Official Launch of New Phase:$3.1 Billion RAH-66 Comanche EMD Contract Signed

Representatives of the Boeing Sikorsky RAH-66 Comanche program and the U.S. Army signed contract documents today in a ceremony that officially launched the $3.1 billion engineering and manufacturing development phase for the Comanche program.

The contract signing came less than two months after a Department of Defense Acquisition Board Milestone II review gave the go-ahead for EMD. "We accomplished this task by relying on the Alpha Contracting process, a major Defense Department acquisition reform initiative that streamlined the contract negotiation process, saving much time and money," said Brig. Gen. (P) Joseph Bergantz, U.S. Army Comanche Program Manager. "The hard work, trust and teamwork that made today's ceremony possible have benefited the Army, the contracting companies and the public we serve," Bergantz added.

"The Comanche Team has performed well," said Comanche Joint Program Office Director Arthur Linden. "The validation of the program's excellent record came from the Defense Acquisition Board and also from the 2000 Aviation Force Modernization Plan that recommended acquisition of 1,213 Comanche aircraft, valued at nearly $34 billion. Today's contract signing reinforces the Comanche's success."

During EMD, the Comanche Team will test and qualify the aircraft, including the fully integrated digital mission equipment package and advanced cockpit management system incorporating navigation, communication and target acquisition capabilities.

The program will manufacture and deliver five new Comanche helicopters for EMD testing; it also will deliver eight new aircraft to the Army for operational test and evaluation. The first U.S. Army Comanche unit will be operationally equipped in 2006.

The RAH-66 Comanche, the U.S. Army's 21st century combat helicopter, is being developed by the U.S. Army and a team of leading aerospace companies headed by The Boeing Company and Sikorsky Aircraft Corporation, a unit of United Technologies Corporation.

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