

MBDA SEA CEPTOR Successfully completes its final first of class firing trials



Figure 1 – Simultaneous engagement on two targets.

While MBDA was showcasing Sea Ceptor at PACIFIC 2017 as an exciting new capability for Naval Based Air Defence (NBAD), the advanced air defence weapon system completed its final first of class firing trials for the British Royal Navy.

Following on from the first round of trials last winter, the second set of trials from Royal Navy's HMS Argyll saw the system tested against more complex scenarios, including rapidly engaging multiple simultaneous threats.

Sea Ceptor offers a step-change in capability compared with legacy systems like Sea Wolf, which it is replacing in Royal Navy service. While Sea Wolf gave Royal Navy warships the capability to protect themselves, with Sea Ceptor the navy's frigates will now also be able protect other vessels.

Speaking following the success of the trials, Nick Neale, Sea Ceptor Programme Manager at MBDA said: "The performance and capabilities of Sea Ceptor have been fully demonstrated in these outstanding trials. Recognising the complexity of the new system, the consistent level of success achieved is quite remarkable and testament to the quality of MBDA's verification and validation process".

Sea Ceptor's missile is called CAMM (Common Anti-air Modular Missile), and its unique features provide the key to this step-change in capability. These include its powerful rocket motor that provides double the range of Sea Wolf, and its active radar-seeker that allows the missile to engage targets without the need for complex and costly target illuminators.

CAMM also makes use of a soft-launch system that uses a gas generator to eject the missile from its canister, the benefits of which include: further increased range by saving all the rocket motor's energy to power the intercept, reduced minimum intercept range, reduced stresses on the launch platform, significantly reduced maintenance requirements/costs, more compact installation on ship, and removes the need to manage the hot gas efflux on board.

The Sea Ceptor weapon system will be the primary NBAD system on the Royal Navy's new type 26 frigates, providing local area, point and close in air defence.

Despite being brand new to the market, the benefits that SEA CEPTOR / CAMM offers have already been widely acknowledged internationally; with a number of international customers, including New Zealand, having chosen it as the basis for their future local air defence capabilities.

Sea Ceptor provides, through its compact installation, an ideal solution for Australian defence programmes such as SEA 1180 (Offshore Patrol Vessels) and SEA 5000 (Future Frigate Program).