

Navy deploys new APKWS design for fixed-wing aircraft



An AV-8B Harrier equipped with the Advanced Precision Kill Weapons System (APKWS) during a test event at China Lake, Calif. The U.S. Navy delivered the first fixed-wing aircraft variant of APKWS in March 2016 to Marine Attack Squadron (VMA) 223 operating the AV-8B Harrier in theater. (U.S. Navy photo)

NAVAL AIR SYSTEMS COMMAND, PATUXENT RIVER, Md. – The U.S. Navy delivered the first fixed-wing aircraft variant of the [Advanced Precision Kill Weapons System \(APKWS\)](#) in March 2016 to Marine Attack Squadron (VMA) 223 operating the [AV-8B Harrier](#) in theater.

Seven months after receiving a requirement from Marine Corps headquarters, two program offices based at Patuxent River fielded the 2.75-inch rockets equipped with Semi-Active Laser (SAL) guidance capability.

“This capability will provide commanders with a warfighting alternative to better enable weapon-to-target pairing,” said [Col. Fred Schenk](#), AV-8B Harrier Weapon System (PMA-257) program manager.

PMA-257 and the Direct and Time Sensitive Strike program office (PMA-242) worked together to define a two-phase program to quickly field the weapon variant. The first phase expedited fielding of a limited AV-8B fixed-wing APKWS employment flight envelope

March 30, 2016

Navy deploys new APKWS design for fixed-wing aircraft

capability. This included the delivery of 80 guidance kits. The second phase will expand the fixed-wing APKWS employment envelope limits to the maximum extent possible for AV-8B.

“The intent of this requirement was to quickly provide the AV-8B with a low-cost, low-collateral damage, high-precision weapon in support of combat operations,” said Navy [Capt. Al Mousseau](#), PMA-242 program manager. “This entire effort showcases what unity of effort among all government and industry stakeholders can accomplish to expediently deliver capability.”

APKWS, a product of BAE Systems, is the only DoD fully qualified 2.75-inch rocket that uses Semi-Active Laser (SAL) guidance technology to strike targets in built-up and confined areas. The SAL is a laser seeker which allows the system to beam-ride reflected laser energy. The reflected laser energy is sourced by either airborne or ground-based laser designators providing positive target acquisition.

PMA-242 is responsible for the acquisition, development and sustainment of weapon systems, including anti-radiation missile systems; airborne rocket systems; precision guided munitions; airborne gun systems; and joint air-to-ground munitions. PMA-257 is responsible for life cycle sustainment of the AV-8B Harrier Weapon System for the U.S. Marine Corps and its allied partners.