U.S. Air Force Successfully Tests Boeing AGM-86D CALCM

The U.S. Air Force recently flight-tested the new AGM-86D Conventional Air-Launched Cruise Missile (CALCM) at White Sands Missile Range in New Mexico.

The missile was launched from a U.S. Air Force B-52 bomber and flew a pre-planned flight path to its target -- a hardened, buried target complex, which the warhead penetrated prior to detonation.

Boeing is under contract to convert Air Launched Cruise Missiles (ALCM) to a CALCM variant designated as AGM-86D.

"The AGM-86D will be able to destroy buried or reinforced targets from standoff ranges of hundreds of miles," said Carl Avila, Boeing ALCM/CALCM program manager. "While the penetrating warhead provides the warfighter with a critical new tool, the key enabling technology is the precision accuracy upgrade -- first fielded in the Block 1A configuration -- that puts the CALCM within meters of the target."

The AGM-86D uses an advanced unitary penetrating warhead and precision accuracy guidance to hold a portion of the hard and deeply buried target set at risk. Previous conversions have been for the AGM-86C CALCM, which has a 3,000 pound-class blast fragmentation warhead.

CALCM has become the Air Force's long-range standoff weapon of choice, principally because of its unparalleled ability to deliver very large warheads with exceptional accuracy over distances in excess of 600 miles.

The conversion process includes a total disassembly of the ALCMs -- some of which have been in storage for several years -- refurbishment or replacement of nearly every part, overhaul of the engine and other hardware, structural modification of the airframe, then reassembly with modified avionics and a new conventional warhead.

CALCM is the only air-launched, conventionally armed, long-range standoff missile deployed in the Air Force inventory today. Coupled with long-range bombers and air-refueling aircraft, the CALCM missile provides the Air Force a highly responsive capability to launch very accurate conventional attacks against targets located nearly anywhere in the world, without the support of bases located outside the continental United States.

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