U.S. Army - Boeing Team Successfully Completes CH-47F Test

The U.S. Army and The Boeing Company have successfully completed a test of an important improvement that will be incorporated into the CH-47F Chinook helicopter modernization effort.

A team from B Company, 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment, recently demonstrated a new enhanced air transportability kit that will be an integral part of the F-model Chinook.

The kit enables maintenance personnel to remove the Chinook's aft pylon and transmission, a necessary task to fit the CH-47 into large transport aircraft for deployment overseas. Reinstalling the aft pylon is equally easy with the transportability kit, which consists of nut plates on all aft pylon mounting bolt positions, quick disconnect fittings on all wiring and hydraulic system connections and removable formers in the aft pylon structure.

B Company's eight maintainers were the first U.S. Army team to use the kit, removing a pylon and transmission from a CH-47D in just over two hours. The team reinstalled the entire assembly with rotor blades in 3 hours 15 minutes during tests conducted at Hunter Army Airfield, Savannah, Ga., in mid-April. In the past, loading a Chinook on a C-5 Galaxy required 12 personnel and 100 man-hours.

Lt. Col. Tim Crosby, U.S. Army CH-47F program manager, praised the test team. "This early demonstration project is another example of risk reduction activities being conducted in support of the CH-47F engineering and manufacturing development phase," he said.

The Chinook team videotaped the entire exercise to produce a training documentary for the Army when the improved pylon installation kit is distributed throughout the CH-47 fleet.

The first CH-47F is scheduled to enter service in 2003. Boeing will modernize at least 300 Chinooks to ensure the U.S. Army retains its heavy-lift helicopter capabilities until eventual development and production of the Joint Transport Rotorcraft, slated to be the Chinook's follow-on.

The Boeing Company in Philadelphia designs, develops and produces world-class military helicopters and tiltrotor aircraft. Its products include the International CH-47SD Chinook, the AH-64D Apache Longbow fuselage, and, in partnership with Sikorsky and Bell, respectively, the RAH-66 Comanche and the V-22 Osprey.

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