

Navy Decision Approving Production Decision of AARGM- ER Expected Soon



The Advanced Anti-Radiation Guided Missile – Extended Range (AARGM-ER) could soon have low-rate initial production approved. *NORTHROP GRUMMAN*

NATIONAL HARBOR, Md. – The U.S. Navy expects to make a decision soon approving low-rate initial production of the Advanced Anti-Radiation Guided Missile – Extended Range (AARGM-ER), built by Northrop Grumman, expects to make a decision approving low-rate initial production soon, a program official said.

The milestone to approve proceeding to LRIP is “expected within weeks,” said Mike Overs, the Navy’s deputy program manager for Direct and Time-Sensitive Strike, speaking Aug. 3 at the Navy League’s Sea-Air-Space Expo at National Harbor, Maryland.

The AGM-84G AARGM-ER is a development of the AGM-84E AARGM that has been in service since 2012 with the role of destruction of enemy ground-based air defenses. The ER missile is considerably different in planform and appearance than the basic AARGM. The ER version is slightly shorter – 160 inches versus 14 inches – than the basic AARGM but has a larger diameter (11.5 inches versus 10 inches) and is controlled by its tailfins rather than fins at the mid-body. The ER features a new rocket motor that takes up more of the length of the missile and is equipped with a new warhead.

The aerodynamic characteristics of the ER plus its larger motor give the missile “twice the tactical range in the same amount of time,” Overs said.

The development of the AARGM-ER was in part in response to the need to accommodate the missile in the weapons bay of the Air Force F-35A and Navy F-35C Lightning II strike fighter. The Marine Corps F-35B, which has a smaller weapons bay, will be able to carry the AARGM-ER on a wing station.

The AARGM-ER completed on July 19 its first developmental test shot, of which Over said, "met all objectives."

A total of 15 to 17 developmental test shots are planned.

Initial Operational Capability of the AARGM-ER is planned on the F/A-18E/F Super Hornet strike fighter and EA-18G Growler by the end of fiscal 2023.

Italy, Australia and Germany are equipped with the AARGM and are potential customers for the AARGM-ER, as is any nation operating the F-35.

Over said that there is a Joint Capabilities Technology Demonstration of a surface-launched version of the AARGM-ER planned for 2022, with the idea for use by the Army, Marine Corps or surface Navy.