



# CH-47F Chinook

The Boeing CH-47F Chinook is the largest helicopter in the Australian Army fleet. The advanced, medium-lift, multi-mission helicopter has a unique twin-rotor design and advanced cargo-handling capabilities which complement its primary mission – supporting the Army to transport troops, artillery guns, ammunition, fuel and other supplies.

The Army's Chinook fleet is also often utilised for humanitarian, transport and recovery missions during disaster-relief efforts.

The aircraft's in-country history began in the early 1960s when the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) and Australian Army began searching for new types of tactical transport aircraft to replace the RAAF's obsolete Douglas Dakotas. The Chinook was renowned for its ability to carry more cargo than its competitors and was better suited to the mountains of the then Australian-administered Territory of Papua and New Guinea.

In August 1970, the Australian Government ordered 12 Boeing CH-47C Chinooks for the RAAF, marking Australia as the CH-47's first export customer. The CH-47Cs were stationed at RAAF Base Amberley, with No.12 Squadron re-raised in 1973 to operate them.

## TECHNICAL DATA: CH-47 Chinook

Power plant	Two Lycoming T55-GA-714A turboshaft engines, 4,733 shp (3,529 kW) each
Rotor diameter	18.29m (60 feet)
Length	30m (98 feet)
Height	2.77m (9ft 1in)
Empty weight	11,148kg (24,578 pounds)
Loaded weight	22,680kg (50,000 pounds)
Maximum speed	310kph (200 mph)
Range	740km (460 miles)
Service ceiling	13,716m (45,000ft)
Armament	Up to three pintle-mounted medium machine guns (one on loading ramp and two at shoulder windows), generally 7.62 mm (0.300 in) M240/ FN MAG machine guns, and can be armed with the 7.62 mm M134 Minigun rotary machine gun

The aircraft entered service in December 1974, with a crew of four, comprising two pilots, a loadmaster and one other, and could transport up to 33 passengers or 11,129kg of cargo.

International missions included annual high-altitude flying training exercises in Papua New Guinea, and in August 1980, a CH-47 was flown from Amberley to Malaysia to recover a crashed Royal Malaysian Air Force S-61. The return trip of 14,000km was believed to have been the longest distance a helicopter had flown up to that time and remains the longest flight to have been conducted by a RAAF helicopter.

The RAAF and Army jointly opted to withdraw the Chinooks from service in May 1989 as a cost-saving measure. No. 12 Squadron ceased flying on 30 June 1989, and was disbanded on 25 August that year. The CH-47Cs were placed in storage at Amberley.

When the Australian Defence Force found its other helicopters couldn't sufficiently replace the CH-47's capabilities, four of the CH-47Cs were upgraded to CH-47D standard and returned to service with the Australian Army in 1995. The Army acquired two more CH-47Ds in 2000 and another pair in 2012 before replacing them with seven new CH-47F aircraft in 2015 and another three in 2016.

Today, 10 CH-47F Chinooks are operated out of the Army's C Squadron at 5th Aviation Regiment, RAAF Base Townsville.

Boeing Defence Australia is currently contracted to deliver the Chinook Integrated Support Services Contract, which includes aircrew training, aircraft maintenance and field service engineering support, and fleet modifications.

