Ninth U.S. Army AH-64D Apache Longbow Battalion Certified Combat-Ready

The U.S. Army's ninth AH-64D Apache Longbow attack helicopter battalion has been certified combat-ready after completing extensive training with the Boeing [NYSE: BA] helicopter at Fort Hood, Texas.

The 1st Battalion, 229th Aviation Regiment based at Fort Bragg, N.C., completed eight months of training with AH-64D Apache Longbow helicopters built in the Boeing Mesa, Ariz., plant. To qualify, the men and women of the battalion known as the Tigersharks, completed a series of comprehensive classroom, flight and field exercises. Soldiers underwent a rigorous field examination, three live-fire exercises and completed approximately 3,200 flight hours during the training program.

Following the battalion's deployment to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, the pilots received initial helicopter training at Fort Rucker, Ala., and mechanics received training in helicopter maintenance at Fort Eustis, Va., before regrouping at Fort Hood for battalion-level training.

The Army fielded its first combat-ready AH-64D Apache Longbow battalion in the United States in 1998. Of the eight U.S. Army Apache Longbow battalions deployed, five are based in the United States and three are based overseas.

Additionally, U.S. based Army Apache Longbows deployed to the Middle East in support of Operation Desert Spring, to Afghanistan in the war against terrorism and in Iraq in 2003 supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom. 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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