

(7) Air-Launched Cruise Missiles: *Smart Bombs?*



Among the very few bombers equipped to launch cruise missiles are the B-52H Stratofortress, the B-1B Lancer and the B-2 Spirit. These three warplanes have thrilled audiences at many Canadian military air shows.

About the AGM-86

After being launched from a bomber aircraft, the AGM-86 cruise missile deploys its folded wings, tail fin and engine inlet. It is then powered by an internal jet engine that gives it a range of 1,100 kilometres.

The AGM-86 can guide itself along complicated routes at low-altitude by using an internal Global Positioning System and a navigation system built by Litton Industries in Canada. Initially developed in the 1970s to carry nuclear weapons, AGM-86Bs were tested in Canada, under a Canada-US weapons testing agreement that was signed by Liberal Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau.

Many AGM-86s were converted for conventional use and renamed AGM-86Cs. They carry high-explosive blast/fragmentation warheads and are known as Conventional Air Launched Cruise Missiles (CALCM).

The Bombing of Iraq

B-52H Stratofortress bombers are capable of carrying 20 CALCMs. They were used on several occasions to launch these weapons against Iraqi targets in 1991. In fact, the use of these weapons marked the beginning of the air war that almost completely devastated Iraq's civilian infrastructure.

CALCMs were also used against Iraq during Operation Desert Strike in 1996, and again during Operation Desert Fox in 1998, when 90 were launched.

The B-52H has been used to entertain Canadians at military air shows in at least five Canadian cities, namely, Abbotsford, Hamilton, London, Quebec and Shearwater.

Among the very few other bombers equipped to launch cruise missiles are the B-1B Lancer and the B-2 Spirit. Both of these weapons delivery systems have thrilled audiences at numerous Canadian war shows.

...and Afghanistan

Sunday, October 7, 2001:

The attack on Kabul began at 20:57 local time. Assadullah, a 16-year-old ice cream seller from Jalalabad was the first reported civilian victim during a cruise missile strike on an airfield near his home: "There was just a roaring sound, and then I opened my eyes and I was in a hospital. I lost my leg and two fingers. Other people were hurt. People were running all over the place." That first night, 37 were killed (20 in Kabul, 9 in Herat, 4 in Kandahar and 4 in Jalalabad). 81 were injured.

Tuesday, October 9, 2001:

A cruise missile destroyed the Afghan Technical Center, killing 4 night watchmen. The building was used by the UN landmine-removing contractors, in the Macroyan residential district of eastern Kabul.

Source: <www.krysstal.com/demo/cracy_2001.html#iraq>

More money for military air shows and warplanes?

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Get
Our
Priorities
Straight!

