

Aug. 15, 1961

R. E. CARLBERG

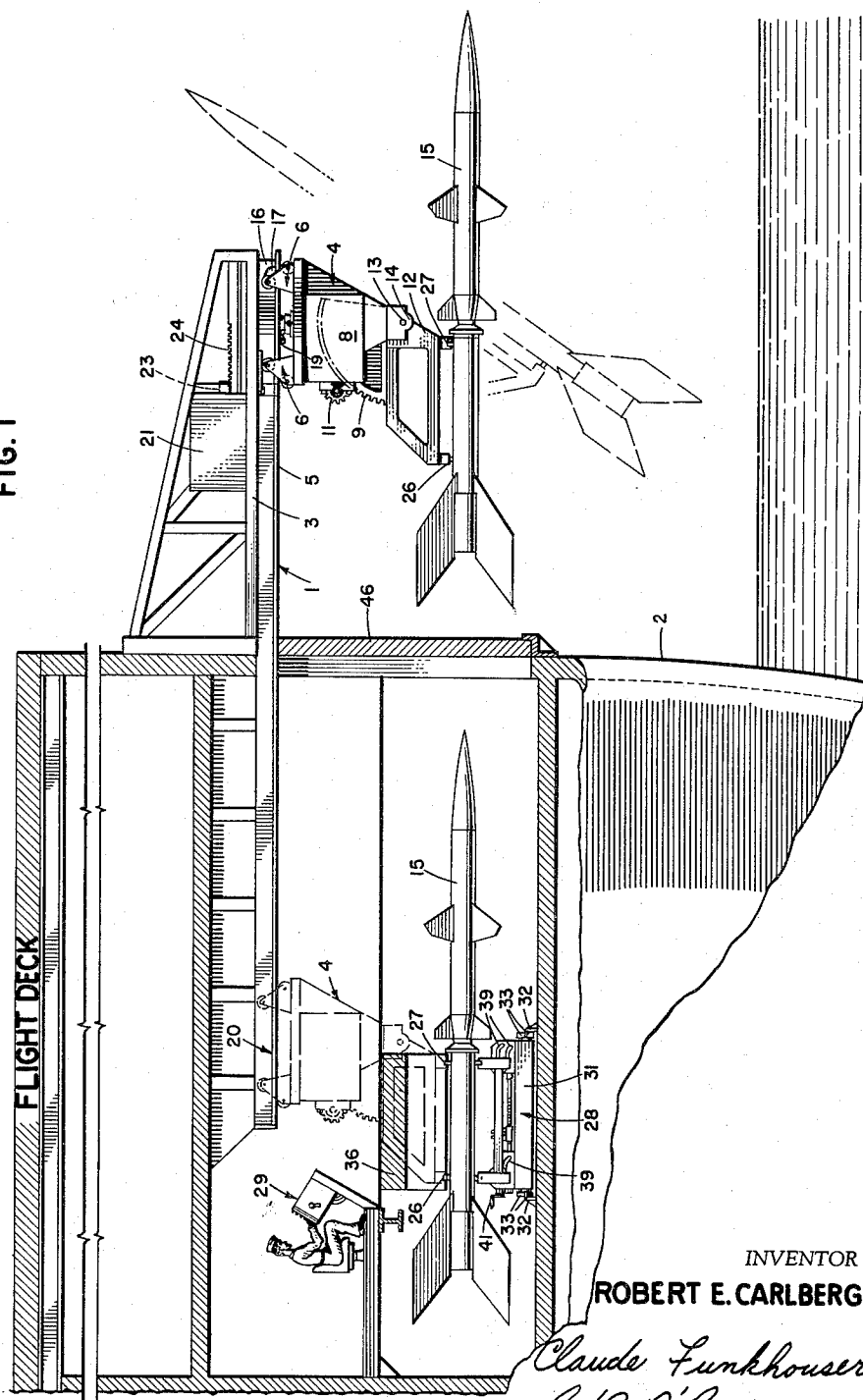
2,995,986

OVERHANGING SHIPBOARD AND MISSILE LAUNCHING SYSTEM

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3 Sheets-Sheet 1

FIG. 1



INVENTOR

ROBERT E. CARLBERG

Claude Funkhouser
G. D. O'Brien
ATTORNEYS

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R. E. CARLBERG

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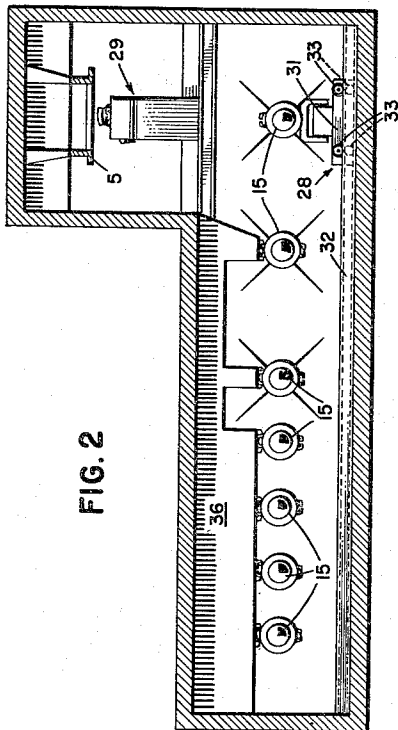


FIG. 2

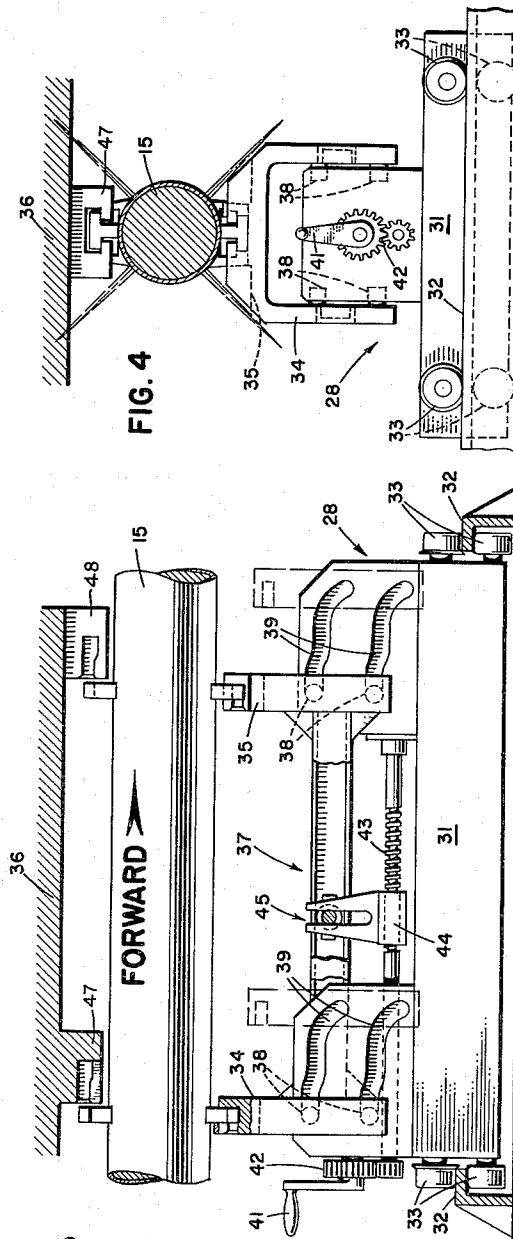


FIG. 3

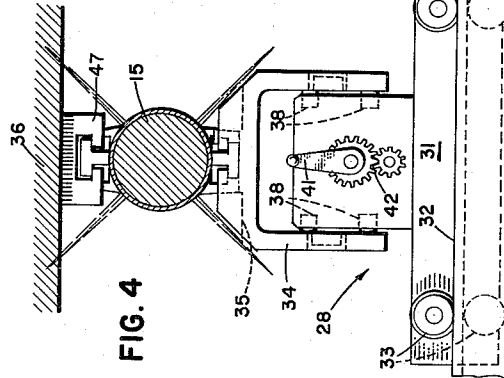


FIG. 4

BY

ROBERT E. CARLBERG

Claude Funkhouser
G. D. O'Brien
ATTORNEYS

INVENTOR

2,995,986

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FIG. 6

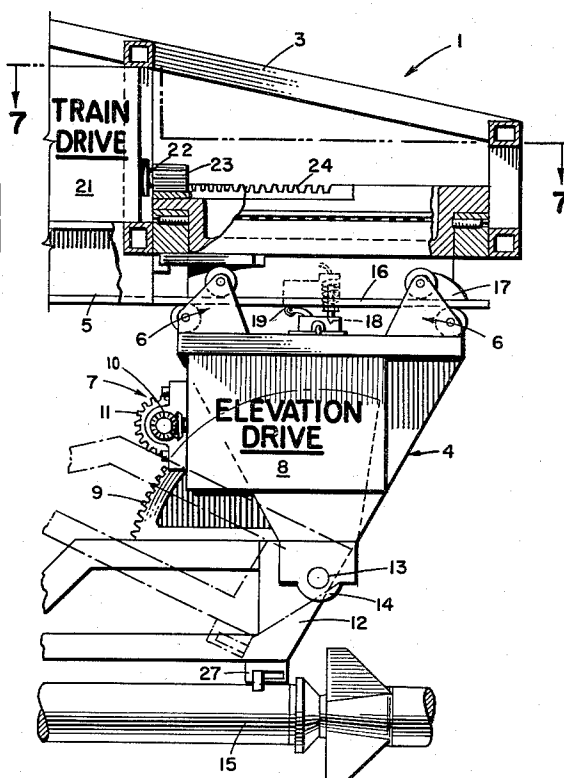
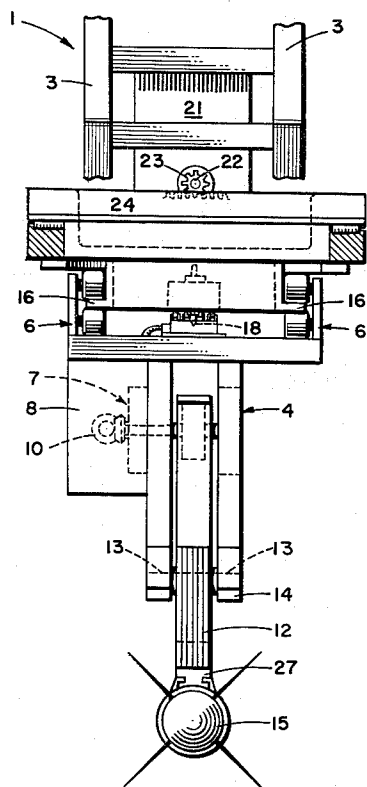
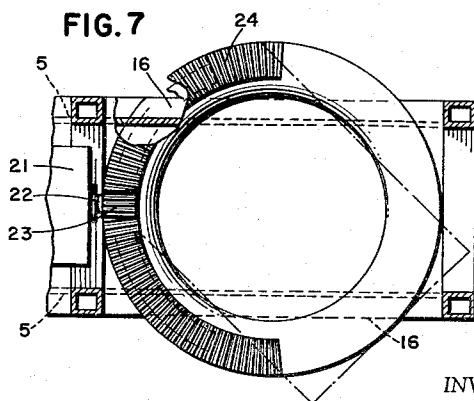


FIG. 7



INVENTOR

ROBERT E. CARLBERG

BY

Claude Funkhouser
G. D. O'Brien

ATTORNEYS

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OVERHANGING SHIPBOARD AND MISSILE LAUNCHING SYSTEM

Robert E. Carlberg, McLean, Va., assignor to the United States of America as represented by the Secretary of the Navy

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1 Claim. (Cl. 89-1.7)

(Granted under Title 35, U.S. Code (1952), sec. 266)

The invention described herein may be manufactured and used by or for the Government of the United States of America for governmental purposes without the payment of any royalties thereon or therefor.

This invention relates to a shipboard missile launching system, and more particularly to a launcher arrangement for use with aircraft carrier type vessels.

More specifically this invention is directed toward the provision of a missile launcher which can be disposed below the flight deck of an aircraft carrier to provide a missile launching capability for this type of vessel without materially interfering with the normal aircraft take-off, landing and stowage facilities thereof, and without any interference whatsoever to operations on the flight deck of the vessel.

Prior types of missile launchers have incorporated above deck mounted launcher heads wherein the stationary portion of the launcher mount is affixed to the ship's deck and provided with mechanisms for imparting movement in train and elevation to the movable portions of the mount. The handling and loading mechanisms of these prior art launching systems are disposed either below the launcher head to feed up through the deck to the launcher arms or the loading mechanisms are disposed to feed from a magazine and a deck mounted handling system adjacent thereto which advances the missile in a linear relation onto the rails of the launcher arms. Such launchers whether of a single or multiple arm launching type are in all instances superimposed on the upper deck of the vessel.

The instant launcher mechanism is advantageously rigged below deck to project from the side of the vessel in overhanging relationship thereto. By such an arrangement, a greater number of launching mechanisms can be used in the instant below deck type of installation since the total number of such launchers capable of installation on a vessel of the aircraft carrier type is limited substantially only by the linear dimension of the hull.

The incorporation of a launching system of the type described herein obviates the shortcoming of the prior systems wherein the use of a plurality of launching systems having the head units thereof mounted on the flight deck present a severe service inconvenience and limit the capabilities of the flight deck for aircraft usage. Such above deck launchers limit the space available for take-off and landing of aircraft and reduce materially the airplane stowage capacity of the flight deck.

Although the embodiment of the instant invention, as herein described, is directed to a single launching system with a ready service magazine disposed adjacent thereto, it will be apparent as the description proceeds that such an arrangement is readily adaptable to some degree of interchange of missiles between adjacent launching heads if desired and wherein a plurality of units may be mounted about the periphery of the ship's hull. Thus, in the event a launcher is disabled, the missiles assigned to and stowed in the ready service area immediately adjacent that launcher could be readily transferred to another launcher which preferably has the ready service magazine thereof in some sort of alignment relationship with the first such launching system.

It is a feature of the instant invention to provide a

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missile launching capability for aircraft carriers which is well adapted for installation below the flight deck of the vessel.

It is an object of the instant invention to provide a missile launcher for aircraft carrier type vessels wherein the launching takes place from a short launching arm disposed in an outboard relationship to the periphery of the vessel's hull.

In correlation with the immediately preceding object it is a further object to provide a missile launcher which advantageously provides for train and elevation movement of a missile when disposed on the launcher arm prior to missile firing.

Another object of the instant invention resides in a launcher installation wherein a high degree of simplicity of operation is provided while maintaining a feasibility for a high degree of safety and maneuverability in handling missiles prior to launching.

Another object of the instant invention resides in the provision of a launching system for aircraft carrier type vessels which provides substantially all of the desirable features of shipboard launching systems heretofore or now in general use while obviating substantially all of the aforementioned shortcomings thereof and yet providing a high degree of efficiency and reliability.

Other objects and many of the attendant advantages of this invention will be readily appreciated as the same becomes better understood by reference to the following detailed description when considered in connection with the accompanying drawings wherein:

FIG. 1 is a view in elevation, with portions thereof shown in section, of a shipboard missile launching system in accordance with the instant invention;

FIG. 2 is a front elevation of the launching system of FIG. 1;

FIG. 3 is an enlarged side elevation view, with certain portions thereof broken away and other portions in section, of a missile transfer cart of the launching system of FIG. 1;

FIG. 4 is a rear elevation view of a typical missile transfer cart with the body portion of the missile mounted thereon;

FIG. 5 is an enlarged fragmentary front elevation view of a portion of the launcher of FIG. 1 showing certain features of construction thereof in detail;

FIG. 6 is a fragmentary side elevation view, with portions thereof broken away and in section, of the mechanisms of FIG. 5; and

FIG. 7 is a plane view taken along the line 7-7 of FIG. 6 with portions thereof broken away.

Referring now to the drawings wherein like reference numerals refer to like parts throughout the several drawings, a launching system according to the instant invention is generally indicated at 1 for incorporation in the hull 2 of an aircraft carrier type vessel. The launcher comprises a protruding generally cantilever type beam arm arrangement 3 for carrying a launcher car mechanism 4 thereon. The launcher car mechanism 4, hereinafter referred to as the launcher car, is mounted on a track 5 as by a set of conventional type hanger and roller assemblies generally indicated at 6 for traverse between the launching position shown by solid lines and the missile pickup position shown by broken lines.

The launcher car 4 of FIGS. 1 and 5 through 7 additionally comprises an elevation gear mechanism 7, FIGS. 5 and 6, which is driven by a suitable prime mover generally indicated at 8, and coupled to elevation arc gear segment 9 by a pinion 11 which is driven by any other suitable gearing arrangement as indicated generally by bevel gearing at 10. The missile carrying portion 12 of the launcher car 4 is pivotally mounted for movement about the axis of trunnions 13 for movement

in journals 14 to elevate the missile 15 carried thereon, substantially as shown, with movement of the elevation arc 9 in a conventional manner. In the event an electric motor is utilized for drive 8, a plurality of suitable movable contactors are utilized for supplying power thereto. If desired, roller or spring finger type contactors may be incorporated, as shown at 19, in the structure of the releasable latch or stop 18.

The outer portion 16 of the hanger rail 5 is provided with fixed stops at 17 and a power actuated latch or spring detent type power released stop 18. When the launcher car 4 is disposed against the stops 17 and latched by stop 18, suitable interlocks, not shown, are disengaged and the outer portion 16 of the track or rail 5 which is mounted as shown in FIG. 7, is released in a manner permitting azimuth rotation with respect to the fixed beam structure proper at 3 to provide training movement for the missile launcher car 4 carried thereby.

The train drive 21 is shown in a generally diagrammatical manner to include an output shaft 22 for train pinion 23 which in turn drives the training gear 24. The train drive 21 comprises a prime mover of any suitable type such, for example, as a hydraulic or electric motor and suitable conventional regulator type control arrangements.

The rotatable outer portion 16 of beams 3 is returned to an aligned relationship with the fixed portion of the beam for retraction of the launching car 4 over track 5 to a loading station 20 within the ship for return of a non-fired missile for stowage, or for pickup of the next subsequent missile to be launched.

The geometric arrangement of the elevatable missile engaging portion 12 of the launcher with respect to the trunnion bearing 14 therefor is such that the missile T-lug and U-lug or shoe engaging portions 26 and 27 are disposed below and to the rear of the trunnion axis at 13. This asymmetrical arrangement advantageously provides for the desirable function of imparting a lifting motion thereto along an arcuate path with counter clockwise rotation as viewed in FIG. 1. This action is accomplished by rotation of the elevation arc gear by the drive means therefor and functions in a desired manner to permit passage of the missile engaging portions 26 and 27 of the launcher car over a missile which is disposed in pickup position at the loading station 20 on the ship's deck.

In a preferred mode of operation, the foregoing action occurs as the car is moved rearwardly along the beam rail or track 5 by the inclusion of multiple contact, longitudinal bar type trolley rails, not shown, along and between a portion of the fixed track 5. This provision is made in order that the missile lug engaging portions 26 and 27 of the elevatable car portion 12 will be clear of the launcher lugs when the launcher car 4 approaches the point of travel wherein interference would otherwise occur. This permits launcher car 4 to be moved further back along the beam to a position somewhat behind the position of the launcher T-lugs and U-lugs or shoes on a missile in its ready to load position on the lateral transfer cart 28. Thereafter, the pivotally mounted portion 12 of launcher car 4 may be rotated in a reverse or counterclockwise direction, as viewed in FIG. 1, to a position in alignment with the missile lugs and slightly rearward thereof. Thereupon, a slight forward motion of the launcher car will provide engagement by the matingly configured engagement portions 26 and 27 with the T-lug and shoe of the missile booster and function as it is then advanced, to pick up the missile from the cart 28. The launcher car 4 is then moved or rammed forwardly to the launching position at the forward or outermost end of the launching beam.

While structure for accomplishing advancement of the launcher car out on the beam has not been shown, it is considered to be within the scope of the invention to provide any such means as may be desired for this

purpose. Reference is made to my copending application Serial No. 783,624, filed December 29, 1958, for Below Deck Shipboard Missile Launching System wherein structural details for accomplishing this operation are disclosed. This ramming function may be accomplished by use of a chain rammer device of a conventional character or it may be accomplished by the use of a differential pulley arrangement or any other suitable mechanism disposed on the beam and operable from adjacent control stations 29. Alternatively, the ramming function may be accomplished by a self-contained motor driven pinion or sprocket mechanism mounted on the launcher car 4 and a rack or fixed guide chain arrangement provided on the beam for engagement by the pinion or sprocket member carried on the missile launcher car. In the latter case a drive motor would be mounted opposite elevation drive 8 and such additional contactors incorporated at 19 as required to provide power energization therefor.

Referring now to FIG. 2, the stowage facilities for the launcher are shown at one side of the launcher. However, it is to be understood that the launcher could be arranged between two stowage areas, one on each side thereof.

The arrangement of the stowage or magazine area immediately adjacent the launcher may be of the character illustrated wherein facilities are provided for stowing a plurality of missiles in side-by-side relation. The spacing of the missiles is such as to provide for assembly of the wing and fin elements on the missile at each of the two stations immediately adjacent the pick up station whereby these two missiles may be made ready for check-out. This may be accomplished at any desired time prior to missile transfer and loading on the missile launcher car. This same spacing may be used for all of the missiles if desired. However, the arrangement of the stowage area, as shown in FIG. 2, may be readily adapted for storing a greater number of missiles in laterally spaced adjacency in the same type of supporting structure when the missiles are stored with only the bird and booster sections in an assembled relationship. In this latter instance an individual missile is moved to a vacant wing and fin assembly station in the assembly area immediately adjacent the pickup position of the launcher car. At this station the wings are installed and the missile is checked out and made ready for transfer to the loading or pick up station for ultimate transfer to the launcher car for outboard launching therefrom.

It is highly desirable to accomplish all stowage and transfer of the missile with the bird portion connected to the missile booster and without any additional support for the bird portion. This is accomplished by utilizing both the upper and lower sets of missile lugs and shoes. The transfer cart shown at 28 in FIG. 2 is provided with lug and shoe engagement elements for releasable mating engagement with the lower lugs of the missile booster. The transfer cart 28 is arranged for lateral movement as by means of a track 32 and wheel arrangement 33 to a position immediately beneath any one of the stowed or ready service missiles which is desired to be moved to an adjacent vacant position. It is provided with means of any suitable nature such for example as illustrated at 37 for providing longitudinal displacement of the missile engaging elements 34 and 35 of the cart along the axis of the missile to effect missile disengagement of the upper shoe and the upper lug of the missile from the stowage rack 36 therefor and effect engagement with the transfer cart 28.

In the arrangement of FIG. 3, the carriage portion 37 may be moved rearwardly in an upward motion as determined by the path of the cam follower 38 in the fixed cam slots 39 in the fixed base portion 31 of cart 28. This movement in a longitudinal direction is accomplished by a suitable actuator mechanism comprising hand crank 41 which operates gear drive 42 and feed screw 43 for a

traveling nut 44 and linkage arrangement 45. When this movement takes place, the missile booster becomes disengaged from the fixed structure 36 which is provided with longitudinally aligned lug and shoe engagement elements 47 and 48 for engagement with the upper lugs and shoes of the missile. The missile and cart assembly are then free for lateral movement to the next adjacent station.

The particular structural and kinematic details of the disclosed device which may be used for this purpose form no part of the instant invention since such details will become apparent to one skilled in the art from the foregoing and following descriptions. Also, it is considered a matter of mechanical skill to adapt the system disclosed hereinafter to the lug arrangement on any particular type missile. For example, the relative movement required for missile transfer to the cart may be provided by movable supporting elements for the T-lug and U-lug or shoe of the missile with suitable actuators therefor.

In an alternative arrangement, the transfer cart is preferably mounted on wheels or roller members similar to the showing of FIG. 3, and which engage a portion of a track channel for linearly guided movement from the missile pickup position to a transfer position for the missile launching cart. In such an arrangement this member is provided with a missile supporting frame having fixed lug and shoe engaging portions. In the operation of this alternative arrangement, the cart is moved under the missile which is normally out of interfering alignment with the missile lower lug and shoe engagement portions of the cart. Thereafter, this member is axially aligned with the missile lugs and either the missile moved longitudinally with respect to the cart or vice versa. In the event the missile retaining member on the retaining rack is fixed as a part of the stowage structure the missile itself is moved longitudinally in suitably provided slots to permit the missile to engage the lower lug and shoe elements thereof with the mating parts on the transfer cart and subsequently disengage the upper lug and shoe of the missile from the supporting member on the fixed stowage structure. The missile is then transferred by the cart with movement along the tracks to a position directly below the pickup position in alignment with the mating portions of the launcher car.

Referring again to FIG. 1, the launching system is additionally provided with structure for supporting and providing movement of the blast doors 46 to permit movement of the launcher car with a missile thereon to the end of the beam. The blast doors are then closed prior to missile firing. These doors may be of a sliding nature for closure prior to missile firing, and to provide a weather closure for the access opening when the launcher car of the system is stowed. The details of the drive and hinged mechanisms in the case of a swinging door, not shown, or the guide rail, as the case may be, for a sliding door to move the same along rollers or on a longitudinal rail or track are not shown since they form no part of the instant invention. In order to minimize the length of boom overhang in the event that a swinging type door is desired, the door may be of a contoured configuration such that the opening is substantially sufficient only for passage of the missile, with the fins thereon, and the launcher car through the opening. This type of configuration will minimize the size of the blast doors which are necessarily heavy to hinge and yet effectively absorb the blast. Obviously, if a single or dual longitudinally slidable door is provided the boom overhang may be brought to a minimum dimension correlative to satisfactory design of the blast door for absorbing the blast as a missile is fired.

The instant boom is merely a structural supporting element, although communicating means and/or means of providing the aforementioned power source for the

drives may be incorporated therein. In the event B-end servo type hydraulic train and elevation drive units are carried by the cart A-end units may be incorporated on the fixed beam structure. Moreover, it is within the scope of this invention to include on the boom rail support, mechanisms or means for dispensing either hydraulic or electrical cables in the event it is desired to avoid use of contractors or mating type fluid coupling communicating mechanisms. Also certain connections to the electrical mechanisms in the missile when disposed on the cart may be incorporated in the system without departing from the scope of the instant invention. This latter situation is highly desirable in that a contact mechanism of a character known in the art may be incorporated in conjunction with the missile suspension mechanism for engagement with the mating or contacting portion therefor on the missile for external electrical power transfer thereto wherein warm-up of the internal mechanisms of the missile may continue as the missile is moved along the beam to the outer end of the launcher boom. Such a contactor arrangement further provides a means of arming and firing the missile. Also, though not shown since it forms no portion of the instant invention, in the event a cable payout system is utilized the cable may be carried by a reel on the launcher car and dispensed in and out in a Cordomatic type manner, if desired.

Obviously many modifications and variations of the present invention are possible in the light of the above teachings. It is therefore to be understood that within the scope of the appended claim the invention may be practiced otherwise than as specifically described.

What is claimed is:

In an aircraft carrier type of vessel requiring an unimpeded flight deck expanse, a below deck overhanging shipboard missile launching system comprising means for storing a plurality of missiles in aligned side by side relationship in a stowage area below the flight deck of said aircraft carrier vessel and wholly enclosed within the hull of said vessel, missile launcher supporting means entirely below said flight deck of said aircraft carrier vessel, said launcher supporting means including a fixed cantilever beam member extending permanently through the hull of said vessel in overhanging outboard relation thereto for both firing and storage functions, track means extending the length of said fixed cantilever beam member, a launcher car mechanism, means on said launcher mechanism for engaging cooperating mounting lugs on missiles in said stowage area, a hanger and roller assembly cooperating with said beam track means to enable said launcher car to remove a missile from said stowage area within the hull of said vessel and transport said missile along said fixed cantilever beam member to a position at the protruding end of said beam member for firing, blast door means in the hull of said vessel, means cooperating with the movement of said launcher car mechanism to open said blast door means for exit and entrance of said launcher car mechanism from the hull of said vessel and to maintain said blast door means closed during the launching of a missile, means carried by said launcher car for providing a zero length launching rail for a missile to be launched, and means for providing relative movement of said launching rail in train and elevation with respect to the outer protruding portion of said fixed cantilever beam member.

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