PAKISTAN ORDERS NINE MORE BELL AH-1Z GUNSHIPS

News / Manufacturer



Bell Helicopter has been put on contract to build nine more AH-1Z Viper gunship helicopters for Pakistan, as part of a larger foreign military sales package for up to 15 helicopters and 1,000 Lockheed Martin AGM-114 Hellfire-series missiles that was approved last April.

Islamabad ordered its first batch of armed, twin-engine “Zulu Cobras” under that deal in August, as part of a larger US Marine Corps order for 19 AH-1Zs. It furnished an undisclosed number of AH-1Zs powered by GE Aviation T700-401C powerplants for $58 million, likely three.

Bell’s latest $170 million contract modification via US Naval Air Systems Command, announced on 4 April, buys nine more aircraft for Pakistan. That raises Pakistan’s AH-1Z programme value to $228 million.

All aircraft, including those ordered in August, will be delivered by August 2018, those respective contract announcements state.

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Bell Helicopter

Pakistan is the first international customer for the AH-1Z type, which the Marine Corps is buying as

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part of its H-1 upgrade programme to replace the AH-1W Super Cobra by 2020.

The marines ordered their 13th batch of H-1 derivatives, the 85% common, four-bladed Viper and UH-1Y Venom, in March.

Those two aircraft are delivered from Bell’s final assembly and checkout facility in Amarillo, Texas, and are being marketed around the world by Bell to keep assembly humming beyond 2020.

AH-1Zs carry a turret-mounted M197 20mm cannon and are equipped with four wing stations for anti-armour Hellfire missiles, AIM-9 Sidewinders or 70mm and 127mm rockets, the navy says.

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