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GUIDE & SEEK

THE USAF'S USE OF GUIDED WEAPONS IN KOREA, 1950–51

MAIN IMAGE ***Boeing EB-29 serial 45-21745 of the USAAF's 19th Bombardment Group releases its single 12,000lb (5,440kg)*** **Tarzon** ***radio-guided bomb during a raid on the Sinuiju bridges crossing the Yalu River on March 29, 1951, while a Korean MiG-15 attacks from behind. Artwork by MADS BANGSØ © 2024***

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE USAF

TOP RIGHT ***An example of the 1,000lb (450kg) VB-3*** **Razon** ***Mk IV radio-controlled bomb on display at the National Museum of the USAF. The Mks I and II had single shrouds, whereas the Mks III and IV were fitted with double rear-mounted shrouds.***

Despite extensive development work on radio-guided bombs in the USA during the Second World War, the resulting hardware arrived just too late to see combat in that conflict. It was ready — just about — to see action in Korea five years later, however. **MICHAEL NAPIER** charts the short-lived operational use of the *Razon* and *Tarzon* radio-controlled bombs in the Korean War

DURING THE SECOND World War the US Army Air Forces (USAAF) researched extensively into guided weapons as a means of achieving greater accuracy than the contemporary unguided freefall bomb. By 1945 the VB-3 radio-controlled freefall bomb had been developed. It was codenamed *Razon*, an acronym from **R**ange and **Az**imuth **On**ly, which indicated that it could be controlled both across and along its ballistic flightpath. *Razon* was a development of the *Azon* weapon which could be controlled in azimuth only. *Razon* consisted of a standard 1,000lb (454kg) AM-M65 bomb fitted with a shrouded tail, incorporating battery-driven control surfaces, a radio receiver, a gyro unit to control the bomb in roll and a one-million-candlepower flare for sighting. It was aimed using a Norden Crab I bombsight modified with a "JAG" (Just Another Gadget) attachment. The USAAF's Boeing B-29 Superfortress could carry eight such weapons in its bomb bays.