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MBDA DEMONSTRATES BRIMSTONE MISSILE LIVE FIRING FROM APACHE HELICOPTER

MBDA and Boeing have successfully completed a series of physical trials and firings of Brimstone on the AH-64E attack helicopter to confirm the feasibility of integrating the missile with the United Kingdom's future Apache AH-64E fleet. These trials validate a prior UK MOD study contract with MBDA and Boeing that confirmed integration was expected to be low risk.

The programme was funded by a UK Ministry of Defence (MOD) contract, awarded to MBDA in September 2015. It included a range of environmental and sensor compatibility trials, as well as functional and avionics trials to demonstrate new platform software and functionality implemented into the platform and cockpit by Boeing. Boeing performed the platform and cockpit software modifications and managed the trials programme at Mesa and Yuma, Arizona, using a leased United States Government AH-64E in just nine months. All this activity culminated in a number of successful guided firings.

These firings demonstrated the capability of the weapon to guide using Brimstone's Semi-Active Laser (SAL), Dual Mode SAL/millimetric wave (mmW) and fully autonomous mmW guidance modes. The weapon releases were from hovering, moving and manoeuvring/banking scenarios against Main Battle Tanks and Pickup Truck targets. All of the firings utilised fully telemetered missiles instead of those with a warhead to confirm performance. The UK MOD's trials objectives were met with missile telemetry being gathered, confirming that the weapons separated with active fin control off the rails, with no tip-off concerns. The data collected from these missile firings will be used to enable future optimisation of Brimstone for the AH-64E capability.

Whilst using the current Brimstone capabilities, and with further enhancements planned, an impressive range of unique capabilities have already been demonstrated. Dan Girardin, Boeing Flight Test Engineer, Mesa AZ: said "The mmW autonomous shot from a moving and banking platform against an off-axis target with the missile hitting the MBT turret ring was the most aggressive shot I have seen in my 30 years of the Apache programme"

Dai Morris, UK MOD's Complex Weapons Senior Responsible Officer in FMC-WECA welcomed the results saying, "UK MOD is working together with MBDA to develop the missile capability the British Army requires. Brimstone is part of a family of capabilities, which in addition to the needs of the warfighter, will be aimed at delivering wider benefits including pan-platform utility, stockpile resilience and better overall value for money for Defence".

Notes to editors:

MBDA is offering this derivative of Brimstone, marketed as the Future Attack Helicopter Weapon, as the primary armament for the UK's AH-64E Apache fleet. FAHW builds on the combat proven Brimstone missile that will primarily offer a lethal anti-armour capability combined with its unique ability to reliably and precisely strike fast moving, manoeuvring targets in high collateral risk environments as well as enhanced Insensitive Munition compliance which minimises the risk from ground fire to the weapon and safe ship operations.

Brimstone is a unique air-to-surface precision attack weapon currently being used in operations over Syria and Iraq by the RAF. Already demonstrated from land, sea, fast jet and remotely piloted aircraft, Brimstone provides a true multi-role/multi-platform approach and very high single shot lethality to reduce whole life cost ownership of complex weapons. It is used for the engagement of fast moving and manoeuvring targets, as recently demonstrated from both Tornado GR4 and Reaper RPAS, achieving direct hits against targets operating at speeds up to 70 mph and proving ideal for operations in collaterally constrained environments. Brimstone is also being integrated onto Typhoon for the Royal Air Force.

The physical trials are also supported by an Apache FAHW demonstrator, as part of MBDA's capability development test bed. Former British Army Attack Helicopter pilots are involved in developing a user-focused cockpit solution; ensuring that using FAHW is focused on the operator's needs. This cockpit system demonstrator is on display at MBDA's stand at the Farnborough International Air Show.

With a significant presence in five European countries and within the USA, in 2015 MBDA achieved a turnover of 2.9 billion euros with an order book of 15.1 billion euros. With more than 90 armed forces customers in the world, MBDA is a world leader in missiles and missile systems.

MBDA is the only European group capable of designing and producing missiles and missile systems that correspond to the full range of current and future operational needs of the three armed forces (land, sea and air). In total, the group offers a range of 45 missile systems and countermeasures products already in operational service and more than 15 others currently in development.

MBDA is jointly held by AIRBUS Group (37.5%), BAE SYSTEMS (37.5%), and Leonardo - Finmeccanica (25%).

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