50th Boeing AH-64D Apache Longbow Arrives at Fort Rucker

U.S. Army pilots last week delivered the final three of 50 AH-64D Apache Longbow helicopters to be based at Fort Rucker, Ala., the center of individual U.S. Army helicopter pilot training. Col. Cash Striplin, Training and Doctrine Command's System Manager for Apache Longbow at Fort Rucker, was one of six pilots who flew the helicopters from Boeing in Mesa, Ariz., to Fort Rucker.

Three combat-ready Apache Longbow units are fielded at Fort Hood, Texas, Fort Campbell, Ky., and most recently at Fort Stewart, Ga. Currently the 1st Battalion, 2nd Aviation Regiment is in training at Fort Hood and will deploy to Korea later this year.

With the delivery of these three aircraft to Fort Rucker, the U.S. Army has fielded a total of 178 Apache Longbows. When the first five-year, multi-year Apache Longbow contract is completed late this year, the Army will have received 232 of the world's most advanced multi-role combat helicopters. The second five-year, multi-year contract -signed in 2000 - will bring the total number of U.S. Army Apache Longbows to 501 by 2006. Additionally, Boeing has delivered 39 AH-64Ds to international customers and is contracted to deliver 110 more over the next several years.

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.

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