

Continuous Improvements Ahead for the Army's Bunker Buster

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XM141 Bunker Defeat Munition

To support continuous improvement of munitions, the Project Manager for Close Combat Systems (PM CCS) has applied some outside-the-box thinking. The result — a systems approach to procurement called “in-stride modernization.” The goal is to provide warfighters with the quality products they need today while continuing to modernize the munitions they will use tomorrow. It’s a whole new way of looking at munitions product improvement as the Army transitions from the Current to Future Force.

The strategy is perhaps most easily explained using an example — the XM141 Bunker Defeat Munition (BDM), also known as the Shoulder-Launched Multipurpose Assault Weapon–Disposable. The BDM is a modified nondevelopmental item weapon system that can defeat fortified positions (bunkers) constructed of earth and timber, breach masonry walls and defeat lightly armored vehicles at an effective range of 150 meters. The weapon is being used successfully by Coalition Forces in *Operations Iraqi* and *Enduring Freedom*.

The BDM originated in response to operational deficiencies of existing shoulder-fired rockets identified during *Operations Just Cause* and *Desert Storm*. It was intended as an interim solution, but the follow-on weapons that were to have replaced it were canceled.

With the BDM in full production and needing improvements to be able to support a user requirement for safe firing from an enclosure or confined space, it became the perfect candidate for PM CCS’ in-stride modernization initiative. Working with contractor Talley Defense of Mesa, AZ, and Fort Benning, GA, the team will incorporate a new propulsion system, making it possible to meet new user requirements while retaining the weapon system’s original capabilities. The PM will implement a nonrecurring engineering effort for the BDM starting this fiscal year. The contract will be quickly negotiated via Alpha contracting. Once the design is finalized, a quantity of production representative munitions will be rapidly assembled and delivered for Army qualification and operational evaluation. Following approval by the Milestone Decision Authority, the new

BDM — called BDM Confined Space — will be fielded to the Army. The PM will maintain the flow of these critical weapons to Army inventory while substantially modernizing BDM capabilities to address Soldier requirements.

In-stride modernization allows the PM to quickly address new capabilities or deficiencies by improving existing systems instead of initiating a new program. As part of the effort, PM CCS will also improve BDM training, improve the warhead and make the weapon capable of meeting insensitive munition requirements. Limited funding for ammunition is a fact of Army life, but the need to rapidly respond to evolving needs of warfighters engaged in current operations is crucial. The key to these successful efforts is the partnership between the contractor, materiel developer, combat developer and the Soldier.

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