

Test of

Bell AH-1S Cobra

Produced by Area-51 Simulations

The Bell AH-1 Cobra is a two bladed, single engine, two crew attack helicopter produced by Bell Helicopters since the mid 1960s. The Cobra shares engine, transmission and rotor system with the older UH-1 Iroquois which is commonly also referred to as the HueyCobra or snake. The Bell company designation is Model 209.

The Cobra was the backbone of the United States Army's attack helicopter fleet, but is today replaced by the more modern AH-64 Apache. Several upgraded versions of the AH-1 are still in service in other nations and the AH-1 twin engine version is still used by the United States Marine Corps as their primary attack helicopter. The Firewatch Cobra program has also converted surplus AH-1 helicopter for fighting forest fires and Garlick Helicopters has also converted surplus AH-1 helicopters for this purpose under the name Firesnake.

Specs:

- **Produced by** *Bell Helicopters*
- **First flight** *September 7th 1965*
- **Introduction** *1967*
- **Role** *Attack helicopter*
- **Status** *In service*
- **Built** *1.116*
- **Unit cost** *US\$ 11,3 million (1995)*
- **Primary users**
 - *United States Army (historical)*
 - *Japan Self Defense Forces*
 - *Republic of Korea Army*
 - *Israeli Air Force*



I received this add-on directly from Area-51 Simulations and the download went perfectly and without any problems. The connection to the download server was superb as I had also experienced with previous downloads and the complete download didn't take long.

The installation was quick and easy and also without any problems. I just had to activate the installation wizard and then the rest was done automatically. Nice, easy and quick and it is nice to use an installation wizard that is so user friendly.

After the installation had completed I went into the FSX folder to verify that the file had been installed the way that I wanted it to, and of course it had – now I opened up FSX and went into my virtual hangar. Here I found the helicopter together with other add-ons from Area-51 Simulations so this was also perfect.

I started my test with a walk around the helicopter. This model is very well made with lots of details, good textures and nice animations and effects and resembles the real Cobra nicely. The details are all placed very careful and precise and the lights are very well made. They are clean and bright and also placed properly. The helicopter features animations as main rotor, tail rotor, canopy etc and all animations are made very well.



Going from the outside to the inside of the helicopter I found both a 2D cockpit and a double tandem virtual cockpit - both the gunners and the pilot's cockpit. The 2D cockpit is fair with good quality textures and multiple details, but unfortunately very limited in regards to animated buttons and switches.

The virtual rear cockpit (pilots) is good with very nice texture quality, good quality gauges, great depth and a nice finish. Furthermore it features a lot of details and standard animations, but here I also missed some more animated buttons and switches. The general atmosphere and realism in the rear virtual cockpit is good. The front virtual cockpit was poor – bad textures quality, minimum detailing and animations and was to be honest very unrealistic if not unusable.

The included sound set was very good and it does resemble the real Cobra sound quite good – I found some sound clips on the internet to compare it against and this was very close to be perfect. I tested the sound set in both stereo and 7.1 surround sound and both worked perfectly – so no issues here.

Also included in this model is a good number of additional view that can be selected from the top bar menu. This was very nice to see and really enables the simmer to experience the helicopter better and this also adds to a better overall feeling of the helicopter.



I have seen various Cobras' as freeware, and only a few of them were any good – this cobra is certainly above the standard of freeware and probably the best Cobra that I have seen. I have had a lot of fun trying it out that is for sure.

The general flight characteristic is in my opinion very realistic. The helicopter reacts quickly on all control inputs that I gave, and this I also did expect since this is an attack helicopter. The top speed is not great but you can control the helicopter very precisely and hereby taking it for a ride down below the trees. This I will recommend – it did give me an adrenalin rush.

To fly this helicopter is not that difficult, and if you are familiar with general handling of helicopters, then you will quite quickly master this helicopter. I believe that simmers on all levels will be able to fly this helicopter within a few tries.

The most difficult part for me was to get used to “taxi” with this helicopter, and after I mastered that, I had absolutely no issue handling the helicopter afterwards. The reason why this was the most difficult part was that the helicopter features skids and not wheels as landing gear, so when you have to taxi, you actually have to fly low and slow while keeping the helicopter above the taxiway.



I flew various fictive missions with this helicopter both attack, surveillance, escort and support missions, and I felt that when using the rear virtual cockpit, I gained some quite realistic missions and it was a lot of fun. When doing the missions I prepared as it was for real and got myself into a “bubble” so I could get the most from it.

I tested the helicopter for direct attacks but also for sneaking in on enemy positions down below and behind the trees – this was extremely realistic and very exciting for me and it was like some of the missions that I had flown in the superb AH-64D from Area-51 Simulations.

Overall you here get an add-on of good quality. The model is very detailed and includes various animations and effect. The model is also covered with textures of good quality and includes a very realistic light effect. The 2D cockpit is fair and the rear virtual cockpit is quite good with a great depth, multiple animations, lots of details and a nice finish. The sound set is very realistic with a clear and clean sound that can be used in both stereo and 7.1 surround sound.

I rate this helicopter 3.5/5-stars and thanks Area-51 Simulations for this very well made helicopter.

Rays Aviation

