

# First-Ever Helicopter-Based Firing of High Energy Laser

*Defense-aerospace*



***An AH-64 Apache attack helicopter carrying the gray-painted laser pod developed by Raytheon under its port weapon pylon during the recent trials in New Mexico. (Raytheon photo)***

MCKINNEY, Texas - Raytheon Company and the U.S. Army Apache Program Management Office, in collaboration with U.S. Special Operations Command, recently completed a successful flight test of a high energy laser system onboard an Apache AH-64 at White Sands Missile Range, New Mexico. The demonstration marks the first time that a fully integrated laser system successfully engaged and fired on a target from a rotary-wing aircraft over a wide variety of flight regimes, altitudes and air speeds.

The test achieved all primary and secondary goals, providing solid experimental evidence for the feasibility of high resolution, multi-band targeting sensor performance and beam propagation supportive of High Energy Laser capability for the rotary-wing attack mission. Additionally, the system performed as expected while tracking and directing energy on a number of targets. The design of future HEL systems will be shaped by the data collected on the impact of vibration, dust and rotor downwash on HEL beam control and steering.

"Our goal is to pull the future forward," said Art Morrish, vice president of Advanced Concept and Technologies for Raytheon Space and Airborne Systems. "This data collection shows we're on the right track. By combining combat proven sensors, like the MTS, with

multiple laser technologies, we can bring this capability to the battlefield sooner rather than later."

In this test Raytheon coupled a variant of the Multi-Spectral Targeting System, an advanced electro-optical infrared sensor, with a laser. The MTS provided targeting information, situational awareness and beam control.

Raytheon Company, with 2016 sales of \$24 billion and 63,000 employees, is a technology and innovation leader specializing in defense, civil government and cybersecurity solutions.