



Photo credit: *U.S. Army*

## LAW IS BACK

Warfighters now have an improved shoulder-launched weapon system that lightens the Soldier's load and improves his mobility on the battlefield. An upgraded M72 Light Assault Weapon is back and actively supporting Soldiers and Marines in the fight.

The new LAW is ideal for the combat environment in Afghanistan, characterized by difficult terrain, high elevations, long foot patrols and fast-paced operations against insurgents, who are often protected by structures and fighting at close range.

According to 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division's lessons learned feedback from their time in Afghanistan, "The M72s provided the best balance of weight and bulk (for) combat effectiveness. It was an excellent munition to use against insurgents firing from close and medium range. It was both a good suppressive weapon and at the same time quite accurate and lethal."

Derived from its 66 mm, man-portable, direct-fire predecessor, the improved LAW is a more effective, easier-to-use weapon. The M72A7 weighs 8 pounds with a normal carry length of 30.5 inches, extending to 38.5 inches for firing.

The improved rocket motor is capable of carrying the warhead to the target at higher velocity and can accurately engage targets in excess of 200 meters. The use of an insensitive explosive in the shaped charge warhead makes the system safer, as it is less vulnerable to fragments from exploding munitions or small-arms fire. The M72A7 integrates the Picatinny Rail, a bracket that provides a standardized mounting platform for laser pointers or other alternative sights for night operations, making it more

versatile than previous versions.

To reduce the training expense of firing the new M72s, a 21mm, sub-caliber trainer and rocket is available. The trainer is effective in replicating the sight picture, operator controls and backblast. The sub-caliber rocket includes a tracer, allowing Soldiers to train effectively under realistic conditions with immediate feedback. The M72 training system is easy to use and enables Soldiers to maintain safety discipline required by the tactical round.

The payoff of the weapon and training is in combat. According to Soldiers from the 10th Mountain Division, "The M72s were fast and easy to bring into operation. Not only were they easy to carry, once fired, the empty launch tube could be collapsed and re-stowed more easily than other launchers."

-Program Manager Close Combat Systems