



TOW MISSILE SYSTEM

Mission

To defeat threat armored vehicles and urban enclosed threats at extended ranges in all expected battlefield conditions

Entered Army Service

1970

Description and Specifications

The TOW (Tube-launched, Optically-tracked, Wire command-link guided) Missile System consists of a tripod, traversing unit, missile guidance set, launch tube, optical sight, battery assembly and any of five missile variations. The TOW missile system also includes a thermal sight that provides a capability for operations at night, in reduced visibility, and in a countermeasure environment. TOW missiles are all-up rounds encased in a disposable container.

The TOW system is mounted on various platforms including the Bradley Fighting Vehicle, the improved TOW vehicle, the Humvee and the AH-1F Cobra helicopter. In addition, it can be operated in a dismounted ground mode. The TOW is guided to its target merely by the gunner keeping the cross-hairs on the target. Corrective information is sent to the missile by two thin wires that deploy in flight.

Since initial fielding, five variations of the missile and two variations of the TOW subsystem have been fielded. In FY92 the direct-attack TOW 2A missile was replaced as the standard production missile by the top-attack TOW 2B missile - both are in use.

The ongoing TOW Improved Target Acquisition System (ITAS) is a material change to the current ground TOW 2 system that will increase target detection, recognition and identification ranges.



| | TOW 2A | TOW 2B |
|---|---------------|---------------|
| Missile weight: | 47.1 lb | 49.8 lb |
| Missile length: | 46.1 in | 46.1 in |
| Minimum range: | 65 m | 200 m |
| Maximum range: | 3,750 m | 3,750 m |
| Launcher weight: with TOW 2 mods | 204.6 lbs | |
| crew: | 2 | |

Information courtesy Army.mil

Manufacturer

Hughes (missiles), Hughes and Kollsman (night sights), Electro Design Mfg. (launchers)