



With retirement looming, the OH-58A+ fleet nevertheless plays an important role at White Sands. Although they are occasionally used for test work, the main role is to fly safety patrols over the ranges before missile tests are undertaken. In the background are the snow-capped Sacramento mountains that fringe the White Sands range to the east.

removed, but has retained its bigger generators to provide more power to the various test equipment on board, while additional navigation and communications equipment has been installed.

The different modifications are made under the auspices of the Aircraft Engineering Division (AED) of the US Army Aviation and Missile Command (AMCON), as this section of

AMCON specifically deals with the certification of the modifications and airworthiness releases for the test aircraft. Intermediate and limited general support (maintenance) on the UH-1 and OH-58 aircraft is performed by WSMR Army Air itself. Depot level support is performed either at Corpus Christi Army Depot, or at the Bell plant, both in Texas. The C-12 is contractor-maintained by DynCorp and repair facility maintenance is accomplished at Stevens Aviation in Greenville, South Carolina.

Army Air's duties

Test missions flown by Army Air are diverse and include the flying of precise test profiles. During these profiles, for instance, the heli-

copter can be used as a platform to simulate a specific weapon system or a part of the weapon itself, such as the seeker head of a missile. For these so-called Captive Carry missions, the helicopters carry a non-live warhead on a special outside rigger, using an interface system for collecting data.

Although one might expect different, the limited airspeed of the helicopter does not hamper tests. On the contrary, the unique ability of the helicopter to stop at any time during

The single JC-12C on Army Air charge is a redundant RC-12D Sigint platform that has been modified to accept various payloads, with onboard power coming from the large generators it retains from its days as a battlefield reconnaissance aircraft.

