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Airbus Group delivers 300th on-time, on-budget UH-72A Lakota helicopter to U.S. Army

COLUMBUS, Miss. – Airbus Group today delivered to the Army the service's 300th UH-72A Lakota helicopter. Every Lakota has been delivered – on time and on budget – by an American workforce that is more than 50 percent U.S. military veterans.

The Lakota is manufactured at the company's Airbus Helicopters, Inc. facility in Columbus, Miss., where Col. Thomas Todd, Army Project Manager for Utility Aircraft, accepted delivery of the 300th aircraft.

"Airbus has an established record of on time or ahead of schedule aircraft deliveries," said Col. Todd. "Their Columbus facility has recorded a nine year record of excellence."

Since the UH-72A contract was competitively awarded in 2006, the company has delivered the Lakota in seven different configurations for missions including training, border security, search and rescue, medical evacuation, disaster response, VIP transport and range support. Five aircraft are also in service with the U.S. Naval Test Pilot School, which trains Navy, Marine Corps and Army test pilots.

Army officials have recently indicated plans to modernize the service's rotorcraft training fleet with the UH-72A.

"The Lakota was competitively selected eight years ago because it was an easily adaptable solution for a broad range of mission requirements, with a low-risk design that allowed the Army to save taxpayers millions in development costs," said Allan McArtor, Chairman and CEO of Airbus Group, Inc. "Industry should be in the business of enabling and supporting that kind of smart decision-making for our customer."

Mississippi Governor Phil Bryant praised the partnership that the state has formed with Airbus Group in delivering a critical capability to the U.S. military. "Almost a decade ago, Airbus made an investment in Mississippi and its people, raising a world-class aerospace manufacturing facility out of a green field," Gov. Bryant said. "That investment has paid off not just for the company, but for the men and women of the Army and for the Mississippi families who are positively affected by the company's presence in our state."

Members of Congress who spoke at the delivery ceremony commended the Lakota workforce for its commitment to quality and exceptional record of performance.

"I applaud the efforts of Airbus to hire veterans to help build the Lakota here in the United States," said U.S. Congressman Jeff Miller, representative for Florida's First District and Chair of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs. "Veterans prove they can get the job done as a civilian workforce and understand first-hand what our warfighters need and deserve; that shows in the care and performance they put into this program."

"From day one, you have delivered on your promise to the taxpayer and the warfighter: every aircraft on time and on budget," said U.S. Congressman Alan Nunnelee of Mississippi's First District. "That's the kind of reliable performance that the Department of Defense needs now more than ever. And it's the kind of dedication that is the hallmark of the Mississippi workforce."

"The Army's Lakota and the proud Americans who build it set an example that all federal acquisition programs should follow," said U.S. Congressman Gregg Harper, who represents the state's Third District. "Particularly at a time of fiscal constraint, performing on time and on cost should be the rule, not the exception."

The UH-72A offers the lowest cost to buy, own and operate of any U.S. military helicopter in production, with a baseline unit cost of just \$5.5 million. The Lakota fleet recently passed the 200,000 flight hour milestone, and it maintains greater than 90 percent availability with full contractor logistics support.

The 300th Army Lakota will serve with the Missouri National Guard. The aircraft was delivered in the Security and Support (S&S) Battalion configuration, which expands the UH-72A's capabilities for missions ranging from disaster response to border security operations.

The S&S configuration includes an electro-optical and infrared sensor, searchlight, digital video recorder, secure data downlink and moving map. Lakotas equipped in the S&S configuration are serving with Army National Guard units across the country, including extensive operations along the U.S. southwest border for border security and drug interdiction.



Photo by James Darcy/Airbus Group, Inc.

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Airbus Group, Inc., formerly EADS North America, is the U.S.-based operation of Airbus Group, a global leader in aerospace, defense, space and related services. Airbus Group contributes more than \$14 billion to the U.S. economy annually and supports over 225,000 American jobs through its network of suppliers. Airbus Group, Inc., headquartered in Herndon, Va., offers a broad array of advanced solutions to meet U.S. military and commercial requirements, including fixed- and rotary-wing aircraft, homeland security systems, public safety communications, defense electronics and avionics, and threat detection systems.

About Airbus Group

Airbus Group is a global leader in aerospace, defense and related services. In 2013, the Group – comprising Airbus, Airbus Defense and Space, and Airbus Helicopters – generated revenues of € 59.3 billion and employed a workforce of over 144,000.

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