

Navy Accepts Delivery of First Tomahawk Block 5 Missile



The guided-missile destroyer USS Chafee (DDG 90) launches a Block 5 Tomahawk, the weapon's newest variant, during a three day missile exercise in November 2020. This event marked the first time a Block 5 Tomahawk missile was operationally tested, marking the Navy's transition to a more advanced capability for the fleet. *U.S. NAVY / Ens. Sean Ianno/Released* ARLINGTON, Va.—The U.S. Navy accepted its first Block 5 Tomahawk cruise missile from Raytheon Missiles & Defense in March 25 ceremonies at the company's facility in Tucson, Arizona.

The missile is one of the first five Block 4 Tactical Tomahawk missiles that have been inducted into the recertification process, which takes missiles at the midlife 15-year mark for overhaul, modernization, and re-certification as Block 5 versions.

All Block 5s will feature a new data-link radio and antennas and navigation system. The Block 5a version also will feature a new seeker kit to hit moving targets and will be called the Maritime Strike Tomahawk (MST). The Block 5b version will feature the Joint Multi-Effects Warhead System.

Deliveries of all-new Block 5 missiles will begin in late 2021, said Kim Ernzen, vice president of Naval Power at Raytheon Missiles & Defense, speaking during the ceremonies on Zoom.

Chris Daily, program area director, Naval Air Missiles, for Raytheon Missiles & Defense, said the Tomahawk “remains our “nation’s weapon of choice” and that “delivery of the Block 5 is the next evolutionary step for the Tomahawk.”

Ernzen noted that the Tomahawk entered service in 1983 and first was used in combat in 1991 during the Persian Gulf War. More than 2,300 Tomahawks have been fired in combat and 500 have been used in test firings. More than 4,000 had been delivered by 2017.

She said the highly survivable Tomahawk is “counted on for its precision” and that Raytheon is “taking existing capability and making it even better.”

Capt. John Red, the Navy’s Tomahawk Weapon System program manager, also speaking in the event, noted that each Tomahawk now only needs to return to Raytheon’s factory only once in the lifecycle of the missile, 15 years after production, for another 15-year life extension.

During the ceremonies, Ernzen and Red signed symbolically the DD250 form signifying the official transfer of the first Block 5 missile.

The Navy ultimately will field only the Block 5 version once the remaining Block 4 Tactical Tomahawks have been converted to Block 5s. The earlier Block 3 versions, which first entered

service in 1994, are being withdrawn from use and are being demilitarized.