

Advanced 'detect and destroy' air defence system launched

Unprecedented in speed, accuracy, performance and target acquisition, Sky Sabre will be able to hit a tennis ball-sized object travelling at the speed of sound.

16 Regiment Royal Artillery is now accepting into service the first tranche of Sky Sabre and further procurements will be configured to operate in all parts of the globe.

Defence Procurement Minister Jeremy Quin said:

"Sky Sabre's spearheading technology has significantly upgraded the protection of our forces from threats from the air. This cutting-edge of defence system is a clear demonstration of our warfighting capabilities to those who wish to do us harm."

Sky Sabre has three key components expected to operate up to 15km apart in the battlespace:

- A Giraffe Agile Multi Beam 3D medium-range surveillance radar that rotates 360 degrees on an extending mast and can scan out to 120km for threats.
- A pioneering computer system linking up the radar and missiles sending them to their targets. It also provides 'Link 16', a tactical datalink allowing Sky Sabre to share its information with Royal Navy vessels, Royal Air Force systems and our allies providing full integration across UK Armed Forces and joint NATO operations.
- At 99kg each, the Common Anti-Air Modular Missiles (Camm) are double the weight of Rapier and have three times the range. They can reach speeds of 2,300mph eliminating fighter aircraft, drones and even laser-guided smart bombs. Eight missiles are mounted on the launcher, which fire in a unique multi-directional manner that significantly reduces its signature making it less of a target for adversaries. The launcher also re-arms in less than half the time of Rapier.

Commanding Officer of 16 Regiment Royal Artillery, Lieutenant Colonel Chris Lane, said:

"We will be able to compete with our peers and take on some of the toughest adversaries. It gives us a capability we have not had before; this new missile system with its new launcher and world-class radar will absolutely put us at the forefront of ground-based air defence."

Operational since 1970s, Rapier has seen service in Kuwait, the South Atlantic, and most visibly when it deployed to numerous London parks to combat any security threats during the 2012 Olympics.

Senior Training Officer, Major Tim Oakes said:

“Sky Sabre is so accurate and agile that it is capable of hitting a tennis ball sized object travelling at the speed of sound. In fact, it can control the flight of 24 missiles simultaneously whilst in flight, guiding them to intercept 24 separate targets. It is an amazing capability.”

Building on our ambitions outlined in the Defence Command Paper, Future Soldier and bolstered by an additional £24 billion over the next four years, we are ensuring our Armed Forces are equipped with world-leading resources.