

GPS, JDAM Communication Upgrade Kits Delivered

by 1st Lt. Matt Keiper
B-1B System Program Office

On 1 April 1998, two of the first seven sets of B-1 Global Positioning System (GPS), Joint Direct Attack Munition (JDAM), and Communication Upgrade modification kits arrived at Tinker Air Force Base, Oklahoma, for installation into B-1 Lancer long-range heavy bombers. When these aircraft are delivered to Ellsworth AFB, South Dakota, later this year, they will also be fitted with modified Multi-Purpose Rotary Launchers, giving the B-1 the ability to employ the new JDAM weapon. The depot at Oklahoma City Air Logistics Center will install the modification kits in this initial block by January 1999, giving Air Combat Command seven JDAM capable B-1 bombers, 18 months ahead of schedule.

These modifications will significantly improve both the lethality and the survivability of the B-1, allowing the war fighters to strike multiple hardened targets on a single pass with highly accurate JDAM weapons. The B-1 is capable of carrying up to 24 of these munitions at once – eight in each of its three weapon bays. The JDAM used on the B-1 is a 2000 pound bomb variant which is guided to its target using GPS information. The on-going B-1/JDAM flight test continues to produce better than expected JDAM accuracy scores. Dr. Lou Cerrato, Chief, Weapons Development Integrated Product Team, JDAM Joint Program Office, said “B-1/JDAM development test scores are the best JDAM scores seen to date for horizontal targets (like low bunkers and aircraft on the ground) and is tied for first for vertical targets (like tall buildings).”

This new JDAM capability for the B-1 is a part of the B-1 Conventional Mission Upgrade Program (CMUP), a multi-year, multi-faceted program to configure the B-1 to carry out its role as the primary USAF long-range heavy bomber for conventional warfare. While the GPS, JDAM and Communication Upgrade modification kits are being installed, OC-ALC will also install the ALE-50 towed decoy system, which will provide greater survivability against defensive threats during combat missions. Completion of fleet-wide B-1 JDAM capability is scheduled for early 2001 and the towed decoy installation is slated to complete in 2003.

Lt Col Ernie Speck, Program Manager for the B-1 GPS, Communication and JDAM upgrade program, said “This is an exciting time for the B-1 community. We are seeing excellent flight test results and will deliver this much needed capability to the war fighters later this year.”