Boeing's New Combat-Ready CH-47F Chinook Helicopter Fielded to First U.S. Army Unit

The Boeing Company's [NYSE: BA] CH-47F Chinook helicopter has been certified combat-ready by the U.S. Army and fielded to the first operational unit, making it the latest addition to the Army's aviation fleet.

Following extensive testing, the Army authorized First Unit Equipped, assigning the aircraft to Bravo Company ("Varsity"), 7th Battalion, 101st Aviation Regiment, 159th Combat Aviation Brigade, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), based at Ft. Campbell, Ky.

"The CH-47F is a next-generation aircraft that provides greater safety, mission management and situational awareness for our soldiers," said Jack Dougherty, director, Boeing H-47 Programs. "This represents a milestone in Army aviation."

"It is an honor to have been chosen as the first unit to field the aircraft," said U.S. Army Lt. Col. Robert P. Dickerson, commander, 7th Battalion, 101st Aviation Regiment (Air Assault). "The Chinook is a combat multiplier and brings greater situational awareness, versatility and capability to the fight."

Since Boeing unveiled the aircraft at its Ridley Park, Pa., production facility in June 2006, the new Chinook has successfully completed several evaluations, including air worthiness and functional testing. In April 2007, the CH-47F completed operational testing at Ft. Campbell, including more than 60 rigorous flight test hours that simulated mission scenarios, air assault, combat re-supply and transport operations.

The CH-47F helicopter features a newly designed, modernized airframe, a Rockwell Collins Common Avionics Architecture System (CAAS) cockpit and a BAE Digital Advanced Flight Control System (DAFCS).

CAAS greatly improves air crew situational awareness; and DAFCS provides dramatically improved flight control capabilities through features such as "hover hold," "altitude hold" and "beep down" that improve performance and safety in brownout situations, as well as the entire flight envelope.

Advanced avionics also incorporate improved situational awareness for flight crews with an advanced digital map display and a data transfer system that allows storing of preflight and mission data. Improved survivability features include Common Missile Warning and Improved Countermeasure Dispenser Systems. The entire suite of improved cockpit capabilities will apply to other H-47 models.

Powered by two 4,868-horsepower Honeywell engines, the new CH-47F can reach speeds greater than 175 mph and transport more than 21,000 pounds. The CH-47F, with the Robertson Aviation Extended Range Fuel System, has a mission radius of more than 400 nautical miles.

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