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MISSILES AND ROCKETS

Little Bird conducts live-fire DAGR tests

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Lockheed Martin and Boeing have successfully fired the Direct-Attack Guided Rocket (DAGR) system from an AH-6 Little Bird light attack helicopter, it was announced on 13 July.

The trials, which were intended to validate both the weapon system and the platform, took place at Yuma Proving Grounds in Arizona in mid-May and involved two separate firings of the 70 mm Folding Fin Aerial Rocket (FFAR) system.

Lockheed Martin engineers mounted the DAGR four-pack launch canister on the outboard rail of a modified XM299 launcher carried by the AH-6 test platform.

The Little Bird firings were performed as a running fire, using a ground designator, and then self-designation using the AH-6's onboard L-3 Wescam MX-15D1 targeting system. According to Lockheed Martin, "the DAGR rocket was

extremely accurate in hitting the laser aimpoint in both tests".

In March, the DAGR was test fired from the Boeing AH-64D Apache and, because it is designed to be compatible with the M299 family of launchers, it offers potential integration on all rotary-wing AGM-114 Hellfire laser-guided air-to-ground missile capable platforms such as the Apache, Little Bird, Kiowa, Black Hawk, Cobra, and Tiger. Twelve successful guided flight tests have been conducted to date.

Before the Little Bird test, Boeing's AH-6 International Capture Team Leader Fred Jernigan told Jane's that the DAGR had been selected for integration because, as well as already being fully compatible with the helicopter's systems, it behaves in exactly the same way as the Hellfire to the extent that the operator is unable to tell the difference. "The advantage [of DAGR over an unmodified FFAR round] is that

you are virtually guaranteed a precision kill with each rocket," he added.

The DAGR system has a proprietary rocket pod that hold four rockets, giving the AH-6 eight precision-guided rockets with a pod mounted on either side.

Other FFAR guided rocket systems in development include the Alliant Techsystems (ATK) and Elbit Systems Guided Advanced Tactical Rocket (GATR), BAE Systems' Advanced Precision Kill Weapon System (APKWS), and the Raytheon/Emirates Advanced Investments (EAI) Talon. The General Dynamics Armament and Technical Products (GDATP) Hydra 70 is already in service with the US Army and a number of export customers, including the UK and Germany. ●

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