the same components found in the standard 2,000- or 1,000- pound JDAM configuration.

"The results of the flight are very impressive," said Carl Avila, Boeing JDAM program manager. "This is a major milestone as it confirms the MK82 as a member of the JDAM family of weapons."

This first guided launch of the smaller bomb kit impacted within three meters of the target. The accuracy demonstrated was well within the U.S. Defense Department's requirement for the JDAM system. The flight also demonstrated the combined all-weather accuracy of the JDAM and the F-15E radar targeting.

In another "first", this marked the first JDAM release from an F-15E aircraft.

The U.S. Air Force sponsored the launch as part of the F-15 Low Cost Weapons Integration program. An F-15E launched the weapon from 20,000 feet altitude and at a range of 5.25 miles from the target. In a separate test, the F-15E demonstrated its ability to radar-designate a target of opportunity and transfer the acquired data to a JDAM being carried on a weapon station.

JDAM now has configurations for 2,000-, 1,000-, and 500-pound weapons. Additional growth to the JDAM low-cost family of weapons potentially includes extending the range to greater than 35 miles, improved GPS accuracy, low-cost terminal guidance and additional warheads. A demonstration of the low-cost extended-range JDAM is planned for September.

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