

All systems

Teaching soldiers how to maintain Apache Longbow helicopters is just one of the many missions at Training Systems & Services by **Yvonne Johnson-Jones** and photos by **Bob Ferguson**

When Boeing's Mike Flynn arrived at the classroom to conduct his next training event at the U.S. Army's National Guard base in Eastover, S.C., recently, he brought with him more than 30 years' experience performing maintenance on military aircraft.

But his real passion is teaching those skills to students—in this case, troops headed to Kuwait to maintain Apache helicopters used in the fighting in Afghanistan. They were there to learn from Flynn how to keep Boeing's AH-64D Apache Longbow helicopter operating safely, reliably and effectively.

When an Apache Longbow pilot flips the switch to start the rotors turning, every system and subsystem has to be ready to do its job—flawlessly, Flynn said. "When something goes wrong with an aircraft thousands of feet in the air, you can't pull over and get it fixed. I take a great deal of ownership in making sure that the soldiers who will maintain the aircraft are trained and ready to keep it flying safely."

On this occasion, the training was for the Missouri National Guard's "A" Company, Theater Aviation Sustainment Maintenance Group, which was headed to Kuwait to help maintain the
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Boeing Training Systems & Services



PHOTOS: (Left) Mike Flynn, a maintenance training instructor with Boeing Training Systems & Services, is shown with the AH-64D Apache Longbow helicopter. (Inset) Boeing Training Systems & Services' Mike Flynn provides maintenance training to members of the Missouri National Guard.

AH-64D Longbow. (Previously, the group had been trained to maintain A-model Apaches only.) To get it ready to perform this critical mission, the National Guard contacted Boeing's Training Systems & Services organization, which is part of Boeing Defense, Space & Security.

With more than 1,800 employees, Training Systems & Services has operations at 58 sites and in seven countries. It offers a range of training solutions including mission planning, state-of-the-art aircrew and maintenance training, as well as instructors and logistics support. Training Systems & Services also makes courses available to domestic and international customers through an online catalog.

Flynn began his career in the military,

maintaining Bell AH-1 Cobra helicopters. He is now qualified to train others on every system of the AH-64 Apache and is one of only three maintenance instructors from Boeing's Mesa, Ariz., site who can provide complete training in theory, operation and maintenance of all configurations of the Apache. Last year, Flynn and his team taught more than 20 courses and trained more than 200 aviation technicians and contractors for U.S. as well as international militaries.

For "A" Company, its two-week training course from Flynn covered how to service, troubleshoot and repair nearly 30 systems and subsystems on the Apache. After lectures and textbooks, it was out to the aircraft for hands-on experience in

systems identification and operations, adjustment techniques and inspections.

Safety was a big part of the training. "Safety is fundamental to every course we teach, without exception," Flynn said. "The ramifications are too great to take anything for granted."

At least one of his students, Staff Sgt. Cory Davis, an avionics technician stationed in Springfield, Mo., felt Flynn accomplished what he wanted. "Mike did a great job preparing me for deployment," Davis said. "I am ready!" ■

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PHOTOS: In a two-week course for the Missouri National Guard's "A" Company, Boeing maintenance training instructor Mike Flynn covered how to service, troubleshoot and repair nearly 30 systems and subsystems of the Apache helicopter.