Boeing SLAM ER Moves Closer to Full-Rate Production

The U.S. Navy has successfully completed the first phase of its verification testing of its Standoff Land Attack Missile Expanded Response, or SLAM ER, bringing the Boeing-made missile one step closer to entering full-rate production. The test took place on the China Lake, Calif., test ranges.

U.S. Navy Lt. Keith Henry launched the SLAM ER from an F/A-18C Hornet on Oct. 21. The test demonstrated the enhanced software features that contribute to the SLAM ER's ability to hit the critical node of a simulated surface-to-air-missile site -- similar to those encountered in Operation Allied Force.

The SLAM ER flew more than 80 nautical miles en route to the target before another F/A-18C, piloted by Lt. Russ McCormack, took control. During the last moments of flight, Lt. McCormack identified the target and updated the SLAM ER's navigation commands. His aimpoint updates enabled precise selection of the final point of impact.

"We were confident the missile would perform as advertised," said Bob Gower, Boeing general manager of the SLAM ER program. "During operational tests this summer, our Navy customer identified several desired improvements. This test verifies that the improvements we incorporated over the last few months work as planned, and we accomplished this on schedule, within budget."

The new software in SLAM ER is designed to allow pilots to detect their intended targets more easily and provides better maneuverability on approach to the target aimpoint. Another improvement scheduled for SLAM ER includes automatic target acquisition, which will give SLAM ER an autonomous capability while retaining terminal pilot control.

The final phase of testing, scheduled to begin in November with Air Test and Evaluation Squadron Nine at China Lake, is scheduled for completion in January.

SLAM ER achieved an early operational capability this summer and is currently deployed in several operating areas.

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