



B-1B achieves first triple munitions drop, target kill.

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From Dyess AFB Peacemaker



B-1 "Power"

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WRIGHT-PATTERSON AIR FORCE BASE, Ohio – A Global Power Bomber Combined Test Force crew, flying a B-1B at Edwards AFB, Calif., accomplished an Air Force first May 2 by successfully targeting three different weapon types against three separate targets in a single, 20 second bomb pass.

Part of the B-1 Block E Computer Upgrade Test Program, the effort showcased the system's new weapons flexibility as the crew released one MK-84 (2000-pound gravity weapon), three MK-82s (500-pound gravity weapons), and four CBU-89s (1,000-pound class cluster munitions), each striking targets approximately 10,000 feet apart.

"Today marks a major test accomplishment," said Lt. Col. Arnie Bunch, Global Power Bomber CTF director. "The team demonstrated conventional weapons flexibility without any glitches. As we add precision weapons to the mix, the B-1 warfighter should have unmatched strike capability long into

the future."


This is the first time in Air Force history that an aircraft's on-board weapon system has allowed employment of multiple weapon types against multiple, separated targets, automatically releasing munitions at the proper time and position in a single bomb run, the colonel added. "This release accomplished what would typically require three aircraft passes or a coordinated strike of three aircraft. Using this new capability, the Air Force will be able to dramatically decrease the number of assets put in harm's way during future aircraft attacks."

A major program milestone, the demonstration also was the first step in developing improved weapons flexibility for the B-1. In the next few weeks, the CTF will demonstrate further weapons flexibility by dropping both precision and non-precision weapons in a single run, Bunch said.

"This demonstrated weapons flexibility is a giant step forward in the B-1's overall Conventional Mission Upgrade Program," said Col. Mike Miller, B-1 system program director, Aeronautical Systems Center here. "It puts the B-1 closer to fulfilling its role as the backbone of the bomber fleet as envisioned by the USAF Bomber Roadmap. The next critical step in this maturation is successful completion of the Defensive System Upgrade Program, now in the early phase of testing."

In 1993, the Air Force initiated a series of phased upgrades, known collectively as the Conventional Mission Upgrade Program. CMUP is focused on increasing the B-1's lethality, survivability and sustainability in the conventional role. It will enable the B-1 force to provide the nation with a massive, penetrating, long-range precision attack capability, while ensuring the survival of the aircraft and its crew in a modern threat environment.

In summer 2003, the B-1 Block E program will begin tests to integrate the Joint Standoff Weapon and Joint Air-to-Surface Standoff Missile, which by approximately 2004, will add precision standoff capability. At the same time, new upgraded computer systems will be installed.

"Air Combat Command enthusiastically anticipates completion of the B-1 Block E program," said Col. Gregory Feest, ACC deputy director of requirements. "As we transform the bomber fleet to be more responsive in striking targets, the B-1's weapons flexibility will provide the Joint Force Component Commander immediate, on-call, un-paralleled strike options." 

(Courtesy of Air Force Materiel Command Print News Service)