



Archive

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PAC-3 Test Successful

The Missile Defense Agency (MDA) and the Army conducted an operational test of the PATRIOT Advanced Capability-3 (PAC-3) system at the Ronald Reagan Ballistic Missile Defense Test Site on Kwajalein Atoll in the Republic of the Marshall Islands on Thursday, May 30 (May 29 in the continental U.S.). Preliminary information indicates that a PAC-3 successfully intercepted the threat-representative ballistic missile target.

The test, designated OT-2, was designed to employ the tactical firing doctrine of ripple-firing two PAC-3 missiles against a single two-stage ballistic missile threat. The target was made from modified Minuteman motors with a separating reentry vehicle. This test was planned to demonstrate the system's ability to properly classify the high-velocity, low-radar-signature target as a tactical ballistic missile (TBM), discriminate between the reentry vehicle and debris, and to destroy the target.

While the PAC-3 intercepted the target, not all test objectives were met. The second PAC-3 missile failed to launch. Analysis of why the second missile failed to launch is ongoing.

Soldiers from the 2nd of the 43rd Air Defense Artillery Battalion of Fort Bliss, Texas conducted this firing mission in a tactical scenario.

This was the fourth operational flight test planned during Initial Operational Test and Evaluation (IOTE) for the PAC-3 system. IOTE is currently scheduled to conclude at the end of this month. A complete chronology of the PAC-3 test program is included as a separate document.

Formed in 1999 when the Army integrated developmental and operational testing and evaluation into a single command, the Army Test and Evaluation Command (ATEC) has been deeply involved in the PAC-3 program. ATEC's Developmental Test Command conducted extensive developmental tests on the PAC-3 system, and now ATEC's Operational Test Command is conducting the user field tests.

The PAC-3 missile is a high velocity, hit-to-kill missile and is the next generation Patriot missile developed to provide increased defense capability against advanced tactical ballistic missiles, cruise missiles, and hostile aircraft. Unlike earlier versions of the PATRIOT missile, that use an explosive warhead to destroy its target, the PAC-3 missile literally collides with its target in mid-air at extremely high speed, destroying the target and neutralizing its payload. Other system upgrades include: improved radar performance allowing enhanced target discrimination; and new system software that improves determination of target launch and impact points and that provides an interface with the Theater High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) system.

The PATRIOT PAC-3 program is managed by the Missile Defense Agency in Washington, DC, and executed by the Army Program Executive Office for Air and Missile Defense and the Army Lower Tier Air and Missile Defense Project Office in Huntsville, Ala. Lockheed Martin Missiles and Fire Control, Dallas, Texas, is the prime contractor responsible for the PAC-3 missile segment. Raytheon Electronic Systems Company of Bedford, Mass., the PATRIOT system prime contractor, is the system integrator for the PAC-3 missile segment.