

Tandem Notes

Vol. 5

No. 2

First International Chinook Customer BHELTRA-V Celebrates 25th



Lifting three field pieces is all in a day's work for the Chinooks of BHELTRA-V. □

by Gabriel Tejedor,
Boeing Tech. Rep.

May ceremonies in Spain marked an important milestone for the air arm of the Spanish Army, **Fuerzas Airmoviles del Ejercito de Tierra (FAMET)** and **Battalion Helicopter Transport V (BHELTRA-V)**.

BHELTRA-V, nicknamed "La Cinco," has operated CH-47s for a quarter century, making it the world's senior International Chinook unit.

FAMET received its first Chinook, a Model 414-176, in January 1973 and established Transport Helicopter Unit No. 5 the following April.

By 1978, the unit had received ten CH-47Cs (One was lost in an accident.). In 1980, FAMET reorganized the unit and BHELTRA-V was born.

The unit continued to grow, adding another nine Chinooks to the fleet through 1987, although another was destroyed in an accident two years ago.

In 1991, FAMET contracted with Boeing for modernization of half its Chinooks to D-model configuration. That program wrapped up in 1993, and three more aircraft returned to Philadelphia for upgrades last year.

Throughout its life, BHELTRA-V's mission has been providing tactical and logistic transport services for the Spanish Army.

But the unit also has conducted a number of exercises and maneuvers with other armies and nations, as well as other missions, including civil relief for flood victims in several areas; rescue of the crews of a foundered tanker and fishing boat; support for Kurdish refugees during Operation Provide Comfort after the Gulf War; and assistance to Spanish Search and Rescue during both military and civil aircraft accidents.

BHELTRA-V also has slingloaded F-4C Phantom jets from Torrejon Air Force Base to the CASA aircraft factory; provided VIP (see 'FAMET,' p. 2)

Dear Chinook and Sea Knight User:

In May, Boeing and the U.S. Defense Department completed the Engineering Manufacturing Development (EMD) contract for the Improved Chinook Helicopter (ICH) program.

We have already completed a significant amount of developmental work on ICH, and expect to have the first of two EMD prototypes in our Philadelphia factory for modernization early next year.

ICH is important not only for the U.S. Army, but also for our customers worldwide.

The program will ensure that Tandem Rotor helicopters remain in service in the U.S. at least until 2033, possibly well beyond that year. This means Chinooks will have a service life of more than 70 years!

But ICH also will ensure continuity for the CH-47D and SD International Chinook, in use around the globe, by keeping our tandem rotor production line hot. We are looking forward to many decades of Tandem Rotor production in Philadelphia to provide our customers brand new heavy-lift helicopters with exceptional performance and capabilities.

As always, send all correspondence to Jack Satterfield, Boeing Philadelphia, P.O. Box 16858, M/S P10-18, Philadelphia, PA 19142-0858. Ph: (610) 591-8399; Fax: (610) 591-2701, e-mail: john.r.satterfield@boeing.com

Good luck and good flying!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John T. Gilbride".

John Gilbride
Director - Global Rotorcraft
Customer Support

FAMET's 25th

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transport for King Juan Carlos and Pope John Paul; handled transport and installation of pipelines and heavy equipment for private industry; conducted numerous fire-fighting campaigns; and transported dolphins from Madrid Airport to the Bay of Cadaques in support of the Mediterranean Dolphin Project, which uses these animals for the education of mentally disturbed children.

And, La Cinco aided in the rescue and preservation of a statue of the Roman emperor Trajan at Tarifa in Cadiz; conducted demolition of the church belfry at Jerez de los Caballeros in Badajoz; and transported assembly line materials to the Opel-General Motors factory in Zaragoza when blizzards interrupted ground shipments.

Throughout its 25 years, BHELTRA-V has operated its Chinook fleet for a total of nearly 32,000 flight hours, transporting nearly 198,000 passengers and more than 32,000 tons of cargo.

For a quarter century, BHELTRA-V and its Chinooks have earned a well-deserved "Ole"! □



Modernization of this FAMET Chinook to CH-47D configuration enabled BHELTRA-V to step toward the 21st century. □

From the Field...

Dutch Chinook Gives Tech School a "Lift"

by Gertjan Van Der Wal,
Netherlands MOD

Students of the Royal Netherlands Air Force Electronic and Technical School rarely run out of class in the middle of a lecture, but then it's not every

day they get to see an RNLAFF F-16 Fighting Falcon hovering above them and landing vertically.

Of course, the fighter jet had some help, in the form of an RNLAFF CH-47D Chinook from 298 Squadron, for its unusual landing.

Col. Ruud Pick, the school's commandant, was delighted with the class' interruption.

The students learned first-hand about the Chinook's lifting power as it carried the slingloaded seven-ton aircraft, and the mission saved considerable time and effort. "If we had

to transport the upgraded F-16 by road, the wings would have to come off," Pick said. "It would take weeks before everything was reinstalled and working again, and weeks to test and recertify the aircraft for operation. We get round this problem by airlifting the fighter to the school."

The F-16's arrival meant that students in training to maintain and repair the jet have a fully operational first-line aircraft to learn systems and procedures they will take to the field.

Although the F-16 was an easy load for the Chinook, the mission, which involved lifting the aircraft from Deelen Airfield for a mile-long trip to the school, still required much planning. The RNLAFF had to design and test special harnesses to carry the Falcon to its new home, and had expert assistance from a British Royal Air Force air crewman with previous experience slingloading aircraft. This was the first mission of its kind for the RNLAFF, which began flying CH-47Ds just a couple of years ago.

The short flight was completed without a hitch, and the new aircraft will benefit the school. "We are talking about a completely new jet fighter, state of the art," said Col. Pick. "With our older block F-16s, we can only instruct our students to a certain level, but the upgraded Falcons are joining our squadrons now, and new maintenance personnel must be ready for them. This F-16 will greatly facilitate training for future maintenance personnel, and thanks must go to 298 Squadron." □



Falcon in a Sling.....makes the trip to the Royal Netherlands Air Force (RNLAFF) Electronic and Technical School under a 298 Squadron Chinook. (Photo by Cor Buser) □

I say, there seems to be something strange out there.....



No. 27 Squadron RAF used to fly Blenheims, and now flies Chinooks, so they enterprisingly put the two together.

Flight International's "Straight & Level" column contains aviation whimsy from around the world. Here's *FF's* take on a recent formation flight. Reprinted by permission of *Flight International*. □



A 'Big Windy' CH-47D flies over Berlin during President Clinton's recent visit. The radio tower in the background was once part of East Berlin. □

Aussies Add to Chinook Fleet

Two more CH-47D Chinooks will join others already "Down Under," following the completion of a contract with the Australian Ministry of Defence. At a contract-signing ceremony in Canberra, Boeing and the MOD agreed on terms for delivery of two new-build aircraft comparable to the four Chinooks currently operating with the Australian Army in Townsville, Queensland. Australia

sold eleven CH-47Cs to the U.S. government several years ago and repurchased four modernized CH-47Ds from the U.S. Army. Boeing upgraded the remaining aircraft, which are now in service in the U.S. Army.

The new Chinooks, which are in production, will be delivered in Brisbane in 2000 after installation of Australian-specified systems. □

'Big Windy' Supports HMX-1's Berlin Visit

by John Morgenstern
Boeing Tech Rep

Once again, F Co., 159th Avn. Rgt., Big Windy, under the command of Maj. Scott Ruth-erford, flew four Chinooks from Giebelstadt Army Air Field to the city of Berlin to support President Clinton's visit to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Berlin Airlift.

'Big Windy' provided helicopter transportation for VIPs, staff, Secret Service, and the media.

Sharing small landing zones with HMX-1 VH-60 aircraft and Puma helicopters of the German Bundesgrenzschutz, the Chinooks performed flawlessly throughout the visit.

Blessed with good weather, soldiers and Marines worked well together to continue a track record of excellence and professionalism, established many years ago during similar Presidential visits to various parts of the globe.

Boeing technical representative John Morgenstern, who usually travels in support of the smaller CH-46 "Sea Knight" with HMX-1, quickly found out that F Co.'s nickname is well earned, since the unit's takeoffs and landings managed to relocate the top layer of a soccer field used as a landing area during its missions. □



Phrog Phorum

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Summer in Sierra Leone

Marine Rescue Photo Album

One year ago, HMM-261, part of the Air Combat Element of the 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit, participated in "Operation Noble Obelisk," the non-combatant evacuation operation of about 2,500 Americans and foreign nationals caught in an attempted coup in Freetown, Sierra Leone, on the West Coast of Africa. HMM-261's CH-46s carried many of these refugees from the grounds of the Mammy Yoko Hotel in Freetown to safety on USS Kearsarge (LHD-3) in an operation from May 30 to June 3, 1997. □



