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Patriot Advanced Capability-3 (PAC-3) System Conducts Successful Developmental/Operational Test

The U.S. Army and the Missile Defense Agency (MDA) announced today it has completed a successful intercept test flight of the Patriot Advanced Capability-3 (PAC-3) missile defense missile system at White Sands Missile Range, N.M. Preliminary test data indicates both targets were intercepted and mission objectives were achieved.

Objectives of this mission included demonstrating the performance of a PAC-3 missile with hardware changes to improve production capability and reduce missile cost. The test also demonstrated the system's capability to detect, track, engage and intercept two simultaneously-arriving ballistic missile targets. The targets for the mission were a modified Patriot-as-a-Target (PAAT), a Patriot legacy missile modified to represent a short-range ballistic missile (SRBM); and a STORM maneuvering tactical target vehicle. Two PAC-3 missiles were "ripple-fired" at each target, according to tactical doctrine, and in each instance the second missile automatically self-destructed.

Soldiers of the 2nd Battalion, 43rd Air Defense Artillery and the 3rd Battalion, 2nd Air Defense Artillery, Fort Bliss, Texas, participated in today's test.

The PAC-3 system successfully completed operational testing and began fielding in 2002. It was first used in combat during Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2003.

The PAC-3 Missile is a high-velocity, hit-to-kill interceptor missile, and is the newest addition to the Patriot family of missiles. It provides increased capability against advanced tactical ballistic missiles, and other air-breathing threats, such as aircraft and cruise missiles.

The Patriot PAC-3 program is managed by the U.S. Army Program Executive Office for Air, Space and Missile Defense and executed by the Lower Tier Air and Missile Defense Project Office in Huntsville, Ala.

Contact: Pam Rogers, U.S. Army Redstone Arsenal – 256-509-4966