

A 688-class attack submarine equipped with the Vertical Launch System (VLS) can execute – while submerged – a 16-Tomahawk land-attack missile salvo. Up to 12 additional Tomahawks can be loaded and fired from the ship's torpedo tubes. Attack submarines typically provide about 20 percent of the Tomahawk firepower in a carrier battle group, and their inherent stealth enables them to operate alone in environments where the enemy threat may prevent surface and air forces from operating without extensive protective cover.

In December 1998, USS Miami (SSN-755), commanded by CDR Jim Ransom and homeported in Groton, Connecticut, became the fifth U.S. Submarine to participate in a real-world strike operation when she launched Tomahawk cruise missiles in support of Operation DESERT FOX.

Two submarines participated in unusual Tomahawk exercise launches in 1998. USS Atlanta (SSN-712) conducted a dual launch consisting of a TLAM-C and a TLAM-N Quality Assurance Test (QAST). This was the first combined conventional and unarmed nuclear test launch from the same platform. USS Minneapolis- St. Paul (SSN-708) also fired a successful TLAM-N QAST during Exercise GLOBAL GUARDIAN '99, marking the first time that the European Command exercised unarmed nuclear command and control authority over a LANTFLT SSN.

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