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# Helicopter INTERNATIONAL

and

# MILITARY HELICOPTER NEWS

# Top Stories This Issue -

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## HAVE YOU GOT NEWS FOR US?

+44(0)1934 822524, e-mail office@aviapress.co.uk Volz has entered a partnership with Piasecki Aircraft to support the development of autonomous flight capabilities for rotorcraft under the ADAPT (Adaptive Digital Automated Pilotage Technology) program. The collaboration will see Volz's DA 30-HT-D-MCCS OPV actuators integrated into the CoAX 2D demonstrator, an optionally piloted helicopter platform from EDM Aerotec.

The ADAPT program is focused on improving rotorcraft survivability and mission continuity through advanced automation. Key features include Returnto-Base, Leader-Follower operations, and Safe Landing Area Determination (SLAD), designed to keep aircraft operational even after sustaining damage or when pilots are incapacitated.

Volz's actuators feature dual-channel redundancy and an electromagnetic clutch for manual override, providing a balance of reliability, precision, and fail-safe operation. Their role is essential in enabling intelligent, damage-tolerant control systems for autonomous rotorcraft.

The CoAX 2D demonstrator is set to begin flight testing later in 2025, following successful simulations of core ADAPT capabilities such as Fly-to-Optimal manoeuvering and Vehicle Manoeuvering Optimisation.

This partnership contributes to both military and future commercial applications of rotorcraft autonomy, with a focus on safety, resilience, and system redundancy.

McDermott Aviation has deployed a total of 15 Bell 214 ST helicopters to Greece to support aerial firefighting operations across the country. Six aircraft have arrived from Australia, reinforcing six units already positioned in Greece, and with three additional aircraft en route from the company's US operations. The full fleet will remain in the country through the official fire season, which runs from May 1 to October 31 under a contract supporting aerial firefighting operations across high-risk zones.

In 2024, McDermott Aviation's Greek deployment flew over 4,000 hours, executing more than 25,000 water drops, an estimated 75 million litres. During post-season flooding in central Greece, seven aircraft were reassigned for flood rescue operations in Volos, Karditsa, and Lariss.

The current operation includes approximately 200 personnel including Australian and international pilots, engineers, and support staff working in coordination with Greek authorities.

McDermott Aviation's long-term commitment to Greece reflects a broader trend in cross-hemisphere fleet utilisation, where operators position assets globally to meet seasonal demand. While the European team focuses on editerranean fire suppression, the company's Australian-based operations continue to respond to domestic emergencies, maintaining year-round engagement in wildfire, flood, and disaster relief missions.

# Helicopter international - MILITARY

**HELICOPTER NEWS** 

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Prabhu Helicopter Ltd., based in Nepal, has introduced a brand-new Airbus Helicopters H125 (AS350B3) into commercial service. The aircraft, registered 9N-ANT, joins the fleet under the company's Air Operator Certificate (AOC) issued by the Civil Aviation Authority of Nepal (CAAN). This expansion reinforces Prabhu's strategic commitment to strengthening high-altitude operations and advancing rotor-wing capabilities in Nepal's complex geography.

The delivery of 9N-ANT marks Prabhu Helicopter's second H125 acquisition, signaling the company's move toward fleet modernisation and greater operational reliability. The aircraft will serve both scheduled and ad hoc requirements, addressing the growing demand for dependable aerial mobility in Nepal's remote regions.

Prabhu Helicopter Ltd., part of the broader Prabhu Group, is headquartered in Kathmandu and operates additional bases at Pokhara International Airport and other strategic locations. The operator also maintains a fleet of Robinson R66 helicopters and is an authorized dealer and service center for Robinson Helicopter Company in Nepal.

SPAES GmbH & Co. KG has completed a certified minor change for the installation of pulse lights on an Airbus AS332 helicopter, significantly improving the aircraft's visibility and operational safety in challenging flight conditions.

Previously lacking pulse light capability, the helicopter was limited in visibility during firefighting missions and low-light operations. With the new installation, pulse lights are now securely mounted under the nose of the aircraft using specially designed brackets. Integrated into helicopter's electrical system, the lights are operated via a cockpit-mounted toggle switch offering "On," "Off," and "Pulse" modes. A dedicated 3-amp circuit breaker protects the lighting system during flight.

The modification enhances safety in poor weather and crowded airspace by emitting high-intensity, rhythmic light pulses that improve the Wisconsin Oshkosh and online, the helicopter's detectability from long event is the longest-running symposium distances. This is particularly valuable of its kind in the world. Full program and for night operations, adverse weather, or registration details are available at missions near other aircraft, reducing the risk of mid-air collisions.

The project was executed as a Minor Change in cooperation with SPAES's EASA Part 211 Design Organisation and the customer. All design, certification, and testing procedures were carried out in close coordination with the client, with the final installation completed at the Members. customer's own EASA Part 145 headquartered in Crossville, Tennessee, maintenance facilit

# Commercia - INTERNATIONAL

The Vertical Flight Society (VFS) is set to hold its 19th Annual Electric Aircraft Symposium in Oshkosh, Wisconsin, on 19-20 July just ahead of the EAA (Experimental Aircraft Association) AirVenture. This hybrid event will bring together more than 35 leading experts for 12 panel discussions exploring the full spectrum of advanced air mobility (AAM), including electric vertical, short, and conventional takeoff and landing aircraft, pilot training, certification, infrastructure, and uncrewed applications.

With the FAA expected to finalise its Modernisation of Special Airworthiness Certification (MOSAIC) regulations this summer, broadening the scope for electric Light Sport Aircraft, and recent policy support for eVTOLs, the symposium comes at a pivotal moment for the industry. Discussions will also highlight advances in hybridelectric and hydrogen-powered systems, offering pathways to greater range, payload capacity, and sustainability.

Held at the University of www.vtol.org/eas.

The General Aviation Manufacturers Association (GAMA) has announced the addition of three new companies to its membership, highlighting continued innovation and growth within the general aviation industry. Robinson Helicopter Company and DeltaHawk Engines, based in Racine, Wisconsin, have joined as full while Whisper Aero. has been welcomed as an Associate Member EPIC.

GAMA's inclusion of these three companies reflects its ongoing commitment to fostering technological advancement, sustainability, and safety in aviation. The additions of Robinson, DeltaHawk. and Whisper demonstrate the broad spectrum of innovation currently shaping the future of general aviation, from rotorcraft and engine design to next-generation electric propulsion.

# Helicopter international -**MILITARY**

**HELICOPTER NEWS** 

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Robinson Helicopter Company has received Federal Aviation Authority (FAA) approval to equip all future R66 helicopters with the Garmin GFC 600H Helicopter Flight Control System (HFCS) as standard equipment. This marks a significant upgrade to the R66's avionics, introducing a fully integrated, digital autopilot system designed to enhance safety, reliability, and ease of operation.

The GFC 600H offers a wide range of features, including Garmin's Helicopter Electronic Stability and Protection (H-ESP), which helps pilots maintain safe flight conditions with tools like limit cueing, LVL mode, and low-G protection. The system seamlessly integrates with Garmin flight displays and navigators, and includes smart servos, redundant sensors, and cyclic-mounted controls to maintain pilot workload efficiency and system dependability.

Autopilot functions include altitude, vertical speed, airspeed, heading, navigation, and approach modes, as well as hover assist and optional yaw axis control for improved ride quality and low-speed handling. A two-axis version of the GFC 600H will be standard on all R66 NxG models, with optional upgrades available. Customers with R66 orders from serial number 1510 onward can amend their configurations to include the new system.

Ex-Change Parts in Sweden has received official accreditation as a supplier from Airbus Helicopters France. This partnership highlights Ex-Change Parts' role as a trusted provider of premium, sustainable helicopter parts, reinforcing the established relationships with various Airbus subsidiaries worldwide. Being an accredited supplier partner to Airbus Helicopters France places Ex-Change Parts within a selected global network, enhancing the availability and procurement of high-quality helicopter components.

GD Helicopter Finance (GDHF) has expanded its commitment to the Airbus H175 by converting 10 existing options into firm orders, bringing its total confirmed H175 fleet to 20 aircraft. This development follows the delivery of GDHF's first H175 in December 2024 and reflects the company's strategy to provide modern, versatile helicopters for the global offshore and SAR markets.

The newly confirmed aircraft will include upgraded configurations designed to enhance operational performance in offshore energy transport and limited search and rescue (LIMSAR) missions. These enhancements aim to increase mission flexibility, optimize cost-efficiency, and improve readiness for multirole operations in demanding environments. GDHF's expanded order positions the company to offer near-term H175 availability to clients, addressing continued global demand for high-capability super medium platforms.

This order solidifies GDHF's long-term investment in the H175 and underscores the type's rising profile in the super medium segment, particularly within the offshore energy and support services sectors. The agreement also strengthens the partnership between GDHF and Airbus Helicopters, reinforcing both companies' commitment to delivering high-performance solutions tailored to evolving operator requirements.

Skyryse has received approval from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to begin for-credit flight testing of the Skyryse One. Powered by SkyOS, the world's first universal flight operating system, Skyryse One is designed to redefine aircraft control through simplified digital interfaces and fly-bywire technology. Built on a Robinson R66 platform and powered by a Rolls-Royce engine, the aircraft replaces traditional mechanical controls with a stick control single and touchscreens, creating a streamlined pilot interface intended to enhance safety, reduce complexity, and increase accessibility.

Entering FAA for-credit testing is a critical step toward full certification. The system's simplicity is aimed at reducing pilot workload, enabling broader participation in aviation and

faster pilot training. Reservations for the first edition of Skyryse One sold out within six months of its 2024 announcement, with deliveries expected to begin in 2026. Reservations for subsequent production units remain open with a \$2,500 deposit.

The FAA testing approval comes shortly after Skyryse entered into an agreement with the US Army to explore integration of SkyOS for reducing pilot training time, improving aircraft interoperability, and introducing optionally piloted capabilities for platforms like the Black Hawk helicopter. As FAA testing proceeds, Skyryse continues to demonstrate SkyOS's performance and reliability in operational conditions, supporting its vision of transforming the future of flight through universal, software-driven control systems.

The UK's Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) has begun a review of the planned acquisition of Macquarie Rotorcraft Limited by SMFL LCI Helicopters Limited. As part of its initial action, the CMA has issued an enforcement order under section 72(2) of the Enterprise Act 2002. This order applies to several entities involved in the deal, including Sumitomo Mitsui Financial Group Inc., Sumitomo Corporation, Sumitomo Mitsui Finance & Leasing Co. Limited, SMFL LCI Helicopters Limited, and Macquarie Rotorcraft Limited.

While the full text of the enforcement order has not yet been published, this early move indicates that the CMA intends to closely examine the potential impact of the transaction. The agency has set up a dedicated email address for stakeholders and the public to submit any concerns about the deal, particularly related to competition or broader public interest matters. A deadline for these submissions has not yet been announced.

This stage is part of the CMA's preliminary steps before it formally launches a merger inquiry. Once the inquiry begins, a statutory timeline will be set for reaching a decision. However, the CMA notes that this date is subject to change, depending on developments during the investigation that may require additional analysis. This acquisition review reflects the CMA's role in monitoring transactions that could potentially affect market competition in the UK, particularly in specialised sectors like rotorcraft leasing and operations.

Joby Aviation made their Verticon debut with the S4 2.0 electric vertical takeoff and landing (eVTOL) aircraft. The 4,800-lb. aircraft can carry one pilot and four passengers and has more than a 100-mile range and a 200-mph top speed. Joby recently confirmed that it was well into the fourth stage of a five-stage FAA certification process and said it expects to begin type inspection authorisation (TIA) flights within the next 12 months.

Five aircraft are currently in flight testing, including a hydrogen-hybrid aircraft. Two of the aircraft are based at Edwards Air Force Base (AFB) as part of the company's work with the US Department of Defense (DoD), a contract valued at \$131 million. Two more aircraft will be delivered to the DoD this year to MacDill AFB, part of a commitment to deliver nine aircraft to the US Air Force. The company also plans to deliver an aircraft to Dubai in mid-2025 to begin passenger service there late this year or early next.

The S4 2.0 features fly-by-wire controls; a redundant, electrically distributed propulsion system that feeds six articulating proprotors (two electric motors per rotor), four proprotors mounted on the forward wing and two on the aft v-tail; and a battery-cooling and charging system that can charge the aircraft in less than eight minutes. Late last year, Joby announced that it had received an additional \$1 billion of funding and commitments and currently has an enterprise value of \$4.7 billion.

Joby has also announced a partnership with Virgin Atlantic to introduce electric air taxi services in the UK, with the focus on developing zero-emission, short-range routes from Virgin's hubs at Heathrow and Manchester airports, with the aim of offering competitive pricing compared to existing premium ground transport options.

Proposed routes include a 15-minute flight from Manchester Airport to Leeds and an 8-minute journey from Heathrow to Canary Wharf, potentially reducing travel times significantly compared to traditional ground transport. Virgin Atlantic will assist in marketing the service, engaging with regulators, and supporting the development of necessary infrastructure.

St Mary's, and Tresco. The system, operators. developed by UK-based Airtec Engineering, has been fully operational supports improved communication with since early 2025. It delivers real-time passengers, local transport providers, flight arrival and departure information and families by offering up-to-date to passengers via terminal displays and travel mobile devices.

updates to override automatic data Isles of Scilly.

Penzance Helicopters has implemented when necessary. A future update will the Online Flight Board system at its enable advertising integration, creating three operational heliports: Penzance, a potential new revenue stream for

The introduction of this system information. Penzance Helicopters, operated by Starspeed, The setup includes a mobile currently flies two Sikorsky S-76C++ app for ground crew, allowing one-touch helicopters on scheduled services to the

Bell Textron and Omni Helicopters International Group have announced a joint offshore operational evaluation programme for the Bell 525 Relentless helicopter, to be conducted over several months at Omni's high-tempo operation in Georgetown, Guyana, pending Federal Aviation Administration type certification.

Following type certification, Bell will operate the Bell 525 helicopter in collaboration with Omni to undertake a program of offshore mission flights. The helicopter will be loaded to representative mission weights and will be fully integrated into the daily flight planning processes and flight schedule. The 525 will visit multiple offshore installations in the region and will be loaded, unloaded and refueled routinely to subject it to a sustained trial under actual field conditions.

The operational evaluation will see Bell fly the 525 integrated with the 200 flight per month Omni flying program. The aircraft will undertake the exact same sequences of flights as the live operational fleet in Guyana, exposing it to the intensity and pressures of live commercial line operations. Special focus will be placed on operational resilience, supply chain robustness and durability when exposed to frequent ground handling activity, both on and offshore. Around 500 hours of flying is planned over a six month programme.



EHang made the first successful urban flight of a pilotless eVTOL aircraft in Europe, when it flew its EH216-S in the city of Benidorm, Spain. The flight was conducted as part of the European Union's U-ELCOME (U-Space European Common Deployment) project, under EASA (European Aviation Safety Agency) regulations,

Coordinated by Eurocontrol, the initiative brought together 51 partners from France, Italy and Spain and showcased the seamless integration of Advanced Air Mobility (AAM) solutions within a controlled urban airspace. Conducted in a specially designated U-Space environment, the flight marked а groundbreaking multi-drone demonstration of coordination. Alongside the EH216-S eVTOL, up to twelve additional drones operated simultaneously, all managed through Spain's Air Navigation Service Provider, Enaire, using its U-Space system and services to ensure a safe and harmonised air traffic environment. This is a significant step forward in U-Space development in Europe, demonstrating how multiple pilotless aircraft can operate safely and efficiently in urban environments

People...People... Lenny Brown MBE, Managing Director of Airbus Helicopters in the UK for the last three years, will step down from his role effective 17 March to pursue a new opportunity. Lenny has been powerfully instrumental in shaping the direction and success of the company, and Airbus sincerely thanks him for his leadership, vision and commitment. Richard Atack, currently Head of Customisation Centre, stepped into the role of Interim Managing Director, effective 3 March. The announcement of the permanent successor will be made in the coming months...



Archer Aviation has been announced as the Official Air Taxi Provider for the Los Angeles (LA28) Olympic and Paralympic Games and Team USA, marking a major step forward for the integration of electric vertical take-off and landing (eVTOL) aircraft into urban transportation at a global scale.

As part of the exclusive partnership, Archer's Midnight aircraft will be deployed throughout Los Angeles during the 2028 Games to offer fast, quiet, and emission-free urban air mobility. Designed to carry four passengers and a pilot, the Midnight aims to replace short-haul car trips with safe and sustainable air travel. Each trip is expected to last between 10–20 minutes, offering a significant reduction in travel time.

The LA28 Olympic Paralympic Games are anticipated to draw more than 15 million visitors, in this context, Archer's eVTOL fleet will play a critical role in transporting VIPs, fans, officials, and stakeholders between key venues, tourist hubs, and the city's major transit points. The partnership also opens the door for Midnight to be used in support roles, including emergency response and security operations, utilising its ability to quickly access congested or otherwise inaccessible parts of the city.

Archer plans to establish a network of vertiports at strategic locations across the city. These include the LA Memorial Coliseum, Stadium in Inglewood, Hollywood, Santa Monica, Orange County, and Los Angeles International Airport (LAX). The goal is to ensure passengers can access eVTOL flights conveniently from major arrival points and venues throughout the Games.

By 2028, the collaboration is expected to position Los Angeles as a global showcase for the commercial deployment of urban air mobility, offering a real-world use case for eVTOL technology in mass event logistics and setting a precedent for future smart city planning and infrastructure integration.



**Bell** Textron Canada has reached a significant milestone in its nearly 40-year history with the **delivery of** its **6,000th commercial aircraft**. The landmark helicopter, a Subaru Bell 412EPX, is one of two aircraft delivered to the Ministère des Transports et de la Mobilité durable, destined for operational use by the Sûreté du Québec.

Assembled at Bell's Commercial Delivery and Assembly Centre in Mirabel, Quebec, this delivery underscores the company's continued leadership in the aerospace sector and its deep-rooted presence in the region. The addition of the two new helicopters strengthens the province's ability to carry out critical missions such as search and rescue, aerial surveillance, tactical operations, flood response, and transportation across challenging terrain.

The Ministère des Transports et de la Mobilité durable, through the Service Aérien Gouvernemental (SAG), has relied on Bell helicopters for decades. The latest additions to the fleet will enhance the operational capacity of the Sûreté du Québec, which carried out 116 helicopter missions in 2024 alone. These missions are vital to ensuring public safety across the province's vast and often remote regions.

To commemorate the milestone, Bell hosted a celebration at its Mirabel facility, bringing together employees, government officials, and partners.

Airbus Helicopters has announced the launch of HTeaming, a new modular solution enabling seamless crewed-uncrewed teaming (CUC-T) for rotorcraft operations. The system, designed to allow helicopter crews to control uncrewed aerial systems (UAS) in-flight, was revealed ahead of the 2025 Paris Air Show and is positioned as a significant advancement in collaborative airborne mission capabilities.

The initial standalone version of HTeaming includes a tablet-based human-machine interface (HMI), Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) management software, a dedicated modem, and four antennas for helicopter integration. Developed for ease of use by standard helicopter crews, the system reduces operator workload and allows for flexible mission deployment.

Flight testing has already taken place, most notably in May 2025 with a Spanish Navy Airbus H135 and an Airbus Flexrotor UAS. The company has also conducted multiple trials on platforms such as the H135, H145, and H130 to validate the operational capabilities of crewed-uncrewed teaming and ensure scalable integration and additional trials involving other rotorcraft types are scheduled in the coming months. HTeaming is designed to be platform-agnostic and modular, supporting future upgrades and integration across multiple helicopter configurations.

Integrated versions of HTeaming are expected to roll out progressively across the Airbus Helicopters product line, with operational availability targeted for 2026.

# **Helicopter INTERNATIONAL**

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Bell has announced the first sale of the Bell 505 helicopter in the Netherlands to Gerrit Verwijs, owner of Verdegro Group. The Verdegro Group, based near Breda, is a leading Dutch manufacturer of public safety infrastructure, including mobile lighting, crash systems, and traffic safety solutions. The aircraft will be used for business travel in Europe.

The Subaru Bell 412EPX has received disaster response. validation from Transport Canada Civil to begin flight operations across Canada.

The aircraft is now cleared for operations in the Canadian market, a key step in Bell's global expansion plans. With its increased maximum internal weight of 12,200 lbs. and an external weight capacity of 13,000 lbs., the 412EPX is positioned to enhance the ability of operators to carry substantial payloads, making it ideal for a wide range of missions, from public safety to

One of the standout features of Aviation (TCCA), allowing the helicopter the SUBARU Bell 412EPX is its robust main rotor gearbox with dry run capability, providing operators with increased horsepower and performance, particularly during demanding public safety operations. The aircraft is capable of carrying up to 5,000 lbs. using a cargo hook, making it particularly well-suited heavy-lift missions transportation of large quantities of critical supplies, including firefighting, law enforcement, and search-and-rescue operations.



Italian law enforcement has begun seizing helicopters used for tourist flights over Pompeii, following an investigation into multiple aviation law violations. Prosecutors in Torre Annunziata, Naples, ordered the seizure of up to eight helicopters, with at least three already detained by the Guardia di Finanza.

Violations reportedly include unlicensed commercial flights, unauthorised overflights of populated areas, use of unqualified pilots, and incidents such as throwing flower petals over wedding ceremonies without aviation authority approval. Charges cited include breaches of the Italian Navigation Code, such as operating without an Air Operator Certificate and unauthorised aircraft use for profit.

Local reports link the company Rotortech Srl to some of the alleged infractions. Two Italian-registered Robinson R44 helicopters have been identified.

Pompeii, a UNESCO site attracting nearly 4 million visitors annually, remains а protected archaeological area, and flights above it are strictly regulated to preserve safety and site integrity.

# **Helicopter INTERNATIONAL**



Westland Aircraft and Rotorcraft. By Jeremy Graham & Ron Smith. Published by Tempest Books. Price: £36.79 (UK). This 286 page hardback is a gold mine for anyone keen to learn about the previously secret projects developed by the projects teams at this Somerset manufacturer.

Well illustrated and with a wealth of information, it boasts two in researching and leading on ground breaking rotary wing technology from 1975 to 2012. They both then retired producing this unique history. Definitely place reserved on the bookshelf as it will carried XF-85 and RF-84K fighters, . one for the serious rotary-wing for anyone involved in its development bookshelf.

Concorde by Lawrence Azerrad. Simons. Published by Pen & Sword. Published by Prestel of Munich, London, Price: £32.00 (UK) \$54.95 (USA). New York. Price: £35.00 (UK) \$45.00 This story of the Consolidated B-36 is (USA).

With 200 mostly unusual and personal With a mix of powerplants popularly colour illustrations this 192 page described as "six turning and four hardback is a special tribute to the burning", referencing the multiple piston world's first successful commercial engines and four outboard turbojets, the supersonic airliner, an aircraft that massive aircraft could remain airborne became a familiar sight to those of us for two days without refuelling. It was living under the London Heathrow flight capable of delivering any nuclear path or close to its British test bases at weapon in the US arsenal in the late Filton and Brize Norton.

assembly and service.

# Supersonic - The Design and Lifestyle of Convair B-36 Peacemaker by Graham M.

without equal in US Aviation history. 1940-1950s and had the longest wing Having personally witnessed span of any aircraft in aviation history authors who spent much of their careers the final flight into Filton when the and fly at altitudes that few other aircraft aircraft was prematurely retired from could reach. First flown in 1946 it service and having earlier visited the remained in US Air Force service until hangar on numerous the mid-1950s and spawned several from the day job and collaborated on occasions, this book has a special variants, including the "parasite"

> A truly fascinating read in 299 pages of well researched text.



Rotortrade has completed the delivery of an Airbus AS350 B3+ helicopter to Nordurflug, Iceland's aerial tourism and heli-skiing operator. Initiated in January and finalised in March, the deal required sourcing a replacement engine amid a global supply shortage.

The aircraft, serial number 4629, was originally manufactured in 2009, and marks a significant upgrade for Nordurflug as it transitions the rotorcraft from private use into full commercial operation. The helicopter officially entered service on April 16th, and is already flying tourists over Iceland's volcanic landscapes and ferrying heli-skiers to snowfields.

Sloane Helicopters, Leonardo distributor for the UK and Ireland, signed for three additional AW109 Trekker light twinengine helicopters at EBACE 2025 in Geneva. These VIP-configured aircraft are scheduled for delivery in 2027 and will bring the total number of Leonardo helicopters ordered by Sloane this year to eight, following a previous contract for five AW109 GrandNew aircraft in March.

To date, Sloane Helicopters has delivered more than 100 Leonardo commercial helicopters to operators and private users across the region. It also operates as an authorised service centre, providing maintenance and support for most AW109 GrandNew and AW169 helicopters. Additionally, Sloane functions as a Type Rating Training centre for Leonardo aircraft in the UK.

Last year Sloane was appointed official distributor for the AW09 in the UK and Ireland, following preliminary sales contracts for nine units. A renewal of the distributor agreement between Leonardo and Sloane is currently under negotiation.



Joby Aviation has achieved a new milestone by flying two of its air taxis at the same time for the first time. The flight, conducted on May 9 in Marina, California, underscores the progress of the company's flight testing programme and its path toward commercial passenger service.

This dual-aircraft operation follows closely on the heels of another key development: full transition flights with a pilot onboard, moving from vertical takeoff to forward cruise and back again. The rapid succession of milestones highlights the growing maturity of Joby's technology and its readiness for certification testing.

The company is advancing toward its goal of launching passenger services in 2026, with six aircraft currently in its testing fleet. Conducting simultaneous flights is seen as a crucial step to accelerate the certification timeline and validate performance across multiple systems.

Joby is collaborating with partners such as Delta Air Lines and Uber to bring electric air taxi service to major US cities, with Los Angeles and New York City identified as initial launch markets. The service is expected to begin shortly after the company receives type certification from the Federal Aviation Administration. International expansion is also underway, with partnerships in place with Virgin Atlantic in the United Kingdom and ANA Holdings in Japan. Additionally, the company has announced plans to begin commercial operations in Dubai by early 2026. Two of Joby's aircraft are currently based at Edwards Air Force Base for testing in collaboration with US defense partners. A sixth aircraft, powered on for the first time last month, is undergoing final checks before joining the flight test fleet.

Joby's first-quarter 2025 Shareholder Letter noted continued progress on FAA certification, marking a second consecutive quarter of record advancement. The company has now completed more than 40,000 miles of test flights across several locations, including New York, Japan, and South Korea.

Rotortrade has announced the sale of a 2020 Airbus H125 helicopter to Mexico based operator Craft Avia Center, expanding the dealership's footprint in Latin America. The utility-configured aircraft, with 800 flight hours, will initially support regional utility missions around the Guadalajara region of the country.

Following a Letter of Intent, the Sale and Purchase Agreement was executed, and the aircraft is now undergoing a Pre-Purchase Inspection (PPI) at Rotortrade's Maintenance Centre in Tallard, France. Delivery and operational deployment are expected in the coming months, with sea freight as the preferred transport method.

Craft Avia Center, a certified maintenance and air taxi operator for both Bell and Airbus platforms, operates in utility, public security, firefighting, and infrastructure surveillance. The acquisition supports the company's ongoing fleet expansion strategy, with additional aircraft purchases under consideration.

As part of its regional growth strategy, Rotortrade continues to strengthen its presence in Latin America through strategic partnerships and tailored support services for operators.



Horizon Aircraft has completed full-wing transition to forward flight with its Cavorite X7 large-scale hybrid eVTOL prototype. The test validates Horizon's fanin-wing architecture, which eliminates the need for rotating nacelles or tilt-wing mechanisms, simplifying the transition phase and improving flight stability.

The hybrid-electric system powering the Cavorite X7 prototype combines electric lift with a conventional turbine engine for cruise, targeting a projected top speed of 250 mph and an operational range of over 500 miles. This configuration is intended to support longer missions typical of regional air mobility and adjacent vertical lift markets.

The company is now advancing construction of its full-scale piloted demonstrator, which will serve as a platform for continued evaluation of hybrid-electric performance and certification pathways.

Gama Aviation has expanded its helicopter maintenance capabilities with Airbus the addition maintenance approval at its Gloucester Airport (Staverton) facility in the UK. This development marks a significant step in the Group's strategy to position Staverton as its central maintenance hub for rotary operations across the UK, complementing existing capabilities at its Norwich and Glasgow facilities, as well as its nationwide Mobile Maintenance Service Team (MST).

The approval allows Gama Aviation to provide a full suite of engineering services for the H145, joining the Leonardo AW169 and AW139 platforms already supported at the site. These services include design, production (under Part 21J & G), maintenance (Part 145), and component painting, with a larger dedicated paint shop scheduled to open later this year.

Strategically located to serve aircraft operating in the southwest of England, Wales, and the Midlands, the Staverton facility expands Gama Aviation's ability to deliver localised, responsive support. The company's Glasgow base will continue to serve as the primary location for helicopters operating in Scotland and northern England, with flexibility built into the network to allow for load balancing between sites as required.

Gama also plans to introduce Airbus EC/H135 support by early 2026.

PDG Aviation Services has acquired UK-based Team UAV, a specialist in drone inspection, survey, and data capture services. The acquisition significantly expands PDG's capabilities, positioning the company as a more comprehensive aerial services provider, with integrated solutions across both manned and unmanned platforms.

Team UAV's expertise in high-precision drone operations, including infrastructure inspection and environmental monitoring, will enhance PDG's offerings in key sectors such as power, utilities, and rail. By combining PDG's established helicopter fleet and aerial imaging services with Team UAV's advanced UAV technology, clients will benefit from greater operational flexibility, improved data accuracy, and expanded service options.

The integration will also streamline aerial data collection, reduce operational costs, and enable access to hard-to-reach or hazardous areas without relying solely on crewed aircraft. Team UAV's operations and personnel will be incorporated into PDG's existing structure, supporting a smooth transition for current customers and strengthening PDG's position in the aerial surveying and inspection market.



The General Civil Aviation Authority (GCAA) of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) has approved the design for the country's first hybrid heliport, set to be located at the Abu Dhabi Cruise Terminal. The site, currently used for helicopter operations, will be upgraded to support both conventional rotorcraft and electric vertical takeoff and landing (eVTOL) aircraft, marking a milestone in the integration of Advanced (AAM) Air Mobility infrastructure in the region.

The transformation is being led by Archer Aviation in partnership with Falcon Aviation Services and in close coordination with the GCAA. Abu Dhabi Aviation (ADA) is expected to support early operational phases, positioning this facility as one of the first hybrid heliports ready for commercial air taxi use in the UAE.

In parallel, the GCAA has become the first civil aviation authority globally to develop and implement regulatory standards specifically for hybrid heliport infrastructure. The standards, designed to ensure safe, efficient, and interoperable operations between helicopters and eVTOLs, are undergoing final consultation and are on

The project involves significant upgrades to the existing helipad, including the installation of eVTOL charging systems, enhanced landing aids, and upgraded safety systems to accommodate both aircraft types. This hybrid approach allows for efficient use of existing airspace and zoning approvals, significantly reducing development time and costs compared to building new, dedicated vertiports.

The project reflects a broader commitment by the UAE to position itself at the forefront of global AAM development, supporting smart city initiatives and sustainable transport goals. By enabling helicopter and eVTOL operations from a unified platform, the hybrid heliport model offers a scalable, adaptable solution that could be replicated across other major hubs in the region.



## - ASIA PACIFIC REPORT

Universal Vulkaan Aviation Pte Limited (UVA), Leonardo's authorised distributor for the Indian civil helicopter market, signed a contract at EBACE 2025 in Geneva, for two additional AW169 lightintermediate twin-engine helicopters. The aircraft will be configured for VIP and corporate transport, marking a strategic expansion of the AW169's presence in India.

The purchase falls under a multi-year procurement agreement signed in 2024, under which UVA is acquiring a total of ten helicopters across the AW109, AW169, and AW139 product lines. The agreement reflects growing demand in India for advanced, high-performance rotorcraft to support private, business, and high-end transport applications.

In addition to the AW169 acquisition, UVA signed preliminary agreements in 2024 for five AW09 nextgeneration single-engine helicopters. This move further diversifies Leonardo's offering in India and underscores its commitment to long-term market development through innovation and tailored customer solutions.

Precision Aviation Group (PAG) Australia has signed an exclusive distribution agreement with Honeywell Aerospace Technologies for the IntuVue RDR-7000 weather radar system for Leonardo AW139 commercial helicopters. The agreement gives PAG responsibility for sales and support across the Asia Pacific region for Honeywell Authorized Channel Partners.

The RDR-7000 system is Honeywell's latest radar offering, featuring automated 3D scanning and predictive hazard detection to improve pilot situational awareness and flight safety. Under the new agreement, PAG will assist with both retrofit and forwardfit installations, expanding access to the radar for operators in the region.

PAG and Honeywell will also collaborate on marketing and training initiatives to help operators understand the radar's capabilities and integration processes.



Milestone Aviation has signed a five-year lease extension with HeliKorea for a Leonardo AW169 helicopter, continuing a long-standing partnership between the two companies. The AW169, originally delivered in December 2016, will remain in service for emergency medical missions across South Korea.

The agreement, announced during Helicopter Investor London 2025, reflects Milestone's commitment to supporting mission-critical operations and diversifying its portfolio within the EMS sector. HeliKorea will continue to operate the AW169 to deliver essential medical transport services, contributing to improved healthcare access and emergency response capability in the region.

Entrol has announced the sale of a At the Langkawi International Maritime simulator to the Korea Forest Aviation Leonardo Headquarters, with delivery installation scheduled before the end of 2026. This simulator, replicating the Skind worldwide.

Entrol's Control Loading System, Garmin GTN 750 Xi avionics, a full LED visual system, NVIS capabilities, and a vibration system. It also includes over 70 operators in Malaysia, with a Entrol's Mission Package with modules fleet exceeding 240 helicopters that for firefighting, external cargo, and water have collectively accrued more than deployment training.

operational environmental high-risk aerial firefighting operations.

Sikorsky S-64 FTD Level 6 flight and Aerospace Exhibition (LIMA), and Weststar Aviation announced Services major government helicopter fleet expansion for Malaysia, with up to 28 helicopters 64E helicopter used primarily for to be delivered between 2026 and 2027 firefighting, will be one of only two of its and leased by Weststar under a 15-year agreement whuch will see the Leonardo The simulator will feature AW149 introduced into service with the Royal Malaysian Air Force and Royal Malaysian Army.

Leonardo currently supports 40,000 annual flight hours. The Developed in partnership with company maintains a regional helicopter Korean agent JINONE Heli-Support, the training academy near Kuala Lumpur, simulator is tailored to the specific offering full-flight simulators and advanced pilot training. Over the last requirements of the Korean agency. The decade, the number of locally trained system is designed to enhance training students has more than doubled, with safety and mission effectiveness for simulation flight hours in the thousands annually.

Airbus Helicopters is expanding its regional training capabilities with the addition of a third full-flight simulator at its Training Academy in Subang, Malaysia. Scheduled to be operational in the second half of 2026, the Airbus H175 simulator will be the first of its kind deployed outside Europe.

The H175 simulator will complement the existing H225 and AS365 training systems, supporting a range of training needs including initial type ratings, recurrent qualifications, and specialized mission training. The simulator will feature Level D certification, full integration of the Helionix avionics suite, and OEM flight data packages to ensure accurate modeling of aircraft behavior across all phases of flight.

To date, Airbus Helicopters' simulator centre in Malaysia has delivered over 21,000 flight training hours to approximately 2,600 pilots, establishing it as a key hub for rotorcraft training in the region.

The FAA has implemented revised helicopter zones and routes near Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport (DCA), effective June 12. The updates aim to enhance airspace safety and follow preliminary NTSB recommendations, building on earlier restrictions introduced in March.

Changes include reducing and relocating Zones 3 and 4 to improve separation from fixed-wing traffic, and introducing the Broad Creek Transition to provide helicopters south of DCA with better vertical clearance from arriving aircraft.

ADS-B Out remains required for most aircraft in the area. The updated helicopter chart was released as part of the FAA's regular 56-day cycle, with digital versions available ahead of the effective date. The revised helicopter chart was issued through the FAA's standard 56-day update cycle, with digital availability preceding the effective date by approximately 20 days.

Airbus Helicopters has opened a new 21,000 sq ft integrated distribution centre in Ontario's Niagara region to expand spare parts storage capacity and bolster support for Airbus's operations nationwide.

The Niagara Distribution Centre is designed to improve inventory management and accelerate logistics across key business lines, including helicopter completions, component MRO, composite manufacturing, and spare parts distribution.

By shifting distribution functions to Niagara, Airbus Helicopters is freeing up capacity at its Fort Erie site to expand manufacturing and completions work. This supports growing demand for platforms such as the H135, recently selected by the Ontario Provincial Police and the Royal Canadian Air Force under the Future Aircrew Training (FAcT) programme.

Sweet Helicopters transported more than 500 passengers to and from the Indianapolis Motor Speedway during the 109th running of the Indianapolis 500, setting a new operational record. As the official helicopter service provider for the event, the company deployed a fleet of nine rotorcraft to handle the high demand, surpassing its previous record of 450 passengers set in 2024.

Operations began early and

continued throughout the day, despite scattered showers and unseasonably cool temperatures. Flights remained on schedule even after a 40-minute rain delay pushed the race's conclusion to 4:56pm.

The company operates a mixed fleet of helicopters including two Leonardo AW109SP, three Airbus H130 and an Airbus H125.

US based Doroni Aerospace has secured a \$30 million investment from Kingdom Aero Industries (KAI) to further development of the of the H1-X eVTOL aircraft. The investment will accelerate the H1-X's development, bringing Doroni closer to its goal of launching the aircraft by the end of 2026.

The agreement also includes plans for a joint venture to manufacture the H1-X in Saudi Arabia, starting in 2027. with KAI establishing manufacturing planet in Saudi Arabia to produce and distribute the aircraft worldwide. The \$30 million investment includes an initial \$5 million to be invested upon signing the agreement (expected in 30 days), with the remaining \$25 million tied to key development milestones over the next two years. Upon completion, KAI will hold a 40% stake in Doroni, subject to future capital raises. Doroni's H1-X eVTOLis currently progressing with Federal Aviation Authority (FAA) certification.

Capitol Helicopters, based in Sacramento, California has placed and order for the GPMS International Health and Usage Monitoring Systems (HUMS) Foresight MX, which will be fitted across its fleet of Bell 407, Bell 412, Bell 429, and UH-60 Black Hawk aircraft.

After evaluating multiple HUMS solutions, Capitol selected GPMS's Foresight MX HUMS based on feedback from other operators who highlighted its ease of use, strong customer support, and the endorsement and backing from Bell. With rising costs and longer wait times for parts, Capitol views HUMS as a key tool in keeping operations efficient, extending the life of components, and cutting down on maintenance costs.



Helicopter Services Inc. (HSI), has announced a major expansion of its headquarters facility at David Wayne Hooks Memorial Airport in Spring, Texas. The upgrade adds several thousand square feet to its existing infrastructure, bringing the total indoor space to over 25,000 square feet. This expansion significantly enhances HSI's operational capacity to meet growing demand from government, public safety, air medical, and private-sector clients across the United States.

The enlarged facility includes dedicated spaces for sheet metal work, composite repairs, avionics integration, and other specialised services. The company aims to streamline turnaround times and improve operational efficiency through the creation of segmented service areas. HSI serves a wide array of operators, including the Florida Keys Mosquito Control District, Oklahoma Department of Public Safety, Houston Police Department, and multiple air medical providers.

Boost Systems, based in North Vancouver, has become the exclusive representative for Canada and USA of the Cloudburst Fire Buckets. Introduced by IMS New Zealand in 2005, the Cloudburst Fire Bucket is made from durable urethane and featuring a failsafe to open monsoon valve, capable of multi drop applications, while incorporating options for shallow-fill pumps and foam bladders.

Boost Systems has expertise and established relationships with utility operators and hopes to expand the deployment of Cloudburst Fire Buckets across the region.



## - OFFSHORE WORLDWIDE

Dong Fang Offshore has completed its strategic investment in Apex Aviation, officially unveiling Taiwan's first self-operated offshore wind helicopter fleet and a new integrated sea-air operations and maintenance (O&M) model.

The initiative, two years in development, marks a significant advancement in Taiwan's offshore wind logistics capabilities. With turbine installations along the western coast increasing rapidly, the demand for fast, flexible, and high-reliability maintenance solutions is growing. The first aircraft, expected to enter service in later in 2025, will be configured for offshore roles and optimised for reliability in maritime environments. While the specific model has not yet been disclosed, it is expected to be a twinhoist-equipped platform suitable for overwater operations and fast deployment from coastal base

CHC Brasil has secured two new contracts with Petrobras to support operations in Roncador, the largest offshore field outside the pre-salt area in Brazil. CHC will operate two Sikorsky S92-A from Farol deSão Tomé heliport, which will become CHC's 5th base of operations in Brazil. The contracts will begin later this year. The addition of two Sikorsky S92A contracts to CHC Brasil's portfolio increases its current heavy aircraft fleet by 33%.

Meanwhile, CHC Brasil has been recognised for the second consecutive year as the top provider for Operational Excellence in Offshore Transportation in Brazil by Petrobras, leading state-owned energy company. The PEOTRAM award, an initiative by Petrobras, encourages and recognises superior operational and maintenance standards within the Brazilian offshore aviation sector. This year's rigorous evaluation process included six competing companies. Over a five-day audit, three scrutinised specialised auditors operational practices based on the IOGP's 690 international standards, a leading benchmark for offshore aviation safety and operational integrity.

CHC Brasil was awarded first place after scoring the highest marks in various operational excellence categories.

Offshore Helicopter Services UK Ltd (OHSUK), a provider of Search and Rescue (SAR) operations in support of the offshore energy sector, has completed its 1,000th mission in the North Sea. The milestone marks a decade of critical emergency support, with SAR crews delivering 24/7 coverage year-round for up to 10,000 offshore workers. Operating across a vast and often challenging environment, the majority of SAR taskings have involved responding to incidents involving injured or ill personnel and transporting them to safety.

Task coordination is handled by Petrofac's Emergency Response Service Centre (ERSC) in Aberdeen, which next year marks its 20th anniversary. Since opening in 2006, the ERSC has handled over 12,000 calls. Last year, OHSUK announced a long-term contract extension that includes the introduction of two new, Leonardo AW139 helicopters. Designed with direct input from flight crews, engineers, and medical staff, the helicopters feature night vision capability, a redesigned medical cabin, and a distinctive blue and orange livery to enhance visibility. The investment in next-generation aircraft reflects the sector's ongoing commitment to offshore safety and ensures that SAR teams are well-equipped to respond to a wide range of emergency scenarios.

Industry-funded and supported by a broad coalition of energy sector partners, the North Sea SAR service underscores the collaborative approach taken to safeguard offshore personnel.

Bristow Norway is to begin testing zero and low-emission aircraft, after signing the first formal agreement for demonstration flights with American aircraft manufacturer BETA Technologies at Bergen Airport, Flesland, at the beginning of March.

The demonstration flights, which will begin later this year will be cargo flights without passengers, conducted using BETA's ALIA CX300 conventional take-off and landing (eCTOL) aircraft, which will be flown by Bristow Norway. The cargo flights will operate initially between Stavanger Airport and Bergen Airport, starting from Stavanger in late summer, with the entire route commencing later in autumn. BETA recently completed the production build of the ALIA aircraft that will perform these demonstrations. The aircraft, BETA's second productionintent vehicle, was manufactured at the company's scaled production factory in Burlington, Vermont, USA and has already received airworthiness certification for VFR, IFR, day and night flying from the Federal Aviation Authority. It will arrive in Norway later this year.

The Norwegian Government plans to accelerate the transition to zero and low-emission aviation and has allocated one billion kroner through the Aviation Strategy and the National Transport Plan 2025–2036 (NTP). The Avinor Group will facilitate the infrastructure at airports and make airspace available for the tests, and a procurement process is currently underway for fast chargers for electric aircraft in Bergen and Stavanger to accommodate the first test flight, with a deadline for the delivery of a charger to be installed at Stavanger Airport by 1st

June 1. Bergen Airport will have a mobile charger, which is to be delivered by 15th August.

Petroleum Air Services (PAS) has signed an agreement to purchase five Leonardo AW169s with skid undercarriage.

This order, which marks the entrance of the skidded variant of the type into the energy market, is a strategic move for PAS and is part of an ongoing commitment to modernise its current helicopter fleet with models that meet the International Association of Oil & Gas Producers requirements (IOGP), as the operator aims at expanding its offshore transport activities and exploration in the Eastern area of the Mediterranean Sea.

In late 2024 PAS also became an Authorised Service Centre for Leonardo allowing the company to add more services, greater spare parts management and more solutions to the benefit of third-party customers and users. The current PAS fleet has 31 helicopters and 8 fixed wing aircraft, with the company planning to expand its helicopter fleet in the near future to fulfil the demands of current and new customers who have obtained new concession rights in Egypt for offshore activities either in the Red Sea or Mediterranean. Petroleum Air Services is servicing the companies from different bases all around Egypt in Red Sea, Mediterranean and South Sinai.

The AW169s are expected to be delivered in the third quarter of 2026 or earlier and will carry out offshore transport, crew change and emergency response missions from the eastern desert region.



Shell has ordered three Leonardo AW189s for offshore operation support in Broome, Western Australia. The aircraft will be purchased and owned by Shell, and will be flown under contract by PHI. The aircraft will be painted in the same colour scheme as the four Sikorsky S-92s Shell currently operates from Seria-Anduki Airport in Brunei.

All three are expected to be delivered by the end of 2025 and will be flown in support of the Prelude FLNG (floating liquefied natural gas) facility, which is positioned 295 miles (475km) north east of Broome, and 124 miles (200km) from the nearest coast. The contract is currently held by CHC, using Sikorsky S92s.

The first aircraft, s/n 89030 with the temporary registration, I-RAIL is currently undertaking the pre-delivery test flights at Leonardo in Vergiate.

(O.Bernardi)



29 Sikorsky UH-60M of US Army 12th Aviation Battalion destroyed in mid air collision with Bombardier CRI-701ER airliner near Ronald Reagan National Airport, Washington DC during night time training flight. All 3 occupants died in the incident plus 64 in the CRJ-701.

### February

- Robinson **R44II** RP-C3424 destroyed in crash into creek at Guimba. **Philippines** following suspected engine failure, whilst en route to Manila. The helicopter became partially submerged and the pilot was killed. Previously whilst refuelling at Binalonan in Pangasinan, the aircraft refused to start and had to be worked on before departing some four hours later.
- 1 Aerospatiale SE3130 YV-163A destroyed in heavy landing in field at Uverito, Venezuela. All three occupants were injured in the accident.
- 2 Bell UH-1H of El Salvador Air Force substantially damaged during fire fighting mission when it ditched into Lake Chanmico whilst trying to fill a Bambi Bucket. All four occupants survived the crash.
- substantially damaged in forced crash in forest in Hofberg, Germany

landing and rollover in field at Hurst in Berkshire during training flight. Two occupants escaped with minor injuries.

- 5 AgustaWestland AW109SP I-CPFL destroyed in crash near Parma, Italy when pilot lost control during initial departure in fog, approximately 500m (1,640ft) from private helipad. 3 fatal.
- 6 Bell 206L-4 PK-ZUV of MHS Aviation substantially damaged at Bentong, Pahang when it rolled over with rotors running after aerial work flight. One ground worker was killed and the pilot suffered minor injuries. 1
- **6 Robinson R44II TI-BAR** (c/n 11119) destroyed in collision with drone whilst crop spraying in Pococi, ) Costa Rica. The pilot survived the crash.
- **7 Robinson R22B N7191B** (c/n 3074) substantially damaged in accident near Spearman, Texas during wildlife culling mission, when engine partially failed causing severe vibration. Helicopter impacted cedar trees during attempted autororation and then rolled several times down a hill, sustaining damage to the fuselage, tail boom and main rotor blades and gearbox. The pilot was uninjured but the passenger sustained minor injuries.
- **9 Schweizer 269C D-HSEP** (c/n S1451) 3 Robinson R22B G-KKRN (c/n 1201) of Franken Helicopters destroyed in



### - OFFSHORE WORLDWIDE

Offshore Helicopter Services UK Ltd (OHSUK) has expanded its fleet with the delivery of a new Airbus H175, following test flights in southern France. The aircraft is scheduled to enter service in the North Sea, supporting offshore energy sector operations. OHSUK conducts approximately 6,300 flights annually, providing offshore transport and emergency response.

The addition of the H175 expands OHSUK's existing fleet and comes nearly two years after Ultimate Aviation's acquisition of the company. This expansion reflects ongoing efforts to enhance capacity to meet growing offshore demands. The helicopter was officially handed over at Airbus' Marignane facility near Marseille before being flown to the UK for application of the company's livery and final preparations prior to deployment.



whilst en route. 2 fatal.

- **11 Mil Mi-8T RA24175** (c/n 98943147) of Yamal Airlines forcelanded at Tazovsky heliport in Yamalo District, Russia following port engine failure. None of the 19 occupants were injured. 12 Bell UH-1H Huey II PR-COE (c/n 9629) of Rio de Janeiro military police damaged in clash with armed criminals. The helicopter received minor damage and had to perform emergency lading near Penha, Rio de Janeiro. No injuries were reported by the occupants.
- 13 Airbus H130 N3WL (c/n 9505) of Well Lived Ltd suffered minor damage at Moabs Canyonlands Field, Utah when a window dislodged from a nearby hangar during take off striking the helicopter main rotor. helicopter landed safely and the 7 occupants escaped uninjured.
- 14 Bell 407 CC-CXT (c/n 53240) of Aeromex Helicopters suffered minor damage when it was shot at while collecting water near Colliputti in Chile during a fire fighting mission. Helicopter landed safely.

# Military Helicopter News



July-August 2025



The US Army has officially designated MV-75 as the mission design series for the Bell V-280 Valor, its Future Long Range Assault Aircraft (FLRAA). The designation includes the prototype version, YMV-75A, where "Y" indicates a prototype and "A" marks the initial model. The "MV" prefix stands for multi-mission vertical takeoff, while "75" references the Army's founding year, 1775.



Bell Textron has demonstrated its Virtual Prototype of the Future Long Range Assault Aircraft (FLRAA) to the US Army's Program Manager FLRAA office and Team FLRAA stakeholders. The event marks the first hardware delivery milestone under the Army's accelerated FLRAA acquisition program.

The Virtual Prototype consists of two advanced cockpit simulators built using a digital twin of the FLRAA platform. These systems are designed to support early pilot familiarisation, tactics development, and user feedback prior to physical aircraft delivery. They will later be converted into Flight Training Devices (FTDs), contributing to long-term pilot training infrastructure.

Developed using a modular open systems architecture, the FLRAA platform builds on Bell's tiltrotor experience and is expected to double the range and speed of current Army assault aircraft. The digital engineering strategy used in the Virtual Prototype supports faster iteration cycles, enabling the Army to incorporate user input directly into the final aircraft design.

The demonstration highlights the programme's use of Middle Tier of Acquisition (MTA) authority accelerate schedule by four years, aligning with Army modernisation goals. Final testing of the Virtual Prototypes is underway, with delivery scheduled to support rapid development of tactics, techniques, and procedures for the future tiltrotor fleet.

FLRAA is designed to offer a significant leap in performance over current rotorcraft, delivering twice the range and speed of the Sikorky UH-60 Black Hawk while incorporating modern digital design practices and a modular open systems architecture. These design features are intended to maximize agility, survivability, and adaptability for future mission requirements.

SkyAlyne has revealed the livery for the Royal Canadian Air Force's future Airbus Helicopters H135 training fleet, designated CT-153 Juno. The high-visibility scheme features a yellow upper fuselage and dark blue underside, separated by a red and blue stripe reflecting the Canadian flag, which will also be displayed in full on the tail. This colour combination is chosen for its effectiveness in maintaining visual contrast in various environments.

The announcement follows Airbus's sale of 19 H135s to Canada in November 2024 as part of the Future Aircrew Training (FAcT) programme. SkyAlyne, a joint venture between CAE and KF Aerospace, is delivering the programme, which covers both rotary- and fixed-wing training. Canada's fleet of 19 aircraft will be customised locally at Airbus Helicopters' facility in Fort Erie, Ontario, with Canadian-developed Supplemental Type Certificates. These include modifications to the avionics suite, communication systems, and cockpit layout, tailored to RCAF requirements.

The CT-153 Juno joins a fleet that includes four other aircraft types under FAcT: 19 Pilatus PC-21s (CT-157 Siskin II), 23 Grob 120TPs (CT-102B Astra II), 7 Beech King Air 260s (CT-145E Expeditor II), and 3 De Havilland Dash 8-400s (CT-142Q Citadel).

Delivery of the first units is expected in early 2026, with full fleet integration to follow. The CT-153 Juno replaces the legacy Bell 206-based trainers and brings the RCAF into alignment with other advanced air forces that have already transitioned to the H135 for pilot training, including the UK's RAF and Germany's Bundeswehr.

The Belgian Air Force is expected to Navy frigates to support future naval retire its NH Industries NH90-TTH operations. tactical transport helicopters in summer 2025, according to industry sources. Though not officially confirmed, the move would align Belgium with other nations like Australia and Norway that have scaled back or withdrawn from the NH90 program due to ongoing reliability and cost issues.

Belgium introduced the NH90-TTH in 2012 to modernise its tactical airlift capabilities. However, the fleet has faced persistent challenges, including low availability, high operating costs, and heavy dependence on specialised VSR700 is equipped with radar, electromaintenance, limiting its operational effectiveness and placing strain on defense resources.

These issues reflect broader concerns reported by other NH90 operators, despite the type's advanced design and multi-role potential. In Airbus H145M, selected in 2024 to replace both the NH90-TTH and the aging Agusta A109BA. Fifteen H145Ms have been ordered under a NATO procurement, with deliveries set for 2026-2027.

France has formalised its commitment to the VSR700 uncrewed aerial system (UAS) by signing a framework agreement with Airbus Helicopters and Naval Group. This agreement advances the Systèmes de Drone Aérien pour la Marine (SDAM) programme, which will see the VSR700 integrated into French

Airbus Helicopters will supply the VSR700 platform, while Naval Group will handle integration using its Steeris Mission System, a mature combat system developed for complex maritime environments. The VSR700 has already demonstrated its performance in at-sea trials, showing autonomous operational capability in high-tempo, electromagnetically challenging conditions.

Designed for ISR missions, the optical sensors, and an AIS receiver. It can fly for over eight hours with multiple payloads and features fully autonomous shipboard launch and recovery, even in rough sea states.

The agreement secures the response, Belgium is transitioning to the SDAM programme's future and invites partner nations to join via governmentto-government deals, supporting the development of a European defense industrial base and positioning the VSR700 as a competitive option in the global maritime UAS market.If the NH90s are withdrawn as planned, Belgium will face a temporary gap in medium-lift transport capability until the H145M fleet is fully operational. This may necessitate interim measures to support missions such as troop transport and medical evacuation.



A US Marine Corps Sikorsky CH-53K King Stallion recently visited GE Aerospace's Lynn, Massachusetts facility, where its three T408 engines are manufactured. This operational display underscored the ongoing collaboration between GE Aerospace and the US military, highlighting the technological advancements that support complex and demanding missions.

The T408 engine delivers 7,500 shaft horsepower, a 57 percent increase over its predecessor, the T64, providing the CH-53K with the capability to perform under extreme conditions while supporting global operations for the Marine Corps, joint forces, and allied nations. With an 18 percent improvement in specific fuel consumption and a 63 percent reduction in parts, the T408 also enhances reliability and maintainability through features such as a rugged compressor with erosion coating and split casing design.

(RNZAF) has completed a full software upgrade of its NH90 fleet in just four weeks, a task NH Industries (NHI) originally estimated would take three years. This rapid completion makes New Zealand the first nation to upgrade its entire NH90 fleet.

Originally, NHI expected the eight-aircraft upgrade to require relocation to Europe and a sequential approach spanning multiple years. However, the New Zealand Defence Force's Deeper Maintenance team at RNZAF Base Ohakea demonstrated the capability to carry out the work locally to the highest standards, convincing NHI to approve domestic completion. Additional support came from the Ministry of Defence, which secured key components from a retired Australian Defence Force NH90, eliminating the need to ground the fleet and enabling a continuous upgrade cycle.

The new software adds key like advanced combat features inter-aircraft identification, secure communication, and ADS-B OUT compliance. It also introduces automated low-hover capability, vital for operations in brownout or maritime conditions.

These upgrades enhance the fleet's safety, flexibility, and integration with military and civilian airspace. Further enhancements are planned to improve communications and precision navigation for better civil air traffic management.

The Royal New Zealand Air Force Airbus US Space & Defense and Shield AI have partnered to integrate Shield AI's Hivemind autonomy software into the MQ-72C Logistics Connector, the uncrewed variant of the UH-72 Lakota. The collaboration supports the US Marine Corps' Aerial Logistics Connector (ALC) programme and aims advance autonomous logistics operations in complex and contested environments.

> The companies will jointly test Hivemind with Airbus' Helionix avionics suite to evaluate scalable autonomous flight capabilities. Shield AI's software allows aircraft to operate without GPS, datalinks, or pilot input, and pairing it with the proven Lakota airframe offers a practical path to fielding resilient unmanned rotorcraft for expeditionary missions.

> The MQ-72C is currently under development as part of the ALC programme's Middle Tier Acquisition (MTA) Rapid Prototyping phase. Airbus is now in its second year of building and evaluating demonstrator aircraft for autonomous payload delivery.

> The agreement supports wider Department of Defense goals to accelerate the integration of autonomy into logistics platforms, aiming to boost operational flexibility, reduce manpower needs, and increase sortie rates in highthreat scenarios.



Thales Defense & Security Inc., based in Clarksburg, Maryland, has been awarded a \$31.1 million order by the US Navy to support critical helmet-mounted display and mounting equipment for the H-1 aircraft platform. The order falls under an existing indefinite-delivery/indefinitequantity (IDIQ) contract.

The scope of work includes the repair of a comprehensive suite of H-1 helmet and display components,. All maintenance and repair activities will be conducted at Thales' facility in Valbonne, France, with project completion expected by May 2026.

The helmet-mounted display system is a key component of the H-1's pilot interface, enhancing situational awareness, targeting precision, and mission performance through real-time symbology and cueing. This support contract ensures continued operational readiness of the H-1 fleet, which includes both the Bell AH-1Z Viper and UH-1Y Venom rotorcraft.

Honeywell has expanded its support for defence modernisation Japan's programs through the delivery of advanced aerospace systems for two helicopter platforms: the upgraded Sikorsky H-60 fleet and the new Boeing CH-47F heavy-lift program.

For the H-60 upgrade, Honeywell is supplying key systems that significantly improve power management, navigation, operational resilience. These include the 36-150 auxiliary power unit, the RDR-7000 weather radar. and next-generation versions of the APN-209 radar altimeter, air turbine starter, embedded M-code GPS/INS, 60kVA generator, and LED lighting.

In parallel, Honeywell has been selected to equip Japan's new CH-47F Chinooks with a comprehensive suite of aerospace systems. This includes the T55-714A turboshaft engines, 36-150 APU paired with a 45kVA APU generator, M-code GPS/INS, RDR-7000 radar, the updated APN-209 radar altimeter, and high-efficiency LED searchlights.



The Australian Army has begun regular use of sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) in its rotary-wing operations, marking a key advancement in a move toward energy resilience and sustainability. In April, an Army CH-47F Chinook helicopter was refuelled with approximately 3,000 lbs of SAF at RAAF Base East Sale in southern Victoria, demonstrating the operational viability of the renewable fuel in military missions. East Sale is currently the only airfield in Australia with an ongoing SAF pilot programme, having been certified in 2023.

This development is part of a broader initiative led by the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) and Joint Capabilities Group, aiming to ensure fuel security and reduce dependency on conventional fossil-based aviation fuels. All Australian Defence Force (ADF) aircraft are certified to operate on SAF blends, which align with NATO and allied aviation fuel standards.

Airbus Helicopters and Singapore's Defence Science and Technology Agency (DSTA) have partnered to explore crewed-uncrewed teaming (C-UT) capabilities between the Republic of Singapore Air Force's H225M helicopters and Airbus' Flexrotor uncrewed aerial system (UAS).

The collaboration will test Airbus' HTeaming system, which enables helicopter crews to control drones during missions. The setup includes a tablet-based interface, communication modem, antennas, and software designed to allow pilots to manage UAS sensors and mission profiles in real time.

The RSAF's H225M helicopters are already used for demanding missions such as search and rescue and tactical lift. Integrating the Flexrotor, a small long-endurance VTOL UAS, will allow extended surveillance and reconnaissance while keeping the helicopter at a safe distance.

This demonstration will be tailored to local conditions and is aimed at enhancing situational awareness, mission flexibility, and operational safety. The partnership also helps Airbus refine its C-UT solutions for broader Asia-Pacific use. No timeline for the flight demo has been announced

Sikorsky has been awarded a \$47 million contract modification by the US Navy, expanding a previously awarded Indefinite Delivery/Indefinite Quantity (IDIQ) agreement to bolster support for the H-53 heavy-lift helicopter programme.

The modification has been administered by the Naval Air Systems Command (NAVAIR) and increases the ceiling to accommodate an array of advanced sustainment efforts for Foreign Military Sales (FMS) customers. The scope of work includes: compatibility assessments and engineering modeling, cost reduction and software support initiatives, correction of software deficiencies and enhancement activities, service life extension analysis and flight testing support for follow-on test and evaluation.

The work will primarily be conducted at Sikorsky's facility in Stratford, Connecticut with additional support at various US locations. The performance period runs through until March 2028. This non-competitive award ensures ongoing technical and engineering support for operators of the H-53 platform. While no funds are obligated at the time of award, they will be incrementally committed through individual task orders.

Textron Inc. has signed Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with V2X, DigiFlight, Delaware Resource Group (DRG), and TRU Simulation, aligning to develop a comprehensive and advanced training solution for the US Army's Flight School Next programme. The agreement signals a coordinated approach to modernise Army aviator training with a high-tech, low-risk solution supported established industry leaders in military training and simulation.

This collaboration will focus on integrating training systems, simulators, and aircraft support using the Bell 505, a five-seat helicopter equipped with the Garmin G1000H NXi avionics suite and a Safran Arrius 2R engine featuring dual-channel FADEC.

V2X provides logistics and sustainment expertise for long-term readiness, DigiFlight supports mission planning and simulation development, DRG contributes advanced aircrew training services and curriculum design, and TRU Simulation enhances synthetic training capabilities with high-fidelity full flight simulators.

Fleet Readiness Center East (FRCE), based in North Carolina, has officially started depot-level maintenance on the U.S. Marine Corps Sikorsky CH-53K King Stallion, marking the first time the new heavy-lift helicopter has entered this stage of its lifecycle. The aircraft arrived from Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 461 on April 4, with maintenance starting on April 17. This is the first of 14 aircraft to be processed under the Age Exploration Program, Depot (AEPD),

which will assess the helicopter's condition and help shape future maintenance planning.

Under the AEPD, each helicopter will be disassembled and undergo more than 800 detailed inspections to identify early signs of wear and gather data to refine the maintenance cycle. Results will inform updates to technical manuals and maintenance procedures for both depot-level work and field repairs.

The second CH-53K is expected to arrive at FRCE in late 2026, with additional aircraft to follow in 2027. Until a second maintenance site becomes operational in California in the 2030s, FRCE will remain the sole depotlevel maintenance facility for the CH-53K fleet.

ICARUS Devices has received an Air Worthiness Release (AWR) from the US Army for its smart view limiting system on the Boeing CH-47F Chinook. This approval allows the device to be used for in-aircraft simulation of degraded visual environments (DVE) during pilot training.

The ICARUS system enables dynamic visibility adjustment in the cockpit via a visor, control unit, and mobile app, supporting realistic training for IFR operations and weather-related decision-making. Already approved for the UH-60 Black Hawk and UH-72 Lakota, its certification on the Chinook extends the Army's investment in advanced in-flight training tools. ICARUS is used globally across military and civilian sectors, enhancing pilot readiness for challenging flight conditions.



Airbus Helicopters has delivered the first two NH90 Tactical Transport Helicopters (MSPT variant) to the Spanish Navy from its Albacete facility, marking the initial handover from the second batch of Spain's NH90 program. This phase includes 23 aircraft in total, with seven specifically configured for naval operations.

The MSPT (Multi-Role Support Transport) version is tailored to meet the operational demands of the Spanish Navy, especially for amphibious and tactical transport missions. Notable modifications include reinforced landing gear, navalgrade communication and navigation systems, and automatic folding mechanisms for the rotor blades and rear fuselage, facilitating efficient shipboard operations. Designed to transport up to 20 fully equipped troops or a light vehicle, the helicopter also supports IFR (Instrument Flight Rules) capability with single-pilot operation under night or adverse weather conditions.

The helicopters will become operational at Rota Naval Base later this year. Crew training has already been completed at Airbus's Albacete site to ensure a smooth entry into service. With this delivery, the NH90 is now operated by all three branches of the Spanish Armed Forces—the Army, the Air and Space Force, and the Navy—highlighting the platform's strategic value and interoperability.

In parallel, the Spanish Ministry of Defence and Airbus Helicopters signed a framework agreement on May 13 for the Spanish National Helicopter Plan, which aims to further consolidate and expand NH90 usage across the military. This milestone also reinforces Spain's broader industrial and defence collaboration with Airbus.

MD Helicopters has formally proposed the MD530F for the US Army's Flight School Next initiative. This light single-engine helicopter is designed as a military trainer to mimic the handling and mission profiles of larger Army rotary-wing aircraft.

Built in Mesa, Arizona, the MD 530F is based on the proven 500-series airframe. It features a five-blade fully articulated rotor and a Rolls-Royce C30 engine rated at 650 shaft horsepower. The aircraft is suited for high-altitude and high-temperature training environments common to Army operations.

The MD 530F uses a hydraulics-free control system for simpler maintenance and improved tactile feedback. Its cockpit is dual-control, night-vision goggle-compatible, and includes crashworthy features like a crash-resistant fuel system and energy-absorbing structure for crew safety.

Positioned as a cost-effective trainer bridging basic instruction and advanced mission training, the MD 530F aims to replicate the characteristics of the Sikorsky UH-60M, Boeing AH-64E, and CH-47F without their complexity or cost. It benefits from an existing global user base and support network, promising high readiness and lower ownership costs.

The MD 530F is already used by allied militaries in training and light attack roles, underscoring its suitability as a US Army training platform.

# **MILITARY HELICOPTER NEWS**

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The US Army has officially designated MV-75 as the mission design series for the Bell V-280 Valor, its Future Long Range Assault Aircraft (FLRAA). The designation includes the prototype version, YMV-75A, where "Y" indicates a prototype and "A" marks the initial model. The "MV" prefix stands for multimission vertical takeoff, while "75" references the Army's founding year, 1775.

Intended to complement and eventually replace part of the Sikorsky UH-60 Black Hawk fleet, the FLRAA platform is designed for air assault, medevac, and resupply missions. The aircraft is capable of operating in contested environments with improved range, speed, and survivability. Often summarized as "twice as far, twice as fast," the V-280 is a tiltrotor platform offering significant operational flexibility for combat aviation brigades and special operations aviation units.

The programe incorporates a Modular Open Systems Approach (MOSA) to enable rapid integration of new technologies and reduce long-term sustainment costs. Army leadership emphasized the platform's importance to future large-scale combat operations and its role within the broader Future Vertical Lift modernization portfolio. The naming of the MV-75 marks a key milestone in the FLRAA development timeline as the Army continues preparations for prototype testing and eventual fielding.



The Irish government has officially opened a new €1.4 million helicopter hangar at Custume Barracks in Athlone to support the Emergency Aeromedical Service (EAS), operated by the Air Corps. In service since 2012, the EAS has completed over 4,300 missions nationwide, providing rapid medical response in critical and remote situations.

The upgraded facility enhances aircraft maintenance and readiness, supporting high safety standards and mission reliability

The rooftop helipad at the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh has marked its fourth year in service, having facilitated over 175 helicopter landings since opening. Strategically positioned atop the Royal Hospital for Children and Young People (RHCYP) the helipad provides direct access to emergency departments.

Previously, Edinburgh's air ambulance operations were restricted to a ground-level pad at the site, which, due to surrounding terrain and updated Aviation Authority regulations, was limited to daylight-only use. Night operations required landing at Edinburgh Airport, with patients then transported via ambulance, adding up to an hour in transfer time. The elevated helipad now enables full 24/7 capability,

Air Methods has expanded its Life Flight operations in Florida with the addition of a third helicopter to its regional fleet. Operated in partnership with Baptist Health and Wolfson Children's Hospital, the move significantly enhances access to critical care transport across northern Florida, especially for patients in rural and underserved communities.

The new aircraft will improve coverage and reduce response times in emergency situations where every minute is vital. It also strengthens interfacility transport capability, allowing the safe and rapid transfer of critically ill or injured patients between hospitals.



Tehama County Sheriff's Office, North Carolina, has added a Bell UH-1 helicopter, registration N911NN, to its aviation unit, acquired at no cost through the US Department of Defense surplus equipment programme. The acquisition marks a significant milestone for public safety in Northern California, providing aerial support to a rural county that spans over 3,000 square miles.

Operational and maintenance expenses for the aircraft are fully covered through a combination of federal grants, California state discretionary funds, private donations, and assets seized in narcotics enforcement actions. The UH-1 is equipped with a FLIR thermal imaging system, a rescue hoist, and an external cargo hook. These upgrades will allow the unit to support a wide range of missions, including assistance in locating and dismantling illegal marijuana cultivation sites in remote areas. Flight crew and pilots have completed a yearlong training regimen to ensure readiness for critical incident response.

Beyond Tehama County, the aircraft will also support over nine additional counties in the North State region, under an expanded regional service model financed through the same mix of grants, local discretionary funding, and seized criminal assets from participating jurisdictions. The helicopter unit held its first publicly announced training event at Red Bluff Airport on April 30, marking the operational debut of the aircraft.

Able Aerospace Services, based in Mesa, decision comes after a DHC-6-400 Twin Arizona, has secured a \$10.5 million Otter went down in the Gulf of Thailand firm-fixed-price requirements contract on April 25, resulting in six fatalities, and to provide maintenance services for the Bell UH-1N helicopter's main rotor hub training mission in Muang District on assembly. The contract, awarded by the US Air Force Sustainment Center at Robins Air Force Base, Georgia, outlines a support period through May 27, 2028.

The scope of work involves repair and overhaul of the UH-1N's main rotor hub, a critical component in sustaining the platform's operational readiness. All contracted services will be performed at Able's Mesa facility. The award resulted from a competitive acquisition process, with two responsive offers submitted. Funding will be obligated on a per-order basis as maintenance tasks assigned are throughout the contract term.

entire aviation fleet, both helicopters considered, including the potential and fixed-wing aircraft, following two decommissioning of legacy aircraft such fatal crashes within five weeks. The as the Bell 212...

a Bell 212 helicopter crashed during a May 24th, killing three.

The Bell 212 involved in the latest incident had been in service for over four decades, raising questions about the continued use of aging airframes. In response, National Police Commissioner Pol. Gen. Kittirat Phanphet has ordered a full inspection of all police aircraft. Each aircraft will undergo airworthiness checks before being cleared to return to service.

The Police Aviation Division has instructed conduct to comprehensive reviews of maintenance procedures. operational standards, and aircrew readiness. Fleet The Royal Thai Police has grounded their modernization measures are also being

MILITARY HELICOPTER July-August 2025



Leonardo has completed delivery of the final MH-169A helicopter to the Guardia di Finanza, marking the conclusion of the agency's 24-aircraft acquisition program. The last aircraft, serial number 72036 (construction number CSX82177), has been designated GF 524 and is the 16th unit in the skid-equipped configuration.

The full fleet of MH-169As, the Guardia di Finanza's customized variant of the AW169M, is now in operational service, with a clear split in airframe configurations: the first eight helicopters (GF 501 to GF 506) were delivered in a wheeled landing gear configuration, optimized for rapid ground mobility and specific mission profiles, while the remaining 16 units (GF 507 to GF 524) are outfitted with skid landing gear for enhanced operations in rugged or remote terrain.

Leonardo's completion of the program underscores its continuing support of Italian government agencies and its strong presence in the law enforcement rotorcraft segment.

HealthNet Aeromedical Services, in of its fleet to an all twin-engine, singlepartnership with Marshall Health pilot, forthcoming addition of a new Airbus weather conditions. H135 helicopter to its fleet. The aircraft December 2025, replacing the aging wide EC130 currently in operation.

HealthNet will complete the transition dedicated maintenance team.

Instrument Flight Rules Network and long-time aviation partner (IFR)-capable platform, enhancing safety Air Methods, has announced the and mission flexibility under adverse

Aeromedical is scheduled for delivery to HealthNet's Services operates a total of 10 bases, Huntington, West Virginia base in and the incoming H135 will ensure fleetstandardisation twin-engine IFR aircraft. The aircraft will With the arrival of the H135, be maintained by Air Methods'

RapidSOS, a US-based intelligent safety technology company, has announced a new agreement with Global Medical Response (GMR) aimed at transforming how air ambulances are requested. Through an expansion of RapidSOS Unite, Emergency Communication Centers (ECCs) can now digitally request GMR air ambulances in under 60 seconds. This is a major improvement over the current process, which can take up to 10 minutes and often relies on manual phone calls and data entry.

The new integration allows ECCs to send critical patient and situational information instantly and track aircraft in real time. The system will initially be rolled out in GMR-served areas, with potential for national adoption. GMR is one of the largest air medical providers in the US, supporting over 550,000 patients annually.

This development was highlighted at RapidSOS's Innovation Day, where other updates to the platform were also presented. These include enhanced data analysis from connected devices, centralised communication tools, AI-powered handling of non-emergency calls, and improved system interoperability. RapidSOS now supports over 22,000 public safety agencies worldwide with data from more than 600 million devices.



Helicopter has signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Namibian operator Court Helicopters, outlining plans to explore a partnership focused on delivering search and rescue (SAR) and crew change solutions in Namibia. The agreement paves the way for a potential long-term collaboration supporting both offshore and onshore operations across the country.

CHC will bring its global operational expertise and diverse fleet capabilities to the partnership, leveraging decades of experience in complex SAR missions challenging environments such as Norway, Ireland, and Australia.

Court Helicopters will contribute its established local presence, regulatory understanding, and in-country operational capabilities. The partnership aims to strengthen aviation support for Namibia's growing energy and resource sectors by providing safe, efficient, and scalable personnel transport and emergency response services. Initial efforts will focus on aligning capabilities and regulatory compliance to assess the viability of a full-scale joint operation.

The move signals increased interest in Namibia's aviation and offshore logistics sectors.

TracPlus has opened a new office in London, marking its first permanent presence in Europe as part of its global expansion to better support aerial firefighting operations across the EMEA region. The new team includes Atlanta Taylor as Account Director and Harry Bickerton as Account Manager, both bringing strong aerospace and aviation experience.

The move follows rapid growth for TracPlus, driven by the launch of its FireFlyte platform. In 2024, the company processed over 142 million reports, tracked 170 million litres of suppressant, and logged 99 million kilometers flown. The London office strengthens regional support and aligns with the company's goal of improving real-time coordination and safety for aerial emergency missions.



Life Link III has secured approval from the Duluth Airport Authority Board for a new base at Duluth International Airport, marking a major investment in Minnesota's Arrowhead region. The agreement includes a 15-year lease and construction of a custom hangar to support both rotor and fixed wing operations.

The facility will feature climatecontrolled indoor patient transfer capabilities, improving safety and comfort for patients and crews. Construction is set to begin in 2025, with completion expected by late 2025

The rooftop helipad at Bristol Royal Infirmary, UK (BRI) has reached a major milestone with 1,484 helicopter landings since it became operational in May 2014. Positioned directly above the hospital, the helipad enables rapid transfers of critically ill and injured patients from across the South West, providing direct access to emergency and cardiac care services at BRI and the Bristol Heart Institute.

Built through a £3 million investment, including £500,000 from the HELP Appeal charity, the helipad has significantly reduced transfer times in life-threatening situations.

Cornwall Air Ambulance has renewed its contract with Castle Air Ltd to continue as the charity's helicopter operations partner. Under the terms of the new agreement, Castle Air will remain responsible for the ongoing maintenance and engineering services for the charity's two Leonardo AW169 helicopters, ensuring they remain ready to respond to emergency calls across Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly.

The charity's second AW169, G-CNLL, is currently undergoing a medical fit, during which the aircraft will be equipped with all necessary components to transform it into a fully equipped critical care resource. Once complete, the helicopter will undergo final inspections at Castle Air before entering service later this summer.



In late April, Sikorsky and Rain, a firetech industry company based in Alameda, California, successfully tested autonomous wildfire suppression techniques using Sikorsky's Matrix flight autonomy system and Rain's wildfire mission planning software. The tests, performed in Southern California's challenging terrain, aimed to demonstrate the potential of autonomy in helping both crewed and uncrewed firefighting helicopters detect and suppress early-stage wildfires.

The flight tests utilised Sikorsky's autonomous Black Hawk helicopter, equipped with the Matrix flight control system, which allows for both piloted and fully autonomous operations. Rain's software added a layer of mission autonomy that enabled ground operators to command the helicopter via a tablet, directing it to water sources, locating and assessing fires with thermal sensors, and determining optimal flight paths and water release points for efficient suppression.

The demonstrations took place at an altitude of 1005 metres (3,300 feet) and involved real-time, live-fire scenarios where Sikorsky's Black Hawk aircraft, carrying a 324-gallon Bambi Bucket, dropped water on several brush piles set by firefighters from the San Bernardino County Fire Protection District. The tests were conducted in collaboration with CAL FIRE, the US Forest Service, and local fire authorities, showcasing the interoperability of autonomous aircraft with human-piloted helicopters in the same airspace.

In addition to the core autonomous capabilities, the tests also demonstrated Sikorsky's MATRIX system's ability to transition between autonomous and piloted control based on operational conditions, providing increased flexibility for firefighting teams. The combined system aims to improve safety, accuracy, and efficiency in wildfire suppression operations, particularly during the initial stages of a wildfire.

The demonstrations are a part of a broader push to integrate autonomy into wildfire response, allowing for faster suppression and greater capacity, ultimately saving lives and property. The technology could prove invaluable for aerial firefighting teams in California, where wildfires are a year-round concern. The test flights lasted two weeks, accumulating 24 hours of flight time, and showcased significant potential for autonomous aircraft to assist in managing and mitigating the effects of wildfires.

Avincis emergency medical helicopters, operating on behalf of Portugal's National Institute for Medical Emergency (INEM), completed 29 landings at the newly reopened heliport at Santa Maria Hospital in Lisbon during its first month of operation. Closed since 2020, the heliport reopened on 15 March and has since handled 36% of all Avincis air ambulance missions nationwide and 81% of those arriving in Lisbon.

The reopening significantly reduces patient transfer times by eliminating the need to land at

alternative sites such as other hospitals or the military terminal at Humberto Delgado Airport, which previously added up to an hour in ground transport. Since March, use of the military terminal for emergency flights has dropped from 25% to 8%.

Serving Lisbon's largest hospital, the heliport underwent over €500,000 in safety upgrades, including lighting enhancements, resurfacing, and redesigned emergency access routes. It now operates under updated civil aviation by procedures reflecting its urban location and proximity to Lisbon Airport.



Avincis has taken delivery of two additional five-bladed Airbus H145 helicopters at the manufacturer's Donauwörth facility in Germany. The new aircraft are being deployed to Stockholm to support Avincis' existing Helicopter Emergency Medical Services (HEMS) operations in Sweden. This marks a continued investment in fleet renewal and mission capability enhancement, following the delivery of two similar aircraft in August 2024, one of which also entered service in Sweden.

Delivered in partnership with long-time leasing partner LCI, the helicopters expand the Avincis-LCI portfolio, which includes a globally distributed fleet of mission-critical aircraft. The five-bladed H145 offers a combination of high performance, reduced vibration levels, and simplified maintenance, making it well suited for demanding HEMS operations.

Avincis' global fleet now includes approximately 60 Airbus helicopters. The aircraft form the operational backbone of the company's air ambulance, SAR, and aerial firefighting services across Europe, Africa, and South America.

Hampshire and Isle of Wight Air helicopter mission since the service began in 2007. The milestone was reached on 10 June 2025, when the air ambulance team was dispatched to an emergency in Milford on Sea

So far this year the air Ambulance has completed its 14,000th ambulance has already responded to more than 1,000 incidents. The charity is currently running a capital campaign, Operation Airbase, to raise £3.6 million for a new facility near Southampton Airport.

United Rotorcraft has secured a contract with the Kern County Fire Department (KCFD) to convert two Sikorsky UH-60L Black Hawk helicopters into fully equipped Firehawk aerial firefighting aircraft. Sourced from US Army surplus, the helicopters will be outfitted with mission-critical upgrades to support wildfire suppression and emergency operations across Kern County.

The conversion package includes United Rotorcraft's high landing gear, Dart Aerospace's 1,000-gallon belly tank system for high-volume, targeted water drops, and a modernized avionics suite to enhance operational effectiveness and situational awareness. These upgrades will significantly expand the department's aerial firefighting capabilities, quadrupling their water delivery capacity from 250 gallons to 1,000 gallons per aircraft.

To support integration and long-term maintenance of the aircraft, United Rotorcraft has partnered with Timberline Helicopters, which will oversee initial inspections, scheduled maintenance, and de-modification work.

This partnership illustrates a growing trend in California and across the western US, where agencies are leveraging military surplus platforms and specialized conversions to strengthen aerial firefighting response amid escalating wildfire threats.

# Helicopter international -

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LifeNet of New York 7-7, based at Hornell Municipal Airport, Steuben County, New York, marked 15 years of air medical service with a community celebration highlighting its role in emergency care across the Southern Tier and Finger Lakes region. The event, held in honor of National EMS Week, brought together healthcare providers, first responders, and local residents, and featured a powerful reunion between the LifeNet flight crew and a former patient whose life was saved following a critical trauma incident.

LifeNet of New York 7-7 is one of 12 strategically positioned air medical bases throughout the state, forming a statewide network capable of delivering ICU-level care in flight. These aircraft operate around the clock, staffed with experienced flight clinicians and equipped to provide life-sustaining interventions such as whole blood transfusions, an essential capability in time-sensitive trauma scenarios.

Air Methods has renewed its partnership with EAGLE III, extending nearly two decades of collaboration in air medical transport across Green Bay, Wisconsin. Originally established in 2007, the alliance combines Air Methods' aviation expertise, including pilots, mechanics, and aircraft, with EAGLE III's clinically trained medical crews.

The renewed contract supports continued operation of an Airbus EC-135 T2+ helicopter, enabling advanced critical care transport including neonatal, Intra-Aortic Balloon Pump, Impella, and Left Ventricular Assist Device patient missions.

The renewal coincides with the 25th anniversary of EAGLE III's first helicopter transport, marking a significant milestone in organisation's long-standing regional service.



Avincis has secured new wildfire response contracts with Spain's Ministry for the Ecological Transition and the Demographic Challenge (MITECO) and the regional government of Castilla-La Mancha, expanding its role in Spain's aerial fire fighting strategy. The contracts will see the deployment of 14 helicopters across multiple regions from 2025 through 2027.

Under the MITECO contract, Avincis will operate nine Bell 412 medium helicopters and one Airbus Super Puma, supporting national wildfire suppression operations by providing both water bombing and personnel transport capabilities. The deployment is part of Spain's broader national plan for wildfire prevention and response, with aircraft positioned to assist autonomous communities during peak fire periods.

In Castilla-La Mancha, Avincis has been awarded two additional contracts for aerial firefighting support. These include two Super Puma helicopters for three fire seasons and two Bell 412s for a two-season term. All aircraft will be tasked with direct attack missions and tactical mobility for ground crews during wildfire events.

Avincis currently operates 39 firefighting aircraft within Spain and over 70 globally, including both rotary-wing assets and fixed-wing Canadair water bombers. The company logged over 8,500 flight hours in firefighting operations in 2024. Its global fleet supports missions in Spain, Italy, Portugal, and Chile.



Spokane County has officially commissioned a new Bell 505 helicopter into service with the Spokane Regional Air Support Unit (SRASU), operated by the Spokane County Sheriff's Office. The \$3.4 million acquisition enhances the unit's capacity to support law enforcement, search and rescue, and regional emergency operations across Eastern Washington.

Funding for the aircraft was secured through a combination of sources. Spokane County contributed approximately \$1.6 million in local funds, with additional support from the US Department of Justice and the Washington Auto Theft Prevention Authority (WATPA). Proceeds from the sale of an older aircraft also helped offset the cost. The helicopter is equipped with thermal imaging systems and other advanced technologies to support pursuit, surveillance, and rescue missions.

The Bell 505 replaces two aging helicopters that have served the SRASU for years. The unit, marking its 20th anniversary in 2025, has provided airborne law enforcement and emergency response services across the Inland Northwest since its founding in 2005, when it received its first aircraft, a Bell OH-58, from the US Army. Current aircraft in the SRASU fleet include a Bell OH-58 (Air 2) and a Bell UH-1H Super Huey (Rescue 3), both acquired through federal surplus programs. The new Bell 505 modernises the fleet and is expected to significantly improve mission performance and crew safety. The unit continues to operate with support from local law enforcement and fire departments and relies on a team of volunteer pilots for flight operations.

Lincs & Notts Air Ambulance has confirmed the purchase of a Leonardo AW109SP GrandNew helicopter, scheduled for delivery in summer 2027 and expected to enter service by autumn. The new aircraft complement the charity's existing AW169, which is operated under contract with HeliService International. The total cost of the project, including full medical fit-out, is budgeted at £7

million. Over £4 million has already been raised through major donations. The ongoing "Mission Possible 2" campaign is focused on securing the remaining funds.

The addition of the AW109SP is expected to boost the charity's operational flexibility and improve emergency response coverage across the Lincs & Notts region.

CENTUM and Avincis have partnered to support Avincis' new contract with Sasemar, the Spanish Maritime Safety and Rescue Agency. Under the agreement, Avincis will equip its Leonardo AW139 helicopters with CENTUM's Lifeseeker system, a mobile phone geolocation tool designed for search and rescue missions.

Lifeseeker can detect and locate phones even without cellular coverage, greatly improving SAR capabilities. Avincis will also lead the development of the Supplemental Type Certificate (STC) required for integrating Lifeseeker into the AW139 platform, ensuring readiness for Sasemar's coastal and maritime operations.

With a strong global record in emergency missions, Lifeseeker's deployment in Spain marks a further expansion of its use in national SAR fleets. The agreement highlights efforts to modernise rescue operations with advanced technology.

The partnership was formalised at the FEINDEF defence and security exhibition, emphasizing both companies' commitment to innovation and support for Spanish-developed systems.



