Second U.S. Army Apache Longbow Battalion Begins Final Combat Readiness Training

The second U.S. ArmyAH-64D Apache Longbow attack helicopter battalion moved a step closer to combat ready certification today as the final elements of the battalion arrived at Fort Hood.

The Apache Longbow battalion now begins a full-scale unit training and fielding program that will end with certification in late October. Pilots and maintainers have been conducting individual training at Fort Hood since April.

The battalion, which is based at Fort Campbell, Ky., is equipped with 24 AH-64D Apache Longbow helicopters, built by The Boeing Company in Mesa, Ariz. The Army has designated the battalion as the 2nd Battalion, 101st Aviation Regiment.

The U.S. Army is modernizing its fleet of AH-64A Apaches into next-generation Apache Longbow helicopters, which link a wide range of avionics, electronics and weapons in one fully integrated weapon system. The Apache Longbow is 28 times more capable than the battle-proven AH-64A Apache, for years considered to be the world's best combat helicopter.

All pilots and maintainers from the Army's two Apache Longbow battalions received their initial training at Boeing in Mesa. The Army fielded its first combat ready Apache Longbow battalion in October 1998.

Training at Fort Hood, which is conducted by the 21st Cavalry Brigade, focuses on crew- through battalion-level collective training.

The next phase for the second Apache Longbow battalion will include simulated combat missions against opposing forces, live fire exercises and classroom activities that teach soldiers how to apply the tactics, techniques and procedures the Army uses in combat.

Apache Longbow, the world's only fourth-generation combat helicopter, is the rotorcraft industry's quintessential 21st century fighting machine. The helicopters are in service with the U.S. Army, and international variants of the AH-64D are being delivered to defense forces in The Netherlands and the United Kingdom.

With the radar, Apache Longbow crews can scan the battlefield in real time, classify and prioritize multiple threats, and digitally share this battlefield information with other AH-64Ds and other friendly forces.

The helicopter's unique design also makes it easily deployable and maintainable in the field.

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