Boeing Delivers Final UK Apache To AgustaWestland

Boeing [NYSE: BA] employees will deliver today their final Apache helicopter for the United Kingdom the same way it delivered the first -- ahead of schedule.

All 67 multi-role UK Apaches for the British Army -- either complete aircraft or in kit form -- were delivered on or ahead of schedule to prime contractor AgustaWestland over the past four years.

The UK Apache is the United Kingdom's version of the next-generation AH-64D Apache Longbow. Produced at Boeing in Mesa, Ariz., the British Army will field these Apache aircraft under the designation AH Mk1.

Boeing built eight Apache aircraft and partially assembled the remaining 59 for AgustaWestland. Final assembly, flight test, delivery and support is taking place at AgustaWestland's Yeovil, United Kingdom facility.

The program quickly earned a reputation as an example of successful international collaboration that provided both military and economic benefits to both the United Kingdom and the United States. The collaboration logged its first delivery on Sept. 28, 1998.

"This truly has been an international team effort," said Al Winn, vice president of Apache Programs in Mesa. "Together, we've exceeded our expectations on many levels and met those commitments without sacrificing quality or product integrity."

Martin Fausset, Apache program director for AgustaWestland, said, "This delivery is a milestone event that is the culmination of a most significant and successful collaboration between Westland and Boeing.

"Much has been achieved in this unique Anglo-American team effort. By serving and meeting the needs of the Ministry of Defence to introduce both an attack helicopter and an air manoeuvre capability within the British Army, we have collectively harnessed our combined strengths."

Fausset added, "We are now well placed to further develop our association into the next decade with future endeavours that will build upon Westland and Boeing's proven track records in managing complex international programs."

AgustaWestland was the first customer to acquire Apaches under a commercial contract, completing assembly and delivering them to the British Ministry of Defence for the British Army Air Corps.

The UK Apache incorporates a series of enhancements that make it more effective in combat, and more survivable, deployable and maintainable in the field. The UK Apache's fire control radar and advanced avionics suite give combat pilots the ability to rapidly detect, classify, prioritize and engage stationary or moving enemy targets at standoff ranges in nearly all weather environments.

The UK Apache's ability to communicate digitally with other aircraft and ground forces, and to share that information almost instantly, also gives it a significant warfighting advantage over current combat helicopters. With the advanced Longbow fire control radar, UK Apache crews can scan the battlefield in real time, classify and prioritize multiple threats, and digitally share this battlefield information with other next-generation Apaches and other friendly forces.

In addition to Boeing, major subcontractors on the UK Apache program include Rolls-Royce-Turbomeca, Lockheed Martin and Northrop Grumman.

Boeing builds AH-64D Apache Longbow helicopters for the U.S. Army and for several other international defense forces. The Apache Longbow is also under consideration by numerous other defense forces around the world.

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