Boeing Chinooks Help Hurricane Victims in Central America

The U.S. Army has ordered 25 Boeing CH-47D Chinook heavy-lift helicopters here to assist in Hurricane Mitch disaster relief efforts in Central America.

"Chinooks are ideally suited for this humanitarian mission," said James T. Caudle, Cargo Helicopters Project manager, U.S. Army Aviation Program Executive Office, Huntsville, Ala. "The Army's Chinook units are highly trained not only to handle military transport missions but also operations other than war, including the massive disaster relief that will be vital to Central America's recovery from this horrible storm. The Army's Chinook community is ready, willing and able to help these people, and we are grateful we have the capability to do so."

"Boeing Rotorcraft people should be proud of their contributions to this important mission," said Boeing Rotorcraft Vice President and General Manager Charles A. Vehlow. "Our Philadelphia rotorcraft team has designed, built, improved, modernized and provided technical support for Chinooks in the U.S. Army and nearly 20 nations around the globe for more than 30 years. There is no more reliable or efficient heavy-lift helicopter in the world.

"We also are exceptionally pleased that our U.S. Army partner is working with us on an Improved Cargo Helicopter (ICH) program that will modernize the Chinook fleet. The ICH program is under way now, and planned funding will begin deliveries of remanufactured CH-47Fs to the Army in 2003. CH-47Fs will maintain and improve the Army's heavy-lift capabilities well into the 21st century and enable the Army to meet military requirements and respond worldwide to emergencies and disasters such as Hurricane Mitch," Vehlow added.

The Chinook, with a load capacity up to 25,000 pounds and cruise speed of 145 knots, can move enormous amounts of food, water, medical supplies, building materials and construction equipment from airfields, ports and logistics centers to remote regions where help could not arrive for weeks.

The U.S. Army has ordered Chinooks from bases in Kentucky, North Carolina and Georgia to Honduras, where Army CH-47Ds based in Panama already are performing vital disaster relief missions.

U.S. Army Chinooks from North Carolina performed similar missions in Miami and Dade County, Fla., after Hurricane Andrew, when damage to roads and bridges prevented immediate transport of relief supplies and equipment on the ground.

Boeing Rotorcraft designs, manufactures, markets and supports military helicopters and tiltrotors at its facilities in Philadelphia; Mesa, Ariz.; and Chicago. Boeing Rotorcraft produces, develops and supports CH-47D and CH-47F Chinook tandem rotor helicopters for the U.S. Army, International CH-47SD Chinooks for international customers, AH-64D Apache Longbow attack helicopters for the U.S. Army and international forces, and CH-46 Sea Knight tandem rotor helicopters for the U.S. Marine Corps and U.S. Navy. Boeing produces the V-22 Osprey tiltrotor in partnership with Bell Helicopter Textron for the U.S. Marine Corps, Navy and Special Operations Forces and is developing the RAH-66 Comanche armed reconnaissance helicopter for the U.S. Army in partnership with Sikorsky Aircraft.

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