

Boeing Begins Final Assembly on Newest Apache Longbows for U.S. Army

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The first of 269 additional U.S. Army AH-64A Apaches scheduled to become next-generation AH-64D Apache Longbow combat helicopters has entered final assembly at Boeing here.

Boeing is upgrading all 269 AH-64As as part of the latest five-year, multi-year contract with the Army. The contract is in addition to an earlier multi-year order for 232 aircraft, which is nearing completion.

Boeing rolled the newest Apache Longbow candidate into final assembly Dec. 12. That Apache Longbow, as well as the final Apache Longbow from the first multi-year contract, will be delivered in March.

Apache Longbows produced under the newest contract will incorporate a series of upgrades, such as advanced technologies for the digital battlefield, that make them the most advanced Apaches ever produced. Apache Longbow helicopters link a wide range of avionics and weapons into one fully integrated weapon system.

"This is a critical milestone for this vital U.S. Army program," said Al Winn, vice president of Apache programs. "Boeing is committed to providing the very best weapon systems for the pilots and soldiers who protect our country and preserve our liberty.

"The Apache is a proven performer, and the system we'll deliver to the Army will keep the Apache Longbow on the leading edge," he added.

To date, five combat-ready U.S. Army Apache Longbow battalions have been fielded, and additional units are in training.

Ten nations have fielded or have ordered Apaches, and additional nations are considering the next-generation Apache Longbow for their defense needs.

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