Boeing Marks New Chinook Rollout, 40th Anniversary of Original

Boeing yesterday unveiled the CH-47F Chinook heavy-lift helicopter, the sixth Chinook type designed for the U.S. Army, during a ceremony at Boeing's manufacturing facility in Philadelphia.

The ceremony also commemorated the 40th anniversary of the first Chinook prototype test flight, conducted Sept. 21, 1961, by Boeing test pilot Leonard LaVassar, who attended the ceremony.

In remarks to an audience made up of employees and military and defense industry officials, Roger Krone, vice president and general manager of Boeing Army Programs/Rotorcraft, said, "Under this program, Boeing will modernize 300 Chinooks to the new F-model, which will continue its long service with the Army to the year 2033 and possibly beyond. The work of employees past, present and future means that Chinooks, built here in Philadelphia, will serve our country well for more than 70 years -- an unprecedented record for any military aircraft, not to mention rotorcraft."

Krone added that the CH-47F technology improvements also will form the foundation for the new MH-47G modernization program that will improve MH-47D and MH-47E Special Operations Chinooks.

"The Army - from the soldiers who ride in Chinooks, to the air crew and maintenance specialists who make it fly, to the dedicated uniformed and civilian staff people representing just about every facet of management and administration who make the Chinook program successful -- is the real story today. Our reason for being here is to build excellent equipment so that the Army can do its job," Krone concluded.

Other speakers at the rollout ceremony included Rep. Curt Weldon (R-Pa.); Carl Fitzgerald, representing Rep. Bob Brady (D-Pa.); Lt. Gen. Johnny Riggs, director of the U.S. Army's Objective Force Task Force; Maj. Gen. Joe Bergantz, U.S. Army Aviation Program Executive Officer; Jerry Daniels, president and chief executive officer, Boeing Military Aircraft and Missile Systems; Jim Caudle, U.S. Army Cargo Helicopter Program manager; and Pete Parsons, director, Boeing Chinook programs.

The CH-47F prototype completed its first test flight on June 25, meeting a program milestone scheduled to the day more than three years ago. The CH-47F modernization program will sustain the U.S. Army's Chinook fleet to provide rotary-wing, heavy-lift capabilities well into the 21st century. Modernization will include aircraft remanufacturing, vibration reduction, improved avionics with integrated digital mission management systems and a digital map, and installation of more powerful Honeywell T55-GA-14A-714 engines. These core elements of the program will reduce operational and support costs to below those of the original CH-47D and provide at least another 20 years of economical and effective service.

The Boeing Company develops and produces military rotorcraft and provides support services worldwide from its production facilities in Philadelphia and Mesa, Ariz. Among its products are the AH-64D Apache Longbow attack helicopter, CH-47 Chinook, the RAH-66 Comanche armed reconnaissance helicopter and the V-22 Osprey tiltrotor aircraft.

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