Boeing Apache Longbow to Make First Visit to Australia

Military leaders from around the world will get a fresh look at the AH-64D Apache Longbow when the world's most advanced multi-role combat helicopter visits Australia this week.

A production AH-64D Apache Longbow will make its first appearance at the Australian International Air Show '99 and will be available for demonstrations to key government and military leaders who have expressed interest in this versatile rotorcraft. A tour of key Australian defense facilities also is planned, although details have not been announced.

Apache Longbow was designed to fulfill a wide range of reconnaissance and combat missions, most without the need to reconfigure ordnance loads and electronic systems between missions.

Bob Mitchell, director of Apache Business Development at The Boeing Company in Mesa, Ariz., said, "We believe no other weapon system compares to Apache Longbow. We have a lot of competitors, but nothing comes close to matching the fully integrated weapon system we build here in Mesa."

With the U.S. Army now receiving its aircraft, two international AH-64D production programs under way, and several new programs on the horizon, Mitchell sees a prosperous future for Apache Longbow. In fact, the company anticipates a world market over the next decade for at least 600 AH-64D Apaches, not including the U.S. Army, which has nearly 750 AH-64As in its fleet.

The Boeing Apache business development team is responding to numerous requests from potential customers worldwide -- from the Asia Pacific region and Latin America, to Europe and the Middle East.

While some customers remain unnamed, the defense world is aware that countries like Australia, Spain and Turkey, among others, are serious about defense modernization programs, according to Tom Weir, manager of International Business Development at The Boeing Company in Mesa.

Weir said sales to The Netherlands and the United Kingdom confirmed the appeal for the aircraft's capabilities and made Apache Longbow the helicopter to beat. Pending orders in Kuwait add to the AH-64Ds winning track record, he said.

One reason the Apache Longbow continues to be so desirable is the U.S. Army's long-term efforts to keep it at the forefront of technology.

"From the very beginning," Mitchell said, "the U.S. Army has carried out plans to continually modernize the AH-64A Apache, which for years has been widely recognized as the world's best combat helicopter."

The expansion in Apache activity also will mean lower costs for customers, Mitchell said.

Although the company doesn't release aircraft pricing, Mitchell said Apache Longbows, which are the most capable combat helicopters in production, are "competitively priced with other helicopters when compared to mission requirements and capabilities."

"We're constantly battling other manufacturers who say that their products cost less," he said. "What customers aren't hearing is the one-on-one comparison between their aircraft and ours. Face to face, mission to mission, there's no comparison. Army tests demonstrated that AH-64Ds are 28 times more effective than our A-models. That's impressive. The aircraft itself is our most powerful sales tool."

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