

Army to test XM25 'smart' grenade launcher rifle (w/ Video)

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A soldier aims an XM25 weapon at Aberdeen Test Center, Md. Credit: US Army.

(PhysOrg.com) -- The US Army has recently announced plans to test the high-tech XM25 airburst grenade launcher this summer in Afghanistan, unleashing a weapon that veterans predict could be a game-changing advantage in the war. The XM25 can fire 25mm rounds that explode at any distance set by a soldier, effective at a range of up to 700 m. Because the 14-pound, \$25,000 gun can fire rounds in just seconds, it could replace the need to call in fire missions, artillery or airstrikes in some situations, which can take anywhere from several minutes to an hour to arrive.

Army officials say that the XM25 could be ideal in current situations in Afghanistan, where the enemy tends to hide behind barriers such as

walls and trees or in underground trenches, often at distances of 300 m or more. Right now, such targets are difficult to hit even for skilled marksmen, since a bullet is only lethal if it hits the head or vital organs.

Since the blast radius of the XM25 is equivalent to a hand grenade, it could allow US soldiers to target and kill these hidden snipers. For example, if an enemy is hiding inside a distant building, a soldier can point the gun at the building's façade, which measures the distance using lasers and sensors. The soldier can then add (or subtract) a smaller distance so that the round explodes at an estimated location close to the enemy. When the soldier fires, the microchip-embedded round tracks the distance it has traveled by the number of times it rotates. Upon exploding, the 25mm round spreads shrapnel in all directions, likely killing anyone nearby. Compared to a typical M4 carbine, the gun doesn't require extreme precision to kill even at these long ranges, potentially making it one of the deadliest hand weapons in the Army's arsenal.

"It brings, right now, organic to the squad, the capability to defeat targets that we're seeing everyday in Afghanistan -- targets that we can't currently hit," said Col. Doug Tamilio, project manager for soldier weapons with the Army's Program Executive Office [Soldier](#). "It will save soldiers' lives, because now they can take out those targets."

After the weapon is tested by a group of Army Special Forces Soldiers this summer, Army officials may expand the use of the weapon in the future. The Army is currently deciding whether to purchase 12,500 of the weapons, which are made by Heckler and Koch, although a final decision is awaiting a program review by senior Army officials.

More information: [Military.com](#)

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