

5th March 2009**WORLD FIRST FOR THE RAAF WITH ASRAAM**

In a world first for an Air Force and an infra-red guided missile, Air Combat Group (ACG) of the Royal Australian Air Force has successfully carried out the first in-service 'Lock After Launch' firing of an ASRAAM (Advanced short-range air-to-air missile) at a target located behind the wing-line of the 'shooter' aircraft. The firing was conducted from an F/A-18 fighter aircraft, at low level and typical fighter speed, at a target located behind the fighter at a range in excess of 5km. The result was a direct hit on the target.

The engagement simulated a "chase down" situation by an enemy fighter and successfully demonstrated the potential for an all-round self protection capability with the ASRAAM. This capability is inherent on all platforms that provide pre-launch 'over the shoulder' designation information such as F/A-18, Eurofighter Typhoon and F-35 JSF.

Commenting on the firing, a representative from Air Combat Group said "this demonstration of ASRAAM capability is a major step forward for the RAAF and greatly increases the lethality of ACG's F/A-18 fleet. It is a credit to the RAAF-MBDA-DSTO team who worked together to deliver this capability edge to the fleet."

ASRAAM entered service with the RAAF in July 2004. To provide unique levels of in service support, facilities were established in Adelaide injecting some AUS million into the South Australian economy over a period of 6 years. The facilities are located at the Defence Science & Technology Organisation at Edinburgh (SA) and at BAE Systems at Edinburgh Park. These facilities provide the in-country capability to support the front line equipment.

Having entered service with the Royal Air Force in 2002, and deployed on Tornado, Typhoon, and shortly F-35 JSF, the ASRAAM programme has provided a unique opportunity for information exchange between the respective air forces, government departments and scientific organisations.

Notes to editors

MBDA will be exhibiting a range of advanced air and naval weapon systems at Avalon 2009 and welcomes visits at Stand 2H9, Hall B to discuss the warfighting capabilities they provide. With industrial facilities in four European countries and within the USA, MBDA has an annual turnover of more than €3 billion and an order book of more than €13 billion. With more than 90 armed forces customers in the world, MBDA is a world leader in missiles and missile systems.

MBDA is the only 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.

Press contacts:

Jean Dupont
Group Head of Media Relations
Tel: + 33 (0) 1 71 54 11 73
jean.dupont@mbda-systems.com
Mobile: + 33 (0) 6 33 37 64 66