



Ohio Adjutant General's Department

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Ohio Army National Guard to showcase newest aviation assets, demonstrate capabilities useful to assist civil authorities in U.S.

COLUMBUS, Ohio — The Ohio Army National Guard will showcase two of its newest airframes during a capabilities demonstration beginning at 10 a.m. Tuesday, Nov. 26 at Army Aviation Support Facility No. 1, located at the Akron-Canton Airport, 6000 W. Airport Drive, North Canton, Ohio 44720-1483.

This unique event will provide an opportunity to learn first-hand and up close about the versatility and capabilities of two vital assets in the Ohio Army National Guard (OHARNG) aviation arsenal — the CH-47F Chinook cargo helicopter and the LUH-72A Lakota light utility helicopter — and how these aircraft allow the OHARNG to bring critical airlift capability, not only to deployments in support of overseas contingency operations worldwide, but also to support civilian first responder and homeland security missions including disaster relief, medical evacuation (medevac), border patrol and transportation of personnel and equipment.

“The Ohio National Guard has a mission to support the citizens of Ohio in times of need, and we have trained Soldiers and ready equipment specifically designed for this mission,” said Maj. Gen. Deborah A. Ashenurst, Ohio adjutant general. “The Chinook and Lakota airframes are valuable assets for the nation's governors during times of natural disasters or other domestic emergencies, making it possible for the National Guard to deliver assistance quickly to citizens in need and potentially save lives here at home.”

The capabilities demonstration will begin with an overview of the Chinook and Lakota aircraft, provided by senior Ohio National Guard leadership as well as aviation professionals including pilots and crew members. After a demonstration of the LUH-72A's hoist capabilities, there will be an opportunity to ask questions during a guided tour of both aircraft.

Four UH-72A Lakotas were added to the OHARNG's aerial support inventory in December 2011. Ohio has one of 33 units in the National Guard that received the new helicopters, which are assigned to Detachment 1, Company D, 1st Battalion, 376th Aviation Regiment, based at the Army Aviation Support Facility (AASF) No. 1.

"Ohio hasn't had medevac capability since the late '90s. We now have it available for the citizens of Ohio," said Col. Stuart Driesbach, state aviation officer for the Ohio Army National Guard. "The primary focus of the Lakotas will be disaster response, to include medical evacuation and personnel recovery."

The twin-engine Lakota is typically employed by the Army National Guard as a utility helicopter within the United States, which allows other utility helicopters, such as the UH-60 Black Hawk — which the Ohio Army National Guard also operates — to be deployed overseas.

The UH-72A Lakota offers a modern glass night vision goggle-compatible cockpit with space for two medical litters and a rescue hoist. It can carry up to six passengers and a crew of two. The new Lakotas replaced two OH-58 Kiowa security and support helicopters that had belonged to the Ohio National Guard for about six years.

The venerable twin-engine, tandem rotor Chinook helicopter has undergone numerous upgrades since the first CH-47A model was delivered to the Army for use in Vietnam. In August of this year, the OHARNG replaced its CH-47Ds with five CH-47Fs — the newest U.S. Army standard model — which feature composite rotor blades, an improved electrical system, modularized hydraulics, triple cargo hooks, digitized flight controls, upgraded avionics, communication improvements and more powerful 4,700-horsepower engines that can handle a load in excess of 20,000 pounds — about twice the Chinook's original lift capacity.

Most recently, about 70 Soldiers from Company B, 3rd Battalion, 238th Aviation Regiment (General Support Aviation Battalion) returned in November 2012 from a yearlong deployment in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

The North Canton, Ohio-based CH-47 Chinook helicopter unit provided general aviation support for Army units in the Regional Command East area of operations in Afghanistan, moving nearly 30,000 passengers and more than 2.5 million pounds of cargo during the unit's deployment. The GSAB was awarded the Combat Action Streamer for logging more than 2,000 combat flight hours during missions in Afghanistan.

The Chinook can be utilized to transport several pallets of supplies and equipment, two Humvees or up to 33 troops at a time. However, it can also be used to transport up to 24 medical litters, a capability which could be utilized in Ohio or elsewhere domestically for recovery and rescue missions following large-scale disasters or emergencies such as Hurricanes Katrina and Rita in 2005, or more recently Hurricane Sandy in November 2012.

“The Chinook has been a real workhorse overseas, and that’s something that could be, and has proven to be in the past, a valuable asset available to support state and national disasters here in the United States, if our country’s citizens would need it,” Driesbach said.

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NEWSROOM NOTES:

- News media are encouraged to arrive at least 30 minutes in advance of the scheduled start time.
- For videos that feature the OHARNG aviation fleet, including the Lakota and Chinook airframes, go to the Ohio National Guard YouTube channel and search for “2013 Ohio Army Aviation Promo” and “Ohio’s New UH-72 Lakota Helicopter.”

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