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[JSF Watch](#)**LASER GUNSHIP REVEALED**

So, a few months ago you might remember [we talk airborne laser](#) - a massive, Rube Goldberg contraption knocking down ballistic missiles.

During a phoner press conference, Boeing officials were working on another system that could engage ground targets. It's not as logical for such a weapon than one that's designed to strike me as redundant.

Well, now it seems Boeing has taken the first step in installing the weapon on a C-130H...

Boeing completed the laser installation Dec. 4 at Ft. Belvoir, including its major subsystem, a 12,000-pound turret moved into place aboard the aircraft and aligned with the control system, which will direct the laser beam to its target.

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With the laser installed, Boeing is set to conduct a series of tests leading up to a demonstration in-flight at mission-representative ground targets to demonstrate the military utility of the system. The team will fire the laser through a rotating turret that extends through the aircraft's belly.

"The installation of the high-energy laser shows that the ATL program continues to make tremendous progress. It will demonstrate a speed-of-light, precision engagement capability that will dramatically reduce collateral damage," said Bob Bunker, vice president and general manager of Boeing Missile Defense Systems.

"Next year, we will fire the laser at ground targets, demonstrating the military utility of this transformational weapon."

I just love the idea that a JTAC could soon call in for a laser strike on a target. Move over Spectre, say hi to the laser (see [Trek reference here](#)).

ATL, which Boeing is developing for the U.S. Department of Defense, will destroy, damage or disable ground targets, supporting missions on the battlefield and in urban operations. Boeing's Advar includes L-3 Communications/Brashear, which made the laser turret, and HYTEC, Inc., which made the weapon system.

Can't wait to see the test shoot next year...

-- Christian

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