

'Black Death' Hovers Over Clarinda During Fly Iowa

AN APACHE ATTACK HELICOPTER similar to this will be on display during the Fly Iowa activities in Clarinda on Sept. 10-11. (Photo Provided)



By KENT DINNEBIER

Nicknamed "Black Death" by Sadaam Hussein's military forces, the Apache Longbow Attack Helicopter is regarded as the best military helicopter in the world.

Therefore, organizers of Fly Iowa 2005 are proud to announce that arrangements have been made to have an Apache Longbow Attack Helicopter on display in Clarinda during the festivities on Sept. 10-11.

"The Apache will be flown here from Whiteman Air Force Base in Missouri by the United States Army. They will fly here each morning, perform a demonstration and then remain for the rest of the day as a static display where everyone can come and look and talk to the crew. Then it will fly out each evening after another demonstration and go to the St. Joseph Air National Guard where it will be hangared each night.

"The crew is excited to be here and join the United State Air Force and World War II aircraft represented at Fly Iowa. This crew and helicopter go to large air shows all over the United States and for them to come to Clarinda is an unexpected treat. It is fitting that on the fourth anniversary of Sept. 11, our citizens can see up close and personal one of our deterrents to prevent a similar attack," Fly Iowa Air Show Coordinator Steve Mowery explained.

The Apache is a twin-engined army attack helicopter that entered

service with the United States Army in 1984, and has been exported to Egypt, Greece, Israel, the Netherlands, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and the United Kingdom.

The United States Army has more than 800 Apaches in service and more than 1,000 have been exported. The Apache was first used in combat in 1989 as part of the United States military action in Panama. The Apache was also used in Operation Desert Storm and has supported low intensity and peacekeeping missions worldwide including those in Turkey, Bosnia and Kosovo.

In addition, the Longbow has been deployed by the United States Army in Afghanistan as part of Operation Anaconda, in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and in South Korea.

"The electronics it has are reminiscent of the futuristic electronics that 'Star Wars' pilots had in the block buster movies of the 1970's. It is very fast, highly maneuverable, and has weapons systems that are so advanced they defy imagination," Mowery said.

The Longbow Apache is equipped with the Northrop Grumman millimetre-wave Longbow radar. The Longbow fire control radar allows for passive location and identification of radar emitting threats. An advantage of millimetre-wave radar is that it performs under poor visibility conditions and is less sensitive to ground clutter.

The short wavelength allows a very narrow beam width, which is resistant to countermeasures.

The Longbow Apache can affect an attack in 30 seconds. The radar dome is unmasked for a single radar scan and then re-masked. The process ors determine the location, speed and direction of travel for a maximum of 256 targets.

In addition, the turret-mounted Target Acquisition Designation Sight (TADS) provide the pilot with direct view optics to search, detect and recognize targets.

Meanwhile, Pilot Night Vision Sensors allow an infrared image to be displayed in the monocular eyepiece of the helmets and display sighting systems worn by the pilot and copilot/gunners.

Once a target is identified, the Apache has a wide array of weapons at its disposal to ensure its mission is completed successfully.

A 30mm automatic Boeing M230 Chain Gun is located under the fuselage. It provides a rate of fire of 625 rounds per minute. The helicopter has the capacity for up to 1,200 rounds of ammunition.

The Apache is also armed with the Longbow Hellfire air-to-surface missiles, which have a millimetre-wave seeker allowing the missile to perform full fire and forget mode, and have a range of 8-12 kilometers.

The Apache can also be equipped with air-to-air missiles like Stingers, AIM-9 Sidewinders, Mistrals and Sidearms, as well as the Advanced Precision Kill Weapon System family of guided and unguided 70 mm rockets.

While the Longbow Apache carries the combination of armaments chosen for a particular mission, in the close support role helicopter carries 16 Hellfire missiles on four 4-rail launchers and four air-to-air missiles. The Apache is also equipped with a wide variety of countermeasure defense systems.

Despite the high-tech firepower the Apache has at its disposal, the other advantage it has over other aircraft is the maneuverability only a helicopter can provide.

"A helicopter is a completely different animal than a normal 'fixed wing' aircraft. It can ascend straight up and then hover in one place and actually move sideways and backwards in the hands of a skilled pilot. The view is breathtaking and stunning and it has been said that once you fly a helicopter, you are never satisfied flying a normal airplane again," Mowery concluded.