

*Diligentia et Accuratio*

# DESERT EAGLE

## Small Diameter Bomb explodes onto scene

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# Small bomb,

Weapons load team members from the 379th Expeditionary Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, Staff Sgts. Kevin Harvey and Chace Morris and Airman 1st Class Amanda Hicks, upload a weapons carriage with GBU-39/B small diameter bombs to the underside of an F-15E Strike Eagle. The jet flew its first sortie carrying the new munition into combat Oct. 5. The weapons load team is deployed from Royal Air Force Lakenheath, England.

*Photos by Senior Airman Ricky Best*



## Munitions crew plays key role in Small Diameter



**by Maj. Ann Peru Knabe**  
Chief, 379 AEW Public Affairs

Earlier this week the 494<sup>th</sup> Fighter Squadron made history when its aircrew flew small diameter bombs into the war theater for the first time. This milestone could not have happened without a small group of dedicated Airmen working several miles across base in the munitions storage area.

The munitions experts assigned to the 379th Expeditionary Maintenance Squadron recognize the advantage of the SDB.

"Its versatility starts with the bomb rack unit that we load the bombs onto," said Master Sgt. Paul Perron, 379 EMXS munitions systems technician, referring to the SDB and Bomb Rack Unit -61. "For our mission here, we load one BRU for each F-15E strike eagle.

This increases the pilots kill per pass ratio over the target. You get four bombs on a hardpoint verses one 500 pound or one 2,000 pound bomb."

Sergeant Perron's unit is responsible for munitions ranging from bullets and grenades to bombs for fighters. The 379<sup>th</sup> munitions experts inspect, test, assemble, disassemble, store and ship thousands of weapons a day, but the new SDB has created a buzz among the Airmen.

"It's exciting to be part of this cutting-edge technology," said Airman 1<sup>st</sup> Class Nahtana Williams, a 379 EMXS munitions apprentice. "People tell me I will be part of history because we were the first unit to use this."

The bombs, complete with fins, arrive in CNU-660 containers. When munitions specialists are ready to mate the bombs with the

# BIG debut



Bomb debut



Master Sgt. Paul Perron, NCOIC of conventional maintenance, applies leverage to the bottom of a GBU-39/B single round cradle assembly during upload.

BRU, they separate the individual bombs, line them up on the floor in a cradle, and lower the BRU unit over the munitions with a forklift. The process takes 30 to 40 minutes.

“We know it’s properly mated when we hear a click, so it is very simple.” said Tech. Sgt. Corey Hammond, 379 EMXS production supervisor. “That’s when the munition’s bomb lug securely latches into the BRU.”

Sergeant Hammonds’ work crew from Royal Air Force Lakenheath, England, has practiced preparing the SDB for more than a month back in England. When they deployed to Southwest Asia, the munitions troops were already comfortable preparing the SDB for its combat debut.

The SDBs are available “all up round,” coming prepackaged in rounds of four. This is where the versatility comes in. Other kinds of

bombs need tail kits and fuses installed so they take more effort compared to the SDB.

“If we need to replace a munition because it was expended, we can easily replace a single unit SDB,” said Sergeant Perron. “This saves precious time because there’s no assembly involved. We just open of the container and load it up.”

As for the half dozen Airmen who work on SDB munitions, most feel like they are significantly contributing to the global war against terrorism.

“We all feel like we’re part of something big,” said Sergeant Perron. “It’s been quite some time since we’ve seen a new major weapon system of this caliber. In the past, most weapons debuted during peacetime.”