RTM 322 Engine Integration for U.K. Apaches Gets Under way at The Boeing Company

Initial integration of the RTM 322 engine into WAH-64 Apache helicopters for the United Kingdom is under way at The Boeing Company in Mesa, Ariz.

Commencement of ground run testing of the RTM 322 engine marks a major program milestone, and is the result of more than eight years of integration efforts.

During testing last week, the two RTM 322 engines were run simultaneously for a total of 54 minutes at rates up to 101 percent of normal rotor rpm and 30 percent torque. Expanded ground run testing is scheduled to take place over the next few months.

The 2,100 shp RTM 322 engine, manufactured by Rolls-Royce and Turbomeca, is the first to be offered on the Apache with full authority digital electronic controls for more precise engine operation.

"We're pleased to be able to offer the RTM 322 engine as an option to new Apache customers throughout the world," said Chuck Vehlow, vice president of Apache programs.

The British Ministry of Defence has ordered 67 new WAH-64 Apaches with Longbow fire control radars and RTM 322 engines. GKN Westland Helicopters, Ltd., of Yeovil, England, is the prime contractor. Boeing and Rolls-Royce-Turbomeca are major sucontractors on the program.

WAH-64 Apache production will begin this month. As a subcontractor to GKN Westland, Boeing will build eight aircraft and will partially assemble the remaining 59 WAH-64 Apache aircraft at its Mesa facility. Final assembly, flight test, delivery and support for these aircraft will take place at GKN Westland's Yeovil facility.

First production flight of the WAH-64 Apache is expected to take place in late August or early September, with first deliveries to GKN Westland beginning in late September. First deliveries from GKN Westland to the Ministry of Defence will begin in 2000.

The United Kingdom is the second international customer for the AH-64D Apache, following The Netherlands, which has ordered 30 of the advanced helicopters.

The WAH-64 Apache is a derivative of the U.S. Army's AH-64D Apache Longbow, the next-generation version of the combat-proven AH-64A Apache, which is in service by defense forces around the world.

The AH-64D Apache Longbow incorporates a series of enhancements that make it more effective in combat, and more survivable, deployable and maintainable in the field. The Apache Longbow's fire control radar and advanced avionics suite give combat pilots the ability to rapidly detect, classify, prioritize and engage stationary or moving enemy targets at standoff ranges in nearly all weather environments.

Its ability to communicate digitally with other aircraft and ground forces, and to share that information almost instantly, gives the Apache Longbow a significant warfighting advantage over current combat helicopters.

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