

Army Air operates the JUH-1H and JOH-58A+ in the test support role at White Sands. The range is used to test a wide variety of missiles and other weapons. The helicopters are used to carry seekers and other items of missile equipment, as well as for range support.

operations have been conducted from this new facility. This unique \$28 plus million control centre is designed to meet current and future mission requirements with the latest networking, computing and communications for effective interface between test operations and customers. Obviously, as these developmental tests very often require the involvement of aerial assets, in the early 1960s the US Army decided to create a dedicated aviation unit.

Holloman Army Air Field

Originally designated as the Army Air Operations Directorate, the unit was renamed as the Army Air Operations Division, then Army Air Division, and later the Office of Army Aviation, and has, since its creation, been located in the North Area at Holloman Air Force Base, itself adjacent to the White Sands Missile Range.

With the Army Test and Evaluation Command (ATEC) overseeing the activities of the Developmental Test Command (DTC), DTC is in charge of the White Sands Missile Range. White Sands Missile Range in its turn supervises the White Sands Test Center, to which the Army Air reports.

The history books show 'Doc' Hurd to have been the first commander, in charge of the Army Air Operations Directorate from 1957 to 1959. Early types of helicopters that were operated by Army Air included the Piasecki H-21 'Flying Banana', Sikorsky H-37 Mojave and Sikorsky H-34 Choctaw, followed later by various versions of the Bell UH-1 Huey and Bell OH-58 Kiowa. The organisation has also operated several fixed-wing aircraft, such as the Cessna O-1 Bird Dog, de Havilland U-6 Beaver,



de Havilland U-1A Otter and Beechcraft U-21 Ute. In the past a civilian contractor also supported the unit, providing Bell 47Gs and Piper PA-23 Apache aircraft.

In the current setup, civilian contractors form the team at Holloman, most of them retired Army pilots and engineers now contracted under the Department of the Army Civil Service (DAC) programme, under the command of Mr Timothy Porter. Army Air currently operates a fleet of nine helicopters comprising five JUH-1H Hueys and four JOH-58A+ Kiowas, and a single JC 12D (King Air 200). All are used in support of the different aspects of developmental and operational testing conducted at White Sands Missile Range.

For their assignment at White Sands, the aircraft are designated with a J prefix, identifying them as test support assets. This gives WSMR Army Air the authority to make different airframe and electrical modifications to the aircraft to support the test and evaluation requirements.

Apart from their distinctive red and white colour scheme, the Army Air JUH-1H helicopters are modified with extra antennas, special mounts to attach external test loads, and special racks connected to a power source and control board to power up test equipment fitted in the back of the helicopters. The JOH-58A+ Kiowa, having replaced the previous A and C-models, all retain their original olive-drab colour scheme and are mainly used for range and safety sweeps, observation duties, under-slung load operations and transport of personnel around the range. The JOH-58s are occasionally also used for test purposes, mainly when a smaller signature is required.

The only fixed-wing aircraft of the unit, the unique JC 12D is a converted RC-12D Guardrail with its ELINT and COMINT equipment

Army Air's five Bell UH-1Hs wear a red/white scheme for enhanced conspicuity. They are the main platform for carrying elements of weapon systems, and are rigged so that test equipment and controls can be easily installed as required.

