

Fielding of Lakota LUH Helicopter (UH-72A) to ARNG

What is it?

The UH-72A, Lakota Light Utility Helicopter (LUH) is a state-of-the-art aircraft with twin engine reliability, a 21st century navigation/communication system, and a proven record of commercial aviation service.

What has the Army done?

The Army is restructuring aviation organizations to reflect current and anticipated needs. The Army developed the UH-72 Lakota to meet immediate and future light utility aviation needs. In the past 18 months, the active Army has fielded 24 Lakotas and flown more than 3,400 hours with an operational availability rate exceeding 92 percent. On June 7, 2008, the first Army National Guard (ARNG) UH-72A was fielded to the Mississippi National Guard with a special ceremony at the Tupelo Regional Airport, Tupelo, Mississippi. As of November 2010, the ARNG has 53 UH-72A (non-MEDEVAC) aircraft and 12 UH-72A MEDEVAC aircraft for a total of 65.

What continuing efforts does the Army have planned?

The Army plans to field to the Army National Guard a total of 200 UH-72s by FY15. As the Army transforms its aviation fleet, the requirement for a light utility helicopter remains. The LUH replaces the Vietnam-era UH-1H Iroquois (Huey) and OH-58A/C Kiowa aircraft. The LUH will fill the niche missions where the UH-60 Black Hawk capability may be less than optimal. The LUH is designed to operate in a hot environment and in standard mission configuration and is capable of a minimum of 2.8 hours of operation with a 30-minute reserve without the use of auxiliary fuel. The internal cabin size of the LUH accommodates the loading, unloading, and transport of a pilot, co-pilot, and no less than two NATO standard Stokes liters with patients, one medical attendant with equipment, and one additional passenger. The aircraft accommodates the seating and transport of a pilot, co-pilot and six passengers when not in the medical evacuation (MEDEVAC) configuration. The LUH is supportable and maintainable within the current aviation force structure. The Eastern Army National Guard Aviation Training Site (EAATS) will have at least eight UH-72 aircraft to support the Army's UH-72A institutional training requirement.

Why is this important to the Army?

The UH-72A will provide the ARNG Security and Support Aviation Battalions an operational capability for focused logistics and full-dimensional protection related to homeland security and support Army operations in permissive environments. The LUH will provide the flexibility to respond to terrorism, conduct civil search and rescue, support damage assessment, perform MEDEVAC, and provide support to counterdrug operations. The LUH is expected to conduct basic light utility helicopter missions and execute tasks as part of an integrated effort with other joint services, government agencies and nongovernmental organizations. Additionally, the LUH will free-up the UH-60s to return to warfighting units.