Second U.S. Army Apache Longbow Battalion Certified Combat Ready

The second U.S. Army AH-64D Apache Longbow attack helicopter battalion has been certified combat ready after completing eight months of intensive training at Fort Hood, Texas.

The Apache Longbow 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's 2nd Battalion, 101st Aviation Regiment, received its certification Oct. 28 during ceremonies at Fort Hood. The Army fielded its first combat-ready Apache Longbow battalion in October 1998.

To qualify, the men and women of the second Apache Longbow battalion completed a series of comprehensive classroom, flight and field exercises.

Members of the unit underwent a rigorous field examination, which included four live fire exercises and more than 3,000 flight hours during the collective training program.

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

"The soldiers are finding that the capability of the Apache Longbow is phenomenal," said Lt. Col. Greg Gass, battalion commander of the 2-101st 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 into 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.

Apache Longbow is the world's most advanced combat helicopter. 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 design also makes it easily deployable and maintainable in the field.

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