

Updated March 27, 2025

The U.S. Army's Typhon Strategic Mid-Range Fires (SMRF) System

What Is the Army's Strategic Mid-Range Fires (SMRF) System?

Reported improvements to Russian and Chinese artillery systems present a challenge to the U.S. Army. Improved longer-ranged artillery systems, new employment techniques for unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), and the proliferation of special munitions (such as precision, thermobaric, loitering, and top-attack munitions) have renewed concerns about the potential impact of Russian and Chinese fires on U.S. combat operations and ground combat systems. In response, the U.S. Army is seeking to improve its ability to deliver what it refers to as long-range precision fires (LRPF) by upgrading current artillery and missile systems, developing new longer-ranged systems and hypersonic weapons, and modifying existing air- and sea-launched missiles for ground launch.

Originally known as the Mid-Range Capabilities (MRC) System, SMRF is part of the Army's LRPF modernization portfolio. It is intended to hit targets at ranges between the Army's Precision Strike Missile (PrSM) and the developmental Long-Range Hypersonic Weapon (LRHW) system. The SMRF Weapon System leverages existing Raytheon-produced SM-6 missiles and Raytheon-produced Tomahawk cruise missiles and modifies them for ground launch. The SMRF system is also known as the "Typhon" missile system (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Typhon Launchers and Battery Operations Center



Source: *The Drive*: <https://www.thedrive.com/the-war-zone/army-fires-tomahawk-missile-from-its-new-typhon-battery-in-major-milestone>, accessed July 6, 2023.

SMRF Weapon System Components

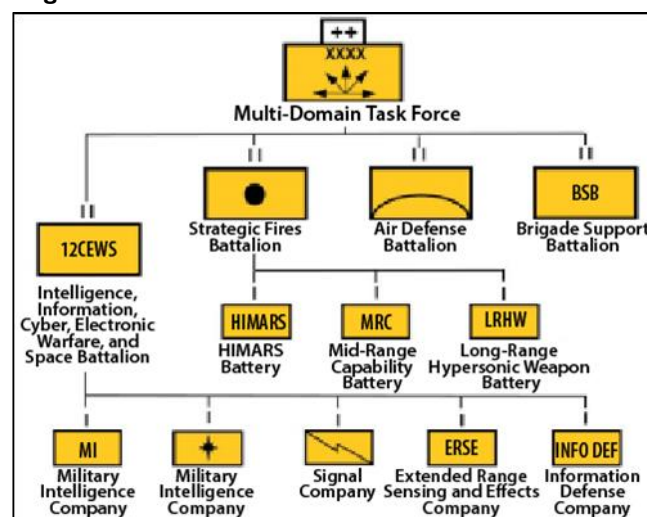
According to the Army, the prototype SMRF battery is planned to consist of four launchers and a battery operations center (BOC) (Figure 1). SMRF batteries are to be equipped with a number of prime movers, trailers,

generators, and support vehicles. Numbers of soldiers assigned to each battery is presently unknown. The Army originally planned for the first prototype SMRF battery to be fielded no later than the fourth quarter of FY2023 and three additional batteries were to be fielded on an annual basis thereafter.

SMRF Unit Organization

The Army plans to field one SMRF battery in the Strategic Fires Battalion of the Army's regionally aligned Multi-Domain Task Force (MDTF) (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Army Multi-Domain Task Force (MDTF) Organization



Source: Chief of Staff Paper #1 Army Multi-Domain Transformation Ready to Win in Competition and Conflict, March 16, 2021, p. 12.

Note: MRC Battery depicted above is now known as the SMRF Battery.

The Army describes MDTFs as “theater-level maneuver elements designed to synchronize precision effects and precision fires in all domains against adversary anti-access/area denial (A2/AD) networks in all domains, enabling joint forces to execute their operational plan (OPLAN)-directed roles.”

What Is Anti-Access/Area Denial (A2/AD)?

Anti-Access (A2) is an action, activity, or capability, usually long-range, designed to prevent an advancing enemy force from entering an operational area.

Area Denial (AD) is an action, activity, or capability, usually short-range, designed to limit an enemy force's freedom of action within an operational area.

Source: *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, November 2021.

Program Status

Reportedly, Lockheed Martin delivered the first of four prototype Typhon systems to the Army on December 2, 2022. The Army originally planned to field its first prototype SMRF battery no later than the fourth quarter of FY2023.

SMRF Test Launches and Full Operational Capability

On June 27, 2023, the Army reported,

The Army's Rapid Capabilities and Critical Technologies Office's Mid-Range Capability Project Office successfully demonstrated the launch of a Tomahawk missile from the Army's prototype Mid-Range Capability system. Soldiers assigned to the 1st MDTF conducted this live-fire event. This test follows the successful launch of an SM-6 missile from the Mid-Range Capability system earlier this year, confirming the full operational capability of the system.

SMRF Battery Deployed to the Philippines for Exercise Salaknib 2024

According to U.S. Army Pacific, the Joint Base Lewis-McChord's 1st MDTF deployed a SMRF battery to Northern Luzon, Philippines, on April 11, 2024, as part of Exercise Salaknib 24. According to *Jane's Defence*, the deployment of the SMRF battery was to be temporary for exercise purposes, and it is to be used during Exercise Salaknib 24 and the upcoming Exercise Balikatan 24.

SMRF Battery Activations and Fielding

Reportedly, the Army activated its second SMRF battery—D Battery, 5th Battalion, 3rd Field Artillery Regiment—as part of Joint Base Lewis-McChord's 1st MDTF in January 2024. Reportedly, a second Typhon battery has been activated at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, WA, and this battery is to be assigned to the Hawaii-based 3rd MDTF later in 2025. It was also reported that

the Army is working to field another three batteries to the remaining multidomain task force units between fiscal [years] 2026 and 2028 and plans to next field a battery to the 2nd MDTF based in Europe in fiscal [year] 2026.

SMRF Typhon Activities in the Philippines

Reportedly in January 2025, the Army moved Typhon launchers from Laoag airfield in the Philippines to another location on the island of Luzon. According to a Philippine government official, "The redeployment would help

determine where and how fast the missile battery could be moved to a new firing position." U.S. Indo-Pacific Command (USINDOPACOM) officials reportedly indicated that the United States "has coordinated closely with the Philippine government on every aspect of the MRC deployment, including the location," and further noted "the relocation was not an indication that the batteries would be permanently stationed in the Philippines." In terms of the impact of the Typhon deployment,

The weapon [Typhon] drew sharp criticism from China when it was first deployed in April 2024 during a training exercise. In September, when the United States said it had no immediate plans to pull the Typhons out of the Philippines, China and Russia condemned the deployment as fueling an arms race.

2025 SMRF Live Fire Exercises

Reportedly, the Army does not plan to conduct a Typhon live fire exercise during spring 2025 exercises in the Philippines. It was further noted that the

Typhon has remained in the country, angering China, which has criticized the move and warned it could destabilize the region. Officials have yet to fire the missile system in the Philippines. It is unclear how long Typhon will remain in the Philippines or if it will go elsewhere in the Pacific theater.

Reportedly, the Army does plan to conduct a Typhon live fire exercise during the summer as part of Exercise Talisman Sabre in Australia.

Potential Issues for Congress

Stationing Locations for SMRF Batteries

According to previously noted reports, the Army has one SMRF battery stationed at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, WA, with another scheduled to be deployed to Germany in FY2026 and a third SMRF to be assigned to a Hawaii-based MDTF by the end of 2025. The locations of the final two SMRF batteries is not known publicly, and Congress might decide to engage with Army leadership regarding the stationing plans for the final two planned SMRF batteries.

Potential Deterrence Value of SMRF Units

Previously noted reports suggest that China considers the deployment of SMRF batteries in the Philippines and the Indo-Pacific as potentially "destabilizing" and that their presence in the region could lead to an "arms race." Given these reactions, it could be argued that SMRF units are contributing to deterrence operations in the Indo-Pacific and might also play a similar role in other regions as well. Given this possibility, Congress might wish to engage with the Army, Department of Defense leadership, and Combatant Commanders to discuss how this potential deterrence value can best be utilized in other theaters of operation.

Andrew Feickert, Specialist in Military Ground Forces

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