Lightweight 155mm Howitzer (LW 155)

Provides direct, reinforcing, and general support fire to maneuver forces and directs support artillery for Stryker Brigade Combat Teams.

DESCRIPTION AND SPECIFICATIONS

The M777 Lightweight 155mm Howitzer (M777) incorporates innovative designs to achieve lighter weight without sacrificing the range, stability, accuracy, or durability of the current M198 howitzer system it replaces. The lighter weight is achieved through lower trunnion height and the use of high-strength titanium, a primary component of the lower carriage and cradle assembly. Two M777s can be transported in a C130 aircraft and can also be dropped by parachute. The M777's lighter weight, smaller footprint, and lower profile provide improved strategic deployability, tactical mobility, and survivability. The primer feeding mechanism, loader-assist, digital fire control, and other automation enhancements will improve survivability, lethality, and combat reliability, as well as provide light artillery with a semi-autonomous capability that is currently found only in self-propelled howitzers.

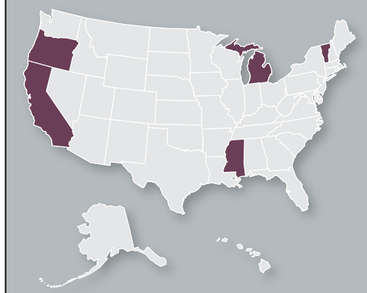
M777 replaces the M198 howitzer as the general support artillery for light forces in the Army. M777 is a jointly managed program with the Marine Corps as the lead agency for development of the howitzer and the Army as the lead agency for development of Towed Artillery Digitization (TAD), the digital fire control system for the M777.

PROGRAM STATUS

- **Current** Low-rate initial production for 94 Marine Corps guns with conventional fire control
- Developmental testing of howitzers equipped with digital fire control successful and near completion
- Digital fire control program has synchronized the with the basic howitzer
- **1QFY05** Operational testing commenced
- Once type classified, the digital fire control-equipped howitzer will be designated the M777A1. All future howitzers will be procured in the M777A1 configuration.

PROJECTED ACTIVITIES

- **2QFY05** Joint Milestone C for full-rate production decision of the M777A1
- **2QFY05** Full-rate production contract award and production begins
- **4QFY06** Army initial operational capability of M777A1 (howitzer with digital fire control)



CONTRACTORS

Prime Contractor: BAE Systems (United Kingdom and Hattiesburg, MS)
Castings:
Precision Castparts Corporation (Portland, OR)
Digital Fire Control:
General Dynamics (Burlington, VT)
Howitzer Body: Hydro-Mill (Chatsworth, CA)
Castings: Howmet Castings (Whitehall, MI)

INVESTMENT COMPONENT

Modernization

ACQUISITION PHASE

- System Development and Demonstration
- Production and Deployment