

April 17, 2012

Marine helicopters deploy with laser-guided rocket



The WGU-59/B Advanced Precision Kill Weapon System (APKWS) II impacts a designated target during an operational test in China Lake, Calif.

NATIONAL HARBOR, Md. – The Advanced Precision Kill Weapon System (APKWS) II program manager announced the Marines recently fielded its highly precise, low-yield weapon to units in Afghanistan during a presentation at the Navy League’s Sea Air Space Expo here April 17.

Navy Capt. Brian Corey, APKWS program manager, confirmed Headquarters Marine Corps declared Initial Operating Capability March 27, authorizing APKWS to be employed in combat for deployment on AH-1W Super Cobra attack and UH-1Y Super Huey utility helicopters.

“This weapon will provide Marines with a much-needed capability for a precise rapid-fire missile system,” Corey said.

Corey said he is confident the weapon will be effective after successfully completing operational test in January. The combined government-BAE team conducted a series of tests to validate the readiness of the APKWS rocket to meet operational requirements, including safely launching and reliably acquiring, tracking and hitting laser-designated targets.

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The APKWS II (WGU-59/B) is a semi-active laser guidance section that integrates with current 2.75-inch rocket motors and warheads. It provides precision engagement of soft, lightly armored targets with low collateral damage.

APKWS can be fired from any helicopter or fixed-wing aircraft that can launch 2.75-inch rockets. The Navy is working toward integrating the weapon on the MQ-8B Fire Scout unmanned helicopter in 2013.