

F-16 test dual mode 500-pounder in Scandinavië



GBU-49M improved rapidly to Middle East

Virtually no Noor on the peninsula of Bodo suspect the Dutch Royal Air Force 500-pounders at the Vidsel range in Sweden drops. Even if three Dutch 'Fighting Falcons' just crossed the Arctic Circle, only 200 meters by shaving their salty Salt Fjord.

One of those cases is the J-066, known as the Orange Jumper. The old beast is the test aircraft of the Air Force, and 'staged' with new software kilometers of cables and cameras. This time allows the guinea pig is part of a trio boxes that more than a dozen GBU-49M's fruit. M is in this case for movement. And that's exactly what it is in week 12 for the pilots of both Leeuwarden and Volkel

about. "Recent missions have taught us that we need a better weapon against moving targets," said Major Ralf. "Sometimes we fight quick pick-ups with a .50 back," added the Head Office Test Flies. "If our bomb falls a few meters in addition to there, it is according to the definition touch, but not enough to turn off the target. And it blows hard, the wind blows a GBU-49 literally off the goal. A kite during a mission barely knows how the wind is on the ground and there can therefore hardly to correct. Therefore, we now update lot3 to lot5, also called the GBU-49M. "



The Orange Jumper, just before he - literally - lose contact with the earth. The important thing is that the Air Force an improved dual mode it gets into the hands not only static but moving targets can be disabling. Besides GPS this weapon really work with laser. It allows you to follow a moving target. The possibility of this 500 pounds bombshell - literally - to steer is considerably increased. That fact does not necessarily have to be done by a kite, but a Forward Air Controller do just as well on the ground.



Head Office Test Flying, Major Ralf, viewing one of the bombs he will drop over Sweden. Ground staff has the projectiles as previously hung with great precision.

Practice makes perfect

In the Middle East is about to jump the Dutch F-16 detachment to the improved version of the GBU-49, knows sergeant Jonnie. The ammunition specialist acts on Bodø airbase as supervisor of 3 assemblers. "The weapon consists of several parts," the sergeant shows, his hand resting on a bomlichaam. Head, body and tail, including fins. Just an oversized carp, but with deadly cargo. "Depending on the mission goal I produce a Formula 1 car or a rally car," said Jonnie on the Norwegian munitions complex. "Basically I have 1 hour a bomb. But practice makes perfect; in the Middle East, we make it 6 in 2.5 hours. "According to the ammunition specialist, it is important to always remain highly concentrated. "Safety first!" He says. "If someone is tired, we stop right away."



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Interested Americans

A few hours later, Jonnie's final products confirmed the F-16s. 2 delegates from the US manufacturer Raytheon Company meanwhile watching with interest. They develop the bomb finally, of course in consultation with the Air Force. Netherlands According to them, the first major customer and therefore make them all possible support and training for both pilots and ground crew. The massive defense and technology company has great confidence in the test. She herself also conducted several tests. The results were fine and this week they expect nothing else. But very curious how the bombs in Sweden, they are.



Left: The sergeants 1 Derjan Fox (left), Just de Jong and Watze Hepkema (right) driving a bomb at the J-642. Right: De Jong is extremely concentrated so that the GBU-49M in exactly the right way firmly put the Fighting Falcon.

Launching customer

Why the pilots 16 weapons testing, rather than a handful? "The certification we only need 2 hits to book," said Ralf. "But then you just validate that it works in terms of technical specifications. Statistically, it says very little. We want to build a database and therefore we Alkmaar to drop bombs. All the more because we are launching customer. And these weapons do not come out of the war stock, but were purchased for operational testing. We want to know exactly how the bomb works so that our colleagues in the Middle East can make the most of. "



The steppes began. About half an hour the coffin airborne.

Thumbs up

The afterburner produces a lot of noise as the Orange Jumper selects the Norwegian airspace. Finally the big day. Together with two buddies flying the J-066 in a quarter to the Vidsel range in northern Sweden. In 3 waves toss the Fighting Falcons 16 bombs in several (moving) targets. The National Aerospace Laboratory (NLR), the leading Dutch independent knowledge company in the fields of aerospace, is on site to calculate the score (see box). The thumbs go up. The F-16 detachment in the Middle East can breathe a sigh of relief. If it goes well, it has within a few weeks an effective weapon.



After a successful first wave reverse the Dutch F-16s back to Bodø airbase.

The National Aerospace Laboratory (NLR) often plays a major role as the Air Force bomb test. In Scandinavia it was back on the front row. One of the researchers explains how NLR the essential data scrambling to make a report of its findings.

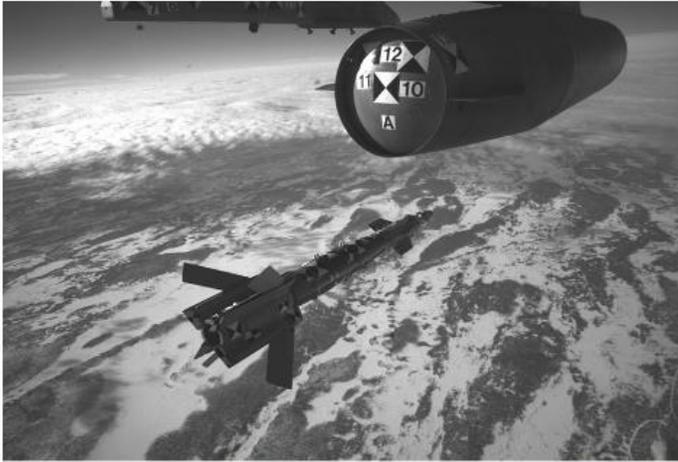
"Long before the pilots dropped their bombs, we inspected with 2 employees the goals on the Vidsel range. We took pictures and we determined the best position for our cameras. This preparation took us a day. In retrospect, we gave the pilots feedback and we had discussions about the sequence of drops.

Such tests we have done before, but never with so many bombs. That was now definitely something to be reckoned with, as goals after multiple direct hits at the end of their tether. What we do on the range, it is not rocket science, but it requires good planning. Up to an hour before the F-16s dropping bombs, we may be on the site. By the time we are looking for a safe haven, is the complete setup and run all cameras.

The bombs are very good cases. The result on the moving target is even excellent. 1 bomb right through the roof of the vehicle cases and went out through the door on the driver again. Even for the Vidsel range was the first time fliers booked such an outcome. I wonder if she can put back in that car ...

The work of NLR actually starts now. Last week course was spectacular, now is the time to make

analyzes using our images, which the Vidsel range and the F-16s. Based on what we have seen now, you can at least conclude that the GBU-49M can be used operationally. "



Photos: Dutch Aerospace Laboratory

