

UH-72 Life-Cycle Strategy

Army National Guard



NGAUS

Fiscal Year 2025 Requirements for the Army National Guard



The Issue

The UH-72 Lakota serves as the principal enabler to the Army National Guard Security and Support Battalions (S&S). The S&S Battalions conduct critical Homeland Defense missions using the UH-72 Lakota. Missions include reconnaissance, air movement, casualty evacuation, search and rescue, and command and control in support of local, state, and federal agencies. As the earliest fielded Lakota aircraft approach 20 years in service, the Lakota program noticeably lacks a funded strategy to address common fleet management issues including long-term sustainment, block upgrade, modernization, and mitigation of aircraft attrition. The implementation of a long-term life-cycle sustainment and management strategy for Lakota, designed similarly to other Army aircraft fleet strategies, mitigates the acceleration of operating and support costs that are typical as all fleets age.

Background

▲ A Colorado Army National Guard UH72 Lakota and crew conduct highaltitude rescue of an injured hiker.

The UH-72 Lakota was competitively awarded in 2006 to fulfill the Army's Light Utility Helicopter (LUH) requirement and serves as a key asset within the Army and Army National Guard. As of February 2023, ~490 aircraft have been delivered through the Army contract, all on cost and on schedule. The Lakota is an affordable and capable platform that is well suited for the diverse missions it performs including serving as the Army's primary Initial Entry Rotary Wing (IERW) training helicopter. Within the National Guard, the Lakota is dispersed across 49 States and Territories. Notable operations include the Southwest Border mission, counter-drug operations, wildfire response, and other disaster relief operations. The UH-72 Lakota is the most affordable twin engine helicopter in DOD production (lowest acquisition and operational cost).

With the online production of the UH-72B the ARNG can modernize the existing ARNG MTOE fleet and cascade displaced low-time UH-72A aircraft to the Army's enduring UH-72A TDA fleets through a systematic, measured, and appropriate process. Modernization of the ARNG MTOE fleet enables improved performance, insertion of technologies, and reduces fleet operating cost over the life cycle. A strategy that infuses new aircraft into ARNG units, cascades low time UH-72As to the training fleet, and harvests serviceable components for reuse, mitigates the effects of a maturing fleet while ensuring the ARNG is prepared for the future. The UH-72B incorporates materiel improvements that add capacity for new systems, improve safety, and reduce maintenance burden.

Recommendation

ARNG Designation



Designate \$12 million for the conduct of a UH-72 Lakota Lifecycle Sustainment and Modernization analysis to include evaluation, production, and delivery of a UH-72A to B remanufactured first article aircraft.



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