Boeing AH-64D Apache Longbow Exhibits Agility in Aerobatic Tests

A series of dramatic aerobatic maneuvers, performed by an AH-64D Apache Longbow attack helicopter for the first time in public today, has showcased the aircraft's performance and agility.

The world's most advanced multi-role combat helicopter performed a series of hammerhead stalls, split-S maneuvers, and loops and rolls at weights never before flown at public demonstrations. Boeing pilots also reported that the AH-64D performed better during the aerobatic tests than its predecessor, the combat proven AH-64A Apache.

In earlier tests from July 30 through Aug. 9, the Apache Longbow proved its versatility by performing 12 sorties in 14.4 flight hours at gross weights exceeding 16,000 pounds (7264 kg).

"The combination of maneuverability and a fully integrated weapon system make Apache Longbow unique," said Robert Mitchell, director of Business Development. "The demonstration confirms that Apache Longbow is up to whatever demanding tasks that our customers might devise and train their crews to perform," he said.

The aerobatic maneuvers are the culmination of recent envelope expansion testing on Apache Longbow. The maneuvers prove performance and agility are inherent in the design, Mitchell said.

The demonstration today showcased a standard production Apache Longbow, equipped with a Longbow fire control radar, at a representative mission weight of 16,600 pounds.

The Apache Longbow's aerobatic maneuvers will be showcased for the first time internationally Sept. 28 through Oct. 1 at the International Defence Industry, Aerospace and Maritime Fair (IDEF) air show in Ankara, Turkey.

"We are the only ones who conduct aerobatic maneuvers at air shows at representative mission gross weights so this should be a real competitive advantage at IDEF and beyond," Mitchell added.

The test aircraft used in earlier tests varied from the standard production model because it contained 1,200 (544 kg) pounds of extra instruments to measure and document its performance.

"The AH-64D Apache Longbow performed better than the A-model in all maneuvers tested with the stress and strain of heavy loads," said Rich Lee, the project's lead pilot.

"We already knew the versatility of the Apache Longbow, and this demonstration shows the confidence we have in the aircraft. And this shows only a fraction of what Apache Longbow can do," he added.

The AH-64D Apache Longbow, in production by Boeing in Mesa, is the world's only fourth-generation combat helicopter. Apache Longbow is in service with the U.S. Army, and new aircraft have been delivered to the Royal Netherlands Air Force and GKN Westland Helicopters, Ltd., in the United Kingdom.

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