

From the Army Acquisition Executive

U.S. Army Aviation



The U.S. Army is actively engaged at the forefront of the continuing global war on terrorism (GWOT) and committed, along with our sister services in the Joint Force, to the primary mission of protecting U.S. security interests at home and abroad. During this sustained and widespread commitment, the U.S. Army has also successfully progressed in its greatest transformation and restructuring since World War II. Aviation has a central role in our success.

With manned and unmanned assets, aviation organizations develop situations from both in and out of contact with the enemy, maneuver to positions of advantage, engage enemy forces beyond the range of their weapons, destroy them with precision fires and provide close air support. Aviation's inherent mobility, flexibility, agility, lethality and versatility are instrumental in enabling the air-ground task force commander to conduct decisive Joint operations.

Highly skilled and knowledgeable aviation Soldiers employing aviation systems from entry operations to decisive action provide a significant contribution to the quality of firsts (see first, understand first, act first and finish decisively). Aviation operations develop the common operating picture, shield the maneuver force, shape the operational environment, extend the tactical and operational reach of the maneuver commander and sustain the force.

In Army aviation's GWOT, the operations tempo (OPTEMPO) rates in theater have been approximately three to four times the planned peacetime OPTEMPO. Aviation platforms — including manned and unmanned aircraft systems — have flown nearly 1.5 million flight hours while consistently sustaining operational readiness rates in theater at, or exceeding, Department of the Army standards. Our aviation Soldiers and those who support them are doing a magnificent job!

The last several years have seen great progress in modernizing U.S. Army aviation. From the reinvestment of Comanche dollars, the Army has selected a Light Utility Helicopter (LUH), Armed Reconnaissance Helicopter (ARH) and Joint Cargo Aircraft (JCA), and Extended Range Multi-Purpose (ER/MP) Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS). It has delivered the UH-60M and CH-47F and established programs of record for the AH-64D Longbow Block III and the Small Unmanned Aerial Vehicle. The success of these programs, to include Flight School XXI and the training base, is due to the continuing support and synchronization of efforts from the

U.S. Congress, the Office of the Secretary of Defense and Army/industry teaming to meet schedules and fielding in support of our warfighters.

Starting in FYs 08-10, we will begin to field the LUH, ARH, JCA, ER/MP UAS, UH-60M, CH-47F and the AH-64D Longbow Block III systems. Army aviation is working in concert with our sister services to develop concepts that will support the Future Force by developing the Joint Heavy Lift and Joint Multi-Role Helicopter programs.

How will Army aviation operate in a Joint and expeditionary environment that includes the Future Combat Systems (FCS)? As it does in today's Modular Force, Army aviation will continue to fulfill critical needs in the Future Force operational concept. Aviation will remain key to decisive maneuver as well as play an integral role in operational maneuver from strategic distances. We envision a battlefield environment dominated by simultaneous, distributed and networked Joint operations — that is, the simultaneous engagement by air and ground maneuver elements employing future advanced lift, reconnaissance and attack aviation assets — supported by Joint fires and the suppression of enemy air defenses, and linked by an advanced network. The Future Force empowered by FCS will mass effects, without massing forces, and still significantly expand our operational reach.

Air and ground manned and unmanned teaming is essential to the Future Force, and Army aviation is already on the leading edge of this teaming. Man-in-the-loop Army aviation will provide advantages throughout the Joint Operational Area for engaging fleeting targets, focusing terminal effects, directing attack UASs, assessing results and controlling effects after munitions are in flight. Mission-tailored aviation assets will provide multidimensional support, including sufficient capability to conduct battalion-sized vertical maneuver, aerial command and control, and aerial sustainment. Advanced aviation will remain a key enabler for higher tactical operations by complementing long-range precision fires; leading multi-functional sensor/attack UAS; and assisting advanced command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance networking.

U.S. Army aviation provides us with remarkable capabilities across the full spectrum of operations. That is why it has a central role in our current global operations and why it is at the heart of the Army's transformation process.

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