First U.S. Army Unit to be Equipped With Boeing AH-64D Apache Longbow Helicopters Begins Collective Training

With the arrival of the 24th production AH-64D Apache Longbow multi-mission combat helicopter earlier this month, the first U.S. Army unit equipped with Apache Longbows has turned its attention to battalion-level training.

Members of the 1st Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment, who completed their individual pilot and maintenance training in Mesa, Ariz., now face three months of intensive company-level and battalion-level training and evaluation at Fort Hood, Texas.

The men and women of the 1-227th will complete a series of comprehensive classroom, flight and field exercises through mid-October to qualify them as the U.S. Army's first combat-ready Apache Longbow unit. Each Apache Longbow unit uses its 24 Apache Longbow aircraft for all attack and reconnaissance duties.

Members of the unit will undergo a rigorous field examination, which includes live fire exercises and performance demonstrations, on Oct. 19-23 before receiving their combat readiness certificates in a ceremony later that month.

The U.S. Army is upgrading its AH-64A Apache fleet to the next-generation AH-64D Apache Longbow over the next decade. Boeing is under contract to produce 232 AH-64Ds through 2002. The company had delivered 32 Apache Longbows through June 30 and is scheduled to deliver three more this month.

Members of the 21st Cavalry Brigade, who will lead all Apache Longbow battalion-level training over the next decade, are already at work at Fort Hood training flight and maintenance teams from the 1-227th.

Once the 1-227th completes its training, it will deploy overseas for field exercises with other Army units.

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

The Apache Longbow, built by The Boeing Company in Mesa, Ariz., 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.

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