

Marine Corps Adds AGM-158A Joint Air-to-Surface Standoff Missile to F/A-18 Arsenal



U.S. Marines load an AGM-158A joint air-to-surface standoff missile on an F/A-18 Hornet assigned to VMFA-232 during the AGM-158A validation and verification at Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, California, Aug. 27, 2024. *U.S. Marine Corps | Lance Cpl. Jennifer Sanchez*

MARINE CORPS AIR STATION MIRAMAR, California – Marines with Marine Aviation Logistics Squadron 11 and Marine Fighter Attack Squadron (VMFA) 232 became the first to conduct ordnance operations with the Marine Corps' newest F/A-18 Hornet weapon, the AGM-158A joint air-to-surface standoff missile, during validation and verification testing at Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, California, Aug. 27-28, 2024.

The AGM-158A JASSM is a conventional, stealthy, air launched ground attack cruise missile with a range of 230 miles. In 2018, the United States employed the JASSM in combat for the first time, fired from U.S. Air Force B-1B Lancer bombers, destroying a Syrian chemical weapons manufacturer and proving the JASSM's effectiveness.

"The integration of the AGM-158A joint air-to-surface standoff missile into the F/A-18's arsenal significantly enhances the Hornet's capabilities, enabling it to strike targets from well beyond the reach of enemy air defenses," said Major Bradley Kirby, an aviation ordnance officer with 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing.

Marines conducted validation and verification testing by loading an AGM-158A JASSM onto an F/A-18 assigned to VMFA-232 to evaluate the loading procedures, connecting hardware and software – a required protocol before the JASSM is

incorporated in the Marine Corps arsenal.

As the Marine Corps tailors its advanced fighter attack aircraft and ushers in fifth-generation aircraft, it is also integrating new munitions with increased range, speed and lethality.

Marine Corps strike fighter platforms are postured to acquire long-range, maritime strike capabilities with the inclusion of the AGM-158B joint air-to-surface standoff missile extended range and AGM-158C long range anti-ship missile on the F-35B/C weapons integration roadmap.

“The JASSM not only surpasses the capabilities of any other weapon currently in the Hornet’s extensive weapons portfolio, but also the Marine Corps at large,” Kirby said. “This added capability will greatly increase 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing’s ability to support the joint force and enable greater freedom of maneuver across all operational domains.”