Boeing-Built Apache Longbows Arrive in South Korea

Arrival of the Boeing [NYSE: BA] AH-64D Apache Longbow helicopters this month in South Korea marks completion of U.S. Army efforts to field an Apache Longbow battalion in the region. This newest Apache Longbow unit joins another element, which arrived in South Korea in late 2001 as the first international deployment of U.S. Army Apache Longbows. A third foreign-based U.S. Army Apache Longbow unit is based in Germany.

Built by Boeing in Mesa, Ariz., Apache Longbow helicopters are the world's most advanced multi-role combat helicopters. These U.S. Army Apaches, which had been in Korea as AH-64As, were remanufactured and returned to duty in their next-generation configuration. 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.

U.S. Army AH-64A Apaches and AH-64D Apache Longbows were deployed overseas in 2003 in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Apache helicopters are fielded around the world, including the U.S. Army's deployment to Afghanistan for Operation Anaconda as part of the war against terrorism.

This new unit spent the last year transitioning to Apache Longbows as an AH-64A Apache battalion. To qualify as combat ready, the men and women of the squadron completed a series of comprehensive classroom, flight and field exercises. Soldiers underwent a rigorous field examination, which included three live-fire exercises, and flew about 3,000 hours during the training program.

Led by the 21st Cavalry Brigade, unit members completed eight months of extensive training at Fort Hood, Texas. They returned to South Korea by ship in May after being certified in April as the eighth combat-ready Apache Longbow battalion.

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