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First AH-64E Apache Guardian for 301 Squadron in The Netherlands



On 14 March 2024 the first Boeing AH-64E Apache Guardian was delivered to 301 Squadron at Gilze Rijen air force base in The Netherlands. This is the first of twenty Apache's that 301 Squadron is planned to receive.

The Royal Netherlands Air Force (RNLAf) has ordered 28 AH-64E's of which the first six, serials Q-31 till Q-36, have already been delivered to 302 Squadron. This squadron is based at Fort Cavazos in Texas, USA where they use these Apaches for training of pilots and technicians. The newly delivered AH-64E with serial Q-37 is therefore the first one to be operated in The Netherlands.

In December 2023 the first AH-64E's for 301 Squadron were airlifted to Europe from the USA by C-17s of the

USAF. They were delivered to Woensdrecht air force base where they are being checked, reassembled, made ready to fly and test flown before delivery to their future home base. This work is being performed by the Logistiek Centrum Woensdrecht (LCW, RNLAf logistics centre).

The Dutch AH-64Es are based on a newly build airframe with both new and overhauled parts of former RNLAf AH-64DN's that were decommissioned earlier. These old Apache's were transported by ship from the LCW to Boeing at Mesa Field, USA. Amongst others new higher power engines, new gearboxes and new rotor blades have been installed. Inside the cockpit the old AH-64DN monochrome displays have been replaced by colour displays that give a better depth perception for the crew.

Apart from these changes, two major improvements over the old RNLAf AH-64DN are the FCR (Fire Control Radar) and the Link 16 capability. The Dutch air force will get ten FCR's and these will give the crew a much improved search capability. The FCR is housed in a radome on top of the main rotor. The Link 16 system will give the Apache the capability to share and receive real life information with other platforms during a mission.

With this new AH-64E 301 Squadron 'Redskins' have set a step into the future. ➡

Text and photos by Frank Mink & Patrick Dirksen of Tristar Aviation

