Seventh U.S. Army Apache Longbow Battalion Certified Combat-Ready

The U.S. Army's seventh AH-64D Apache Longbow attack helicopter battalion has been certified combat-ready after completing extensive training at Fort Hood, Texas, where the battalion will also be based.

The unit completed eight months of training in AH-64D Apache Longbow helicopters, built by Boeing [NYSE: BA] in Mesa, Ariz. To qualify, the men and women of the battalion completed a series of comprehensive classroom, flight and field exercises. Soldiers underwent a rigorous field examination, three live-fire exercises and completed about 3,200 flight hours during the training program.

Pilots from the battalion received their initial training at Fort Rucker, Ala., and maintainers received training at Fort Eustis, Va., before regrouping at Fort Hood for Battalion Level Training. The Army fielded its first combat-ready Apache Longbow battalion in the United States in 1998.

Included in the seven U.S. Army Apache Longbow battalions deployed are five based in the United States and two based overseas.

Additionally, U.S. based Army Apache Longbows deployed to the Middle East in 2002 in support of Operation Desert Spring. Apache helicopters are fielded around the world including the U.S. Army's deployment to Afghanistan for Operation Anaconda, the war against terrorism.

A total of 11 nations worldwide have selected the Apache for their defense forces. The U.S. Army is modernizing its fleet of AH-64A Apaches into next-generation AH-64D Apache Longbow helicopters that link a wide range of avionics, electronics and weapons into one fully-integrated weapons system.

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