

BAE Systems Completes First Tactical Configuration Ground-Launched Test of APKWS Laser-Guided Rockets



An artist's depiction of the APKWS laser-guided rocket. BAE SYSTEMS

BAE Systems announced June 2 that it had completed test shots of its APKWS laser-guided rockets from a tactical configuration ground-based weapon system for the first time. The proof-of-concept testing demonstrated the APKWS rockets' ability to deliver standoff precision-strike capabilities for ground forces, providing a solution for warfighters engaging targets with greater range than small arms fire and without the need for air support.

BAE Systems tested the APKWS rockets at the U.S. Army's Yuma Proving Ground, in collaboration with the U.S. Navy and Arnold Defense, a manufacturer of rocket launchers. The team used Arnold's Fletcher 2.75-inch/70 mm Weapon System concept – a purpose-built laser-guided rocket launcher for ground vehicles – to fire several shots.

“Our customers see the value in low-cost, precision-strike capabilities that reduce the risk of collateral damage, and they want the flexibility to deliver them from the platform of their choice,” said Greg Procopio, director of Precision Guidance and Sensing Solutions at BAE Systems. “Demand is growing for ground-to-ground precision munitions that provide a safe standoff distance for small ground units. We're working closely with our customer and partners to deliver that capability.”

Ground-launched APKWS rockets could provide mounted and

dismounted units with a unique way to engage soft and lightly armored targets from a variety of platforms, according to the company. The low size, weight and power requirements of ground-launched APKWS rockets make them useful for tactical lightweight vehicles, remote weapon stations, non-standard tactical vehicles and stationary platforms.



BAE SYSTEMS

“We designed Fletcher specifically as a ground launcher for precision-guided 70 mm rockets,” said Jim Hager, president and CEO at Arnold Defense. “Fletcher-launched APKWS rockets enable our military customers to engage targets from more than just airborne platforms. We envision Fletcher being used on everything from trucks and tracked vehicles to marine platforms in the future.”

APKWS laser-guided rockets are the only U.S. government program of record for precision-guided 70 mm rockets. All four U.S. armed forces use APKWS rockets, and it is available to U.S. allies via foreign military sales.