Production AH-64D Apache Longbow, Prototype RAH-66 Comanche Make Show Debuts Together at Annual Army Aviation Meeting

The U.S. Army's top two combat helicopters for the 21st century the AH-64D Apache Longbow and the RAH-66 Comanche are appearing in public together for the first time at the 1998 Army Aviation Association of America (AAAA) meeting this week in Charlotte, N.C. The inaugural visit by a production Apache Longbow, built by The Boeing Company in Mesa, Ariz., and Comanche Prototype No. 2, being developed jointly by Boeing and Sikorsky Aircraft, is giving attendees an up-close look at the future of Army aviation. Together, the two helicopters will provide the Army with unprecedented reconnaissance and attack capabilities

The two helicopters are on display side-by-side at the center of the AAAA exposition, which draws key U.S. Army, industry and government officials for three days of discussion and evaluation of Army aviation programs.

This marks the first joint meeting of the Apache Longbow and the Comanche since two prototype aircraft flew together in Florida late last year.

Boeing is converting the U.S. Army's combat-proven AH-64A Apache helicopters into next generation AH-64D Apache Longbow helicopters at a rate of three aircraft a month, while the Boeing-Sikorsky team is conducting an intensive flight test program for the Comanche at the Sikorsky facility in West Palm Beach, Fla. Comanche Prototype No. 1 has accumulated more than 60 flight hours evaluating flight controls and handling qualities.

Prototype No. 2 will begin flight tests in 1999 and focus on development of Comanche's integrated digital Mission Equipment Package. Low-rate initial production of the Comanche is expected to begin in 2004.

The AH-64D Apache Longbow is the next-generation version of the combat-proven AH-64A Apache, which is in service with defense forces around the world.

The multi-mission AH-64D features fully integrated avionics and weapons plus a state-of-the-art modem that transmits real-time, secure digitized battlefield information to a wide range of air and ground forces.

It also incorporates a series of enhancements that make it more effective in combat and more survivable, deployable and maintainable in the field. Its ability to communicate digitally with other aircraft and ground forces, and to share that information almost instantly, gives the AH-64D a significant advantage over current combat helicopters.

Boeing Mesa and Boeing Philadelphia are production facilities of McDonnell Aircraft and Missile Systems, a business unit of The Boeing Company.

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