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Thread: [US ARMY MAKES LARGEST HELICOPTER AWARD IN 40 YEARS](#)

Larry_ - December 10, 2022, 8:16 am

US Army makes largest helicopter award in 40 years

WASHINGTON — Textron's Bell has won the U.S. Army's competition to build the Future Long-Range Assault Aircraft, the service's largest helicopter procurement decision in 40 years.

The deal for the next-generation helicopter is worth up to \$1.3 billion and is set to replace roughly 2,000 Black Hawk utility helicopters. FLRAA will not serve as a one-for-one replacement for existing aircraft, but it will take over the roles of the Black Hawk, long the workhorse of the Army for getting troops to and around the battlefield around 2030.

Ultimately, the Army's Future Vertical Lift pursuits will also replace around 1,200 Apache attack helicopters among other legacy aircraft through the pursuit of FLRAA, the Future Attack Reconnaissance Aircraft and Air-Launched Effects working in advanced teaming formations.

The service wants FLRAA to be capable of traveling roughly 2,440 nautical miles (or 2,810 miles) without refueling, but also to be agile enough to maneuver troops into dangerous hot spots.

The engineering and manufacturing development and low-rate production phase could be worth roughly \$7 billion. If the "full complement" of aircraft are purchased across the entire life of the fleet, the program could be worth in the range of \$70 billion to include potential foreign military sales, the Army's program executive officer for aviation, Maj. Gen. Rob Barrie, said during a Dec. 5 media roundtable.

Complicating the Army's vertical lift modernization efforts, the Army is planning to develop and field FARA nearly along the same timeline to perform the scout mission. That duty was left vacant when the Army decided to retire its Kiowa Warrior helicopters in 2013. Since then, the Army has filled that gap with teams of Apache helicopters and Shadow unmanned aircraft systems.

The contract represents a milestone for the service as the Army hasn't procured two major helicopters since the 1980s and multiple efforts to buy other helicopters over the last several decades ended in failure. For instance, the service canceled the Boeing-Sikorsky RAH-66 Comanche helicopter program in 2004 after spending roughly \$7 billion on its development.

The FLRAA competition pitted two aircraft head to head: Bell's V-280 Valor, a tiltrotor aircraft, and Sikorsky and Boeing's Defiant X, which features coaxial rotor blades. Both aircraft were designed to fit into the same footprint as a Black Hawk.

Source:

<https://www.defensenews.com/industry/2022/12/05/us-army-makes-largest-helicopter-award-in-40-years/>

Aeowulf - December 10, 2022, 9:02 am

The history of tilt-rotor aircraft and my own personal experiences with the V-22... I think they're looking for too much capability in a single platform and its going to cause i not to be great at anything and a liability in in other cases.

Larry_ - December 10, 2022, 11:32 am

(Dec 10, 2022 10:02 AM)Aeowulf Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) The history of tilt-rotor aircraft and my own personal experiences with the V-22... I think they're looking for too much capability in a single platform and its going to cause i not to be great at anything and a liability in in other cases.

Good point but then you say they should stick to more basic functions?

Aeowulf - December 10, 2022, 2:46 pm

(Dec 10, 2022 12:32 PM)Larry_ Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) Good point but then you say they should stick to more basic functions?

Not more basic, the aircraft should be specialized, in addition to an all-purpose aircraft. The forces are moving towards an aircraft that can "do it all" but sacrifices being an expert in any one area.

Rionxee - December 10, 2022, 5:04 pm

I saw this thing fly in 2019 at an air show and let me tell you, this thing is gorgeous in person. It's been ready for quite a long time but I'm sure now they have really fine-tuned the systems. Bell is top notch.