

No. 135 - OCTOBER 2024

# ROTOR

BY

AIRBUS HELICOPTERS

## Helibras: Made by Brazilians

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a new UK HQ for Airbus  
Helicopters**

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**Bruno Even, CEO of Airbus Helicopters**

**“Helicopters are proving to be a key element in protecting the population when needed most.”**

It has been 46 years since the creation of Helibras, a Brazilian success story that has delivered more than 850 helicopters, with more than 700 still in service. Helibras is not just the only helicopter manufacturer in Latin America, but also in the entire southern hemisphere.

There is no question that Helibras has great success ahead of it in Brazil, because today more than ever, helicopters are proving to be a key element in protecting the population when needed most.

Recently the world has been faced with a variety of natural disasters which have once again highlighted the necessity of helicopters to keep communities safe. Brazil itself has been affected and the role that helicopters played in relief efforts show

clearly their importance in maintaining the prosperity of a country as vast as this one, by keeping its citizens safe. In this *Rotor* you can read not only the stories of pilots who fly missions in service of the Brazilian public but also read about the aptitude of Airbus helicopters, but especially the truly versatile H145, for a range of disaster relief missions.

Elsewhere, Airbus Helicopters has had much to celebrate. Anniversaries in Canada and the United Kingdom feature in this issue, especially with the official opening of our new headquarters in Oxford, and of course, we can always take pride in the missions that our operators fly, like creating offshore wind farms off the coast of France or the life saving efforts of Japan's Coast Guard.

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# Helibras: Made by Brazilians

More than 46 years serving those who serve Brazil. Helibras, Airbus Helicopters' customer centre in Brazil, has spent almost half a century supporting a Brazilian defence industry that has brought industrial, economic and social wealth to the largest country in South America. The company manufactures 8 out of 10 helicopters that fly in the country's parapublic segment on firefighting, police, or public service missions.

As deliveries of H225Ms to the Brazilian Armed Forces draw to a close, and deliveries of 27 H125s to the Navy and Air Force begin, Helibras is looking to preserve and develop industrial capabilities that have proven key to supporting progress in Brazil and for Brazilians.

Articles: Isis Franceschetti, Bárbara Gonçalves, Belén Morant



# "The helicopter is a fundamental tool for the prosperity of a country"

Helibras is at a turning point with the completion of the H-XBR programme and the start of deliveries of 27 H125s. Both helicopters are manufactured at the plant in Itajubá, Minas Gerais. Alberto Duek, president of Helibras, explains the ambitions and challenges facing the company.



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## HAVING BEEN ESTABLISHED IN BRAZIL FOR MORE THAN 46 YEARS, WHAT IS YOUR ASSESSMENT OF HELIBRAS' CONTRIBUTION TO THE COUNTRY?

**Alberto Duek:** Helibras, in addition to being a genuinely Brazilian aeronautical company, has also become a guarantor of the country's strategic autonomy in defence matters. We are the only helicopter manufacturer in Latin America, or even in the entire southern hemisphere. Over the years, we have delivered more than 850 helicopters, nearly 700 of which are still in service performing essential missions such as saving lives, protecting the population and contributing to the development of the country. In terms of our local economic contribution, following the historic boost from the H-XBR contract, signed in 2008, Helibras became an economic engine for the region. Today we employ more than 500 Brazilians in our company, support more than 3,000 indirect jobs, and we purchase a considerable amount of raw materials and industrial inputs every year.

## SPEAKING OF THE H-XBR CONTRACT, HOW DO YOU THINK THIS CONTRACT FOR 47 H225M HELICOPTERS MARKED THE HISTORY OF BRAZIL?

**A.D.:** I can tell you that the H-XBR contract was a really historic transfer of technology from France to Brazil, not only for Helibras but also for several Brazilian industries. Now they are part of our global supply chain. Our common objective was to produce a helicopter with more than 50% Brazilian added value; we wanted to bring technological wealth to the country, and we are achieving that. Today, we are a Level 1 engineering centre, capable of producing helicopters, able to perform complex mid-life upgrades, a leader in the region for Support and Services, specialised in complex work, and we are the only centre in the southern hemisphere that performs D-level structural airframe repairs. All this technology also allowed Helibras to export to several countries in Latin America as well as to other continents. This contract allowed us to build our second assembly line (in addition to the one we already had for the H125) and gave us long-term visibility on our business model. Today, we have delivered 44 H225Ms in service in Brazil, the world's largest operator of this model, which have proven to be instrumental in protecting the population during

times of crisis, such as the Brumadinho dam collapse, the COVID-19 crisis or the unprecedented floods in Rio Grande do Sul earlier this year. In total, the Brazilian H225M fleet has already exceeded 50,000 flight hours – a beautiful milestone.

## THE H-XBR PROJECT IS NEARING COMPLETION. DELIVERIES OF THE 27 H125s ORDERED BY THE BRAZILIAN ARMED FORCES ARE STARTING... IS THIS LATEST CONTRACT, TOGETHER WITH YOUR RECURRING CIVIL DELIVERIES, SUFFICIENT TO PRESERVE HELIBRAS' CURRENT ACTIVITY?

**A.D.:** The short answer is no. But we are really convinced that there is a need in the country for more helicopters, especially medium helicopters, to meet both military, parapublic and civil needs in Brazil. And at the same time, Brazil already has an established helicopter industry, with know-how and state-of-the-art technology that makes Brazil one of only seven countries in the world with the capacity to manufacture helicopters. ...



2

- 1: Alberto Duek, president of Helibras.
- 2: Brazil is the world's largest H225M operator.
- 3: More than 100 Brazilians have been trained in France to work on the H225M programme in Brazil.



3





4

4: 70% of the 850 helicopters delivered by Helibras are from the Ecureuil family.

5: Helibras has more than 500 employees at its 4 bases in Brazil.

6: At the main headquarters in Itajubá, Minas Gerais, there is one production line for the H125 and another for the H225.

7: Helibras is the only company to provide highly complex maintenance services in the region.

... We believe the best way to produce medium helicopters for Brazil is to manufacture them in the country, ensuring local jobs, expertise and industry is maintained. By purchasing Brazilian helicopters, our operators are preserving jobs, capabilities and national technologies. We firmly believe that we share the same objective with the Brazilian government: to preserve a key industry, and to continue producing helicopters that bring prosperity to the country. The helicopter is not a whim; it is not a fashion statement. Helicopters are a fundamental tool for creating prosperity and saving lives during unfortunate natural disasters, but also during regular times to transport accident victims and patients. Helicopters are also a fantastic military tool for combat search and rescue (CSAR), defence the country, attack, troop transport, close air support, liaison and observation, operations onboard military vessels, etc.

**DOES HELIBRAS HAVE ANY PROJECTS IN MIND IN THIS REGARD?**

**A.D.:** We are certain that there is a need in Brazil for several medium multi-mission helicopters in the short term to cover civil defence,



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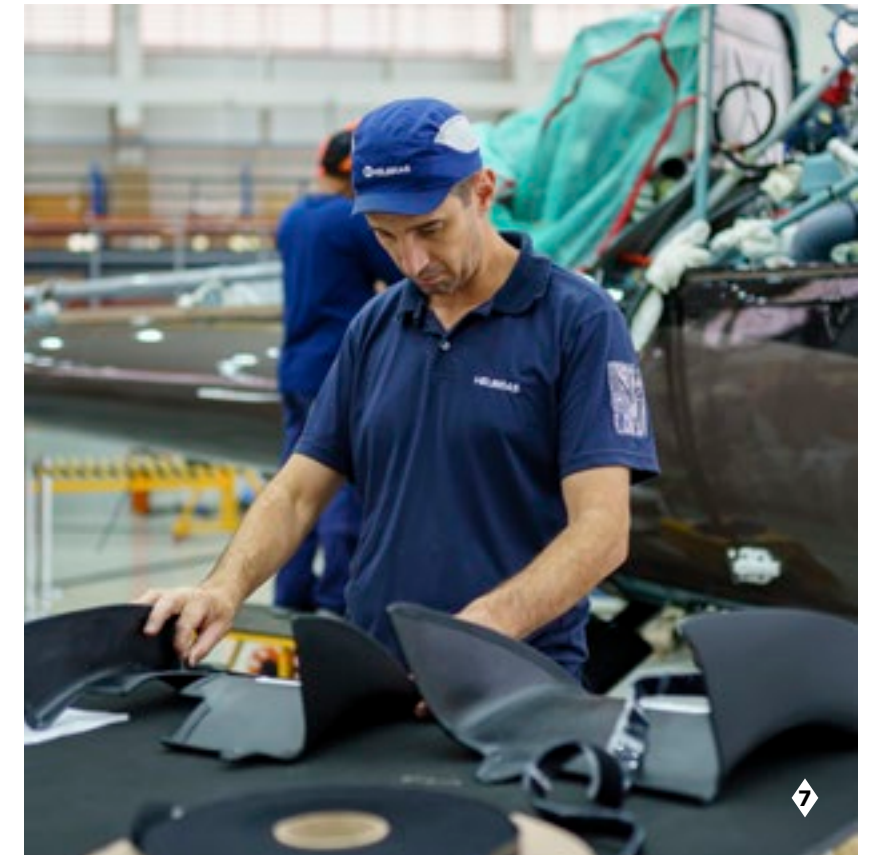


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environmental missions, multi-purpose military needs; to support the medical and energy sectors; and, above all, for parapublic missions such as firefighting, search and rescue, law enforcement missions, and to be able to cope with natural disasters. In this context, we have been discussing medium-weight helicopter options with several operators and our experience points to the H145. It is a proven and excellent helicopter that can provide multi-mission capabilities to a country as vast and varied as Brazil. The H145 is an incredibly versatile helicopter, more than proven with 1,700 helicopters of the family built, 7.6 million flight hours, and unparalleled acquisition and maintenance costs. Helibras has the capacity, technology, know-how and, above all, the desire and motivation to produce it locally for the regional market.

**HELIBRAS IN FIGURES**

- 2 assembly lines: H125 and H225
- +850 helicopters delivered
- 347 operators
- +500 employees
- 4 sites in Brazil



7



# Helicopters in the face of a new threat

Much has already been written about how helicopters are irreplaceable when it comes to dealing with natural disasters, be they floods, fires or hurricanes. It is estimated that the number of Brazilians who will be exposed to the consequences of climate change will be 6.5 million by 2030\*, and the need for more modern helicopters is already in the public debate.

1: The H145 can be reconfigured in just 10 minutes.



It is recognised that climate change has a direct impact on the number, nature and strength of adverse weather events. While Brazil has generally been largely spared from earthquakes, eruptions or hurricanes, a study\*\* shows that overflowing rivers, sudden torrential rains, forest fires, along with landslides are the most frequent and costly catastrophes for the country, with a 60% prevalence per year compared to other crises. "Latin America in general is facing increasingly violent and frequent natural disasters, in many cases linked to the El Niño phenomenon," explains Alberto Robles, Head of Latin America at Airbus Helicopters. "But in the case of Brazil, its enormous size and difficult access to some populations make helicopters even more essential, and a greater number of helicopters are needed to cover the country".

### A SWISS ARMY KNIFE

In Brazil today, the response to natural disasters is managed by various agencies such as the Ministry of Defence, Minister of Environment or the various state fire and police forces. The general view is that few agencies can afford helicopters only for specific emergency response tasks, but instead need versatile platforms that can be adapted to a multitude of missions depending on the need. Another prevailing opinion is the need for many units in order to spread them throughout the country and cover a maximum area, since Brazil is a country of 8.5 million square kilometres, an area more than 13 times the size of France. The south and the Atlantic coast are the most vulnerable regions: in the last 12 months alone, five tropical cyclones have been recorded in the south of the country.

### H145, THE GUARDIAN ANGEL OF MANY COUNTRIES

If there is one helicopter that has established itself in recent years as the multi-role platform par excellence, it is the H145. In addition to the almost 500 Lakota units already in the possession of the US armed forces, customers such as the French civil security force, the German armed forces or, in Latin America, the Ecuadorian and Honduran governments, have chosen it – among other things – for its quick configuration time of just 10 minutes, depending on the mission: from firefighting with a bambi

bucket, to medical evacuation with two stretchers or search and rescue with a hoist. "We are convinced that the best option for Brazil's multi-purpose needs is a platform like the H145, manufactured locally, with support in close proximity to operators, and above all, that provides the protection and support that the population needs to face what lies ahead."

\*Climate Adaptation Platform  
\*\*Climate Change Knowledge Portal

2: The US already has almost 500 Lakotas (US variant of the H145) in operation.

3: The Ecuadorian Air Force has six multifunctional H145s.

4: The number of fires from the beginning of 2024 until 10 June showed an increase of 935% compared to the same period in 2023.



### WHEN CATASTROPHE IS UNPRECEDENTED

After a week of historic storms and torrential rains in early May this year, Brazil's southernmost state of Rio Grande do Sul suffered immense flooding that included the collapse of dams and landslides, causing an environmental and humanitarian catastrophe. Nearly 180 people died and more than 2.3 million people were affected by what the government called a "climatic catastrophe". Military operators, parapublic agencies, as well as civilian customers such as OMNI and Helisul, used their helicopters for search, rescue, evacuation and transport of essential materials. In total, 56 Airbus helicopters flew around 2,000 hours to assist victims, day and night. Helibras sent a support team to the Canoas Air Force base, at the heart of the tragedy, to provide 24-hour support to operators who needed to get the best out of their helicopters. For its part, the Airbus Foundation donated helicopter flight hours to the Red Cross organisation for aerial coordination and transport of emergency personnel.



# H145 The first choice for disaster relief

The H145 is the global benchmark for population-critical missions such as EMS, search and rescue, law enforcement and disaster management, in a period when natural disasters are increasing drastically all over the world.

## Search and rescue

The H145 offers:

- Large and usable interior volume
- Wide side doors and rear clamshell doors
- Compact size allowing it to operate in confined areas



115 NM  
of SAR radius of action.  
Incl. reserve  
30 min

Hoist operations  
with mission  
weight of  
3,350 kg

Rescue  
winch with  
capacity of  
272 kg  
and a cable  
length of  
90 m



Helionix

Infographic: BeatrizSantacruz.com and Airbus

Fast and easy reconfiguration to quickly adapt to a range of missions

## Emergency medical services



Safe approach below  
Fenestron®  
shrouded tail rotor

Full body access for treatment



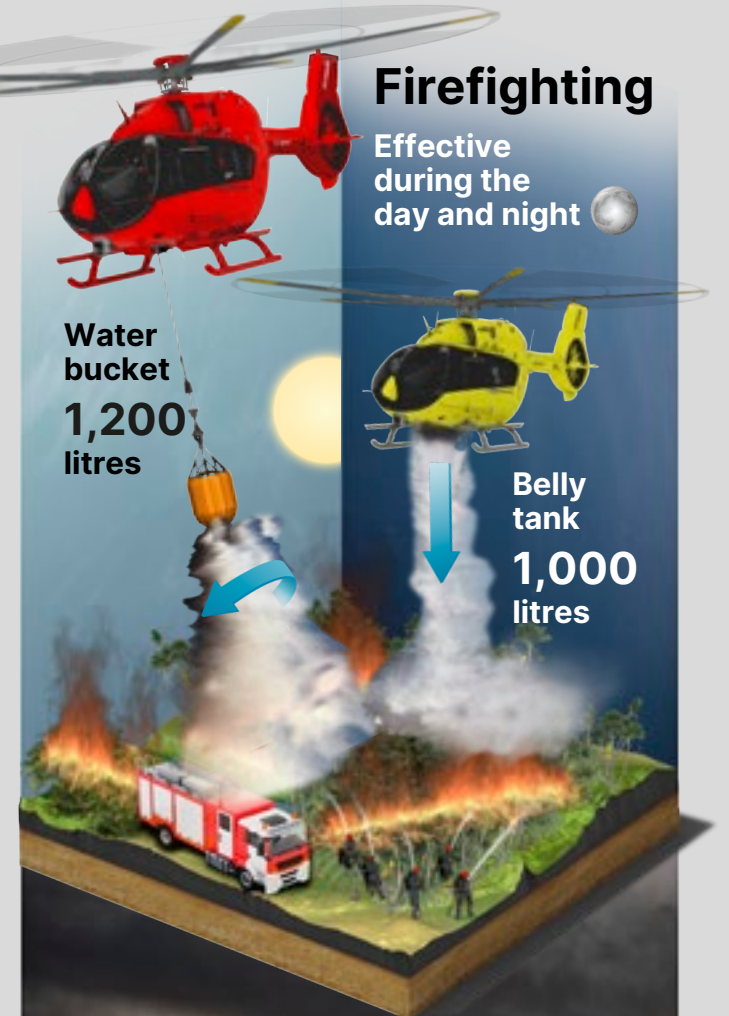
1 or 2 stretchers

## Firefighting

Effective during the day and night

Water bucket  
1,200 litres

Belly tank  
1,000 litres



## Natural disaster

First aid transport to inaccessible areas



Transportation  
of up to  
10 rescuers



# How the fire department of the State of Rio de Janeiro keeps saving lives

Fighting fires and rescuing people at the same time: this is the mission of Rio de Janeiro's fire department. Combining highly skilled aviation professionals with a specialised medical team, the all-women crew intervenes to save lives across the State of Rio with their H125s. Lieutenant Colonel Raquel Lopes, helicopter pilot with the state's fire department and first female commander of its Air Operations Group, and Major Juliana Rangel, aero-medical rescue specialist in the fire department, tell us more about their essential operations and how the squad came together.



## CAN YOU DESCRIBE A TYPICAL DAY AT WORK?

**Raquel Lopes:** In the fire department's aviation unit, we undertake sea rescue missions, mountain rescues at high altitudes, airborne medical rescues, evacuations, medical operations in restricted areas, inter-hospital transportation or vital organ transport, among other duties.

**Juliana Rangel:** We form a crew consisting of a doctor, nurse, technician and pilot. This allows us to perform rescues for medical evacuation and inter-hospital transport. Our inland area is still very underserved, so there is a high demand for inter-hospital transport to provide adequate healthcare for both clinical and trauma patients. My role in the crew is to act as a doctor in the air.

## WHAT'S SPECIAL ABOUT YOUR CREW AND THE MISSIONS YOU PERFORM?

**J.R.:** We underwent operational crew training, since being trained as a doctor for firefighting missions is not enough. We needed to go through specialisation and operational training to be qualified to perform the operational crew functions. As we are a small crew, we have to perform both the doctor's and the crew's functions, so we're trained to assist the pilot in landing in non-certified locations and in hard-to-reach places. Each member of the crew brings something special. We always have to work with a lot of technical attention and coordination.



It's a constant job to pay attention to everything happening around you. The main mission is for us to save lives and return home intact.

## HOW DO HELICOPTERS CONTRIBUTE TO THE SUCCESS OF YOUR RESCUE AND MEDICAL SERVICE OPERATIONS?

**R.L.:** For sea rescues, helicopters are more agile. The Ecureuil helicopter is a very versatile, agile aircraft, allowing us to land in restricted and narrow places. Besides being a very fast aircraft, I feel quite comfortable flying it. I really like it. For firefighting missions, the H125 has the highest power margin. It enables us to carry more

personnel, a larger payload, or transport a greater amount of water. It allows for an electric winch and the transport of heavier loads. It is a crucial asset in our operations.

**J.R.:** For medical rescue operations, the H125 enables us to reach difficult-to-access docks. We can land on the beach or on highways. The H125 provides us with an opportunity to operate in a variety of scenarios. It also meets our operational requirements for patient handling and aeronautical evacuations, because we need to land in locations that larger aircraft wouldn't be able to reach.

**1:** One of the fire brigade's missions is sea rescue.

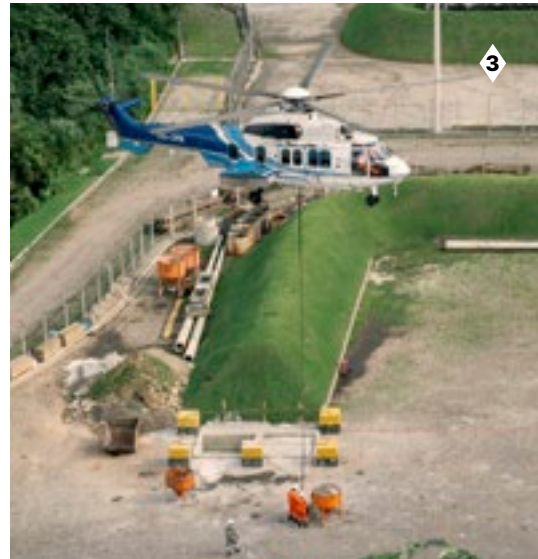
**2:** The H125 can carry an average of 1,000 litres in its bucket.

**3:** The female crew intervenes to save lives throughout the state of Rio with the support of the H125.



# Sky-high revolution: the H225 redefines power line construction from the air

How do you remove 25 old electricity pylons, install new ones and leave no trace on the centuries-old forests of Serra do Mar in Brazil? Tac Power Lines and Omni Táxi Aéreo proved they had the answer – the H225. The helicopter carried out a complex and precise operation to keep the population connected, while minimising impact on the environment and public.



The operation was carried out in difficult mountain terrain, within an environmentally protected park in the Serra do Mar, which serves as a bridge between the coastal lowlands of Santos and the São Paulo plateau. "The use of helicopters in the construction of transmission lines results in a faster and more efficient construction method, reducing the global project timeline. It is also an important tool for preserving forests, reducing environmental impact and making it quicker to obtain permits for the work," explains Fernando Cruz, CEO of Tac Power Lines.

**ONLY SUITABLE FOR HEAVYWEIGHTS**  
At the heart of this operation is the H225, with which OMNI has extensive experience of more than 11 years. "This accumulated experience has enabled us to respond in a short space of time to Tac's demands, and above all to meet their expectations. The operational performance of the H225, with its high load capacity and operational availability, enabled the mission to be carried out safely in a much shorter time than had been planned without the helicopter," explains Décio Galvão, OMNI's Commercial Director. The decision to use the H225 was not taken lightly. "The great advantage of the H225 is its high external load capacity of up to 3,800 kg in its standard version, which allows heavier materials to be used and reduces flight times. Another important factor is the use of a twin-engine helicopter with two pilots, which considerably increases the operational safety level of the mission," OMNI states.

## OVERCOMING CHALLENGES SUCCESSFULLY

Décio Galvão reflects on the challenges and achievements of the project: "It was hugely satisfying for OMNI to have participated in this first transmission line construction project with Tac, where we were able to demonstrate the high operational capability of the H225. We flew 313 flight hours, performed 318 flights with a total of 1,841 stages completed, transporting 3,144 tonnes of cargo. It was a 6-month contract, with 111 days of operation and an operational availability of around 96%."

## A BRIGHT FUTURE FOR AERIAL CONSTRUCTION

The success of this pilot project opens up new possibilities for the energy sector in Brazil. With ambitious plans to expand the installed network in this segment, the industry is poised to benefit from innovative construction solutions

such as those demonstrated by OMNI and Tac Power Lines. As Décio Galvão concludes, "With this contract, we strengthen OMNI as a transport solutions company also for the energy sector, which opens up a number of new business opportunities." Fernando Cruz echoed this sentiment, stating, "The outlook is very encouraging. We have a very strong partnership with OMNI and we should take this to other projects. Tac offers its clients a complete engineering and construction solution, adding the use of the H225 to the total safety of our works." The sky is no longer the limit for energy infrastructure development in Brazil, as helicopters pave the way for faster, safer, and more responsible construction methods. As Tac proudly declared, "It is very gratifying to see our country becoming a benchmark in this type of construction. The introduction of the H225 on construction sites raises levels of safety and productivity."

- 1:** Fernando Cruz, CEO of Tac Power Lines.
- 2:** Décio Galvão, Commercial Director of OMNI.
- 3:** The great advantage of the H225 is its large external load capacity of up to 3,800kg.
- 4:** The H225 is a very important tool for preserving native forests.





# Ecocopter H145: out of the blue





**THE SPANISH ARMY'S H135s TEAM UP WITH DRONES**

In early October, two Spanish Army H135 helicopters conducted an exercise alongside several UAVs commanded directly in flight from the helicopters' cockpits. The aim of the exercise was to demonstrate the interoperability and advantages of integrating crewed and uncrewed aerial vehicles in coordinated operations that will become increasingly crucial on the battlefield. Today, drones are able to perform missions in what we call 3D environments: dull, dirty and dangerous. They can perform these missions with less risk and lower cost than a manned asset. The success of the exercise demonstrated the ability of Airbus helicopters to interoperate with any type of drone, as fostering collaboration between manned and unmanned assets is an opportunity to gain a clear tactical advantage for modern armed forces.

**INDONESIAN AIR FORCE ORDERS FOUR AIRBUS H145 HELICOPTERS**

The Indonesian Air Force has placed an order for four Airbus H145 helicopters as part of its training modernisation programme. Under the agreement between the Indonesian Air Force and PT Dirgantara Indonesia (PTDI), Airbus will deliver the five-bladed H145s to PTDI, who will manage the reassembly and completion of the mission equipment and other customisation work at its facility in Bandung, Indonesia, for final delivery to the air force. These multi-mission helicopters will be deployed for military training and light search and rescue missions.



A safer world



**IRAQI MINISTRY OF DEFENCE OPTS FOR THE H225M**

Airbus Helicopters has been awarded a contract for 12 H225M multi-role helicopters by the Republic of Iraq. The contract was signed in Baghdad by the Minister of Defence of Iraq, Mr. Thabet al-Abbassi, in the presence of the French Ambassador, Patrick Durel. These helicopters will be operated by the Iraqi Army Aviation command, replacing older Mi-17s for a wider range of missions: counter-terrorism, special operations, tactical troop transport, attack, ground fire support, MEDEVAC and combat search and rescue. Deliveries will start in 2025. Iraq already operates a fleet of Airbus helicopters from the H125, H135 and H145 families.



**H135 GETS READY FOR LIFT-OFF WITH OPP**

The Government of Ontario has placed an order for three Airbus H135 helicopters which will be operated by the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) in Ottawa, the Greater Toronto Area and in the OPP's North West (Thunder Bay) Region. The H135 family of helicopters are used by law enforcement agencies all around the world, with more than 200 helicopters in-service in this segment.



**GUANGZHOU PUBLIC SECURITY BUREAU TAKES DELIVERY OF ITS FIRST AIRBUS H175 HELICOPTER**

Airbus Helicopters has delivered the first H175 helicopter to the aviation force of the Guangzhou Public Security Bureau (GZP). The new helicopter will perform public service missions and support emergency management. The H175 will join GZP's fleet, which includes two H145 helicopters that were delivered in 2016 and 2019 respectively and have accumulated a total of 3,200 flight hours.



An innovative future



**AIRBUS TO LEAD THE NEXT GENERATION OF ROTORCRAFT**

The NATO Support and Procurement Agency (NSPA) has awarded a contract to Airbus Helicopters to lead a concept study in the frame of the Next Generation Rotorcraft Capability (NGRC) project under which the participants combine efforts to work on design, development and delivery of a medium multi-role helicopter. Airbus is partnering with RTX's Collins Aerospace and Raytheon businesses and MBDA for the 13-month study which will analyse two integrated concepts of next-generation military rotorcraft.

**PEGASO TAKES DELIVERY OF SIXTH H175**

Transportes Aéreos Pegaso has taken delivery of its sixth H175. The helicopter, along with two others, will be utilised by Pegaso, a company specialised in air transport services for the energy industry in the Gulf of Mexico on behalf of Woodside Energy Group Ltd, an Australian petroleum exploration and production company. The helicopters will perform missions such as worker transportation, medical care and search and rescue missions and also support seismic exploration activities in the Mexican waters of the Gulf of Mexico. This brand-new rotorcraft will be the first to perform offshore deepwater operations in the Gulf of Mexico.

**RACER SPEEDS PAST ITS TARGET**

Airbus's RACER high-speed helicopter demonstrator, developed in the frame of the European Clean Sky 2 research project, has reached its fast cruise speed target of 407 km/h (220 kts). On 21 June, less than two months after its first flight, the RACER demonstrator exceeded its level speed objective of 407 km/h (220 kts) by reaching 420 km/h (227 kts) in its initial configuration. In just seven flights and about nine hours of flight testing, almost all of the flight envelope has been opened. Optimised for a cruise speed of more than 400 km/h, the RACER demonstrator aims to achieve the best trade-off between speed, cost-efficiency, and mission performance. It also targets a fuel consumption reduction of around 20%, compared to current generation helicopters in the same maximum takeoff weight category, thanks to aerodynamic optimisation and an innovative eco-mode propulsion system. The next phase of flight testing will focus on single-engine operations and will finalise the flight envelope.







# POWERING THROUGH THE WIND

1

Offshore wind is emerging as a growing pillar amongst the various alternative ways to produce electricity. Helicopters have an important role to play in this new type of mission. In Vendée, France, helicopter-operator Oya contributes to building new offshore parks off the French west coast, using the latest version of Airbus' H145.

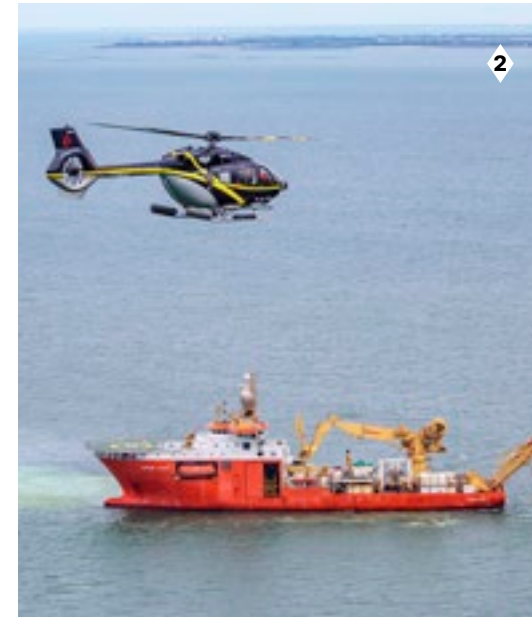
With all the necessary attributes to be an essential asset for the offshore wind market, the light twin-engine helicopter is making an important debut.

Article: Isis Franceschetti

## A NEW TYPE OF TRANSFER

Over the Vendean skies, a helicopter can be seen regularly making rounds between the coast and Yeu island. A not unusual sight in the domain of Oya Vendée Hélicoptères, the operator who performs the transfers between the mainland and the island. This time, the company's brand-new H145 is being put to another use: enabling the transfer of technicians to install the new offshore energy platform of Yeu Noirmoutier. The offshore wind park will become operational over the course of 2025, yet construction work is already well under way to get it ready for operations.

During the building phase, helicopters help transport technicians to and from boats, equipped with a helideck, and then take them to the park. Although they are not the only means of transport to transfer personnel between the coast and the platform's foundations, they provide an unrivalled advantage. Jean-Philippe Auneau, Head of Helicopter Offshore Operations at Oya Vendée Hélicoptères, explains: "A helicopter can sustain Sea State 6, meaning close to 4.5 m, whilst the crew transport vessels can only operate in 1.5 m heaves. Crew transport vessels and helicopters are very complementary solutions that enable



2

us to increase productivity and safety, almost independently of weather conditions."

## THE H145, A GAME CHANGER FOR OFFSHORE OPERATIONS

The H145 is the ideal candidate for this. With its 4-axis autopilot, Helionix suite and high visibility glass cockpit, the H145 benefits from improved comfort and safety, making for a smooth flight, while reducing the pilot's workload. Auneau adds: "The H145 is a real game changer in our offshore operations: it can accommodate more crew members and has a greater useful load." The helicopter has already proven its value for the Yeu Noirmoutier offshore park's installation. Auneau recalls one specific crew transfer that everyone agrees is a true testament to the mission capabilities of the H145: "We recently had to transfer technicians stationed on two different boats: the *Pioneering Spirit*, which is the biggest boat dedicated to offshore operations in the world, and the *Innovation*. The H145 not only transferred them from the shore to the vessels, but also between the two boats. The mission marked a great success and was an impressive show of performance from this helicopter."

## GROWING AN EMERGING EUROPEAN MARKET

Looking further afield, the French west coast is at the heart of the expansion of the offshore wind sector, with two other parks currently in development near Dieppe Le Tréport and next to Saint-Nazaire. Oya Vendée Hélicoptères



3



4

1: Oya's H145 arriving at an offshore wind farm.

2: The H145 was even able to transport technicians from shore to the vessels but also between two boats.

3: Oya's five-bladed H145's axis autopilot and glass cockpit make for a smooth flight.

4: Touching down on a helipad.

expects delivery of its second H145 in the coming months and is on its way to become a leading French company in helicopter offshore operations. To contribute to the growth of this sector in France and Europe, Oya Vendée Hélicoptères has partnered up with another one of Airbus' customers, renowned public services operator Airtelis. Named Airtelis Connect, the two partners' endeavour might have found just the right candidate for this mission. "The H225 is a very promising asset for offshore operations, something that we witnessed in Airtelis' firefighting operations. The rotorcraft's ability to transport personnel and heavy loads to the scene is just what we need in the sector right now".





# THE UPSIDES OF UPSIZING: A NEW UK HQ FOR AIRBUS HELICOPTERS

With an ever-increasing presence in the country's helicopter market, Airbus Helicopters in the UK recently moved to a new purpose-built headquarters. Lenny Brown, Managing Director, explains what they are going to do with all that new space.

Article: Ben Peggie

Beyond simply being one of the leaders in the UK helicopter market, Airbus has a sizable stake in the vertical lift infrastructure in one of the company's 'home countries'. At face value, the Oxford site and its staff of nearly 300 employees have two crucial activities. The first is the completion and retrofit activities of helicopters for Airbus Helicopters customers. The second aspect is the maintenance, repair and overhaul (MRO) for the helicopters used by organisations such as the police and armed forces. On closer inspection though, the range of activities goes deeper, with a design office that has the responsibility of developing customisation solutions for customers with highly technical equipment requirements on their aircraft. The site also provides training to pilots

and engineers, for both UK and international customers, as well as housing the team selling helicopters into the UK market. Airbus helicopters are an important part of the nation's civil and defence fabric. In terms of parapublic missions, the National Police Air Service is flying 20 H135 and H145 helicopters, while two thirds of Great Britain and Northern Ireland's air ambulances are Airbus helicopters. Today, all UK military pilots and rear crew do their mission-specific training on H135 and H145 helicopters. "We have 150 employees at RAF Shawbury totally dedicated to supporting the entire fleet of 36 Junos and Jupiters used for the UK's Military Flight Training System," emphasises Lenny Brown, Managing Director at Airbus

Helicopters in the UK, referring to the Royal Air Force names for the H135 / H145 fleet.

## DOUBLE CELEBRATION

Ensuring that customers can fulfil their missions is a critical part of Airbus Helicopters' activities and the company's new UK headquarters shows its commitment to its operators, with the 11,700 m<sup>2</sup> site significantly increasing the amount of MRO activity that can be undertaken. The modern facilities also provide all colleagues with more comfortable working conditions, whether they are customising and supporting helicopters, or working inside the offices. The relocation might only be a short hop from one side of Oxford Airport to the other, but in terms of opening up new possibilities – a little goes a long way. "The new building is much bigger than where we previously occupied on the other side of the airfield. It is a vastly improved working environment, both inside for our technical workforce and on the operations apron outside," notes Brown. Offering more space with better equipment, the expectation is that productivity will consequently increase to match the market demand. Outside, the site boasts eight landing pads able to accept all models of Airbus helicopters right up to the largest. It really is a case of 'newer means better'. "The new premises are going to be absolutely transformative and will give us a vastly improved working environment. There is much more space, it's more comfortable, and there's the potential



to develop the kinds of leading edge systems that will underpin our growth," explains Brown. The building move also comes in the same year as Airbus Helicopters in the UK celebrates its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The Oxford site will directly maintain around 100 helicopters, supporting 50,000 flight hours per year and Brown believes there are opportunities for more growth in the UK helicopter market. "Fleet replacement will be important in the military and parapublic markets. The five-bladed H145 is proving hugely popular in the HEMS segment – so we expect continued success."

**2:** His Royal Highness, William, the Prince of Wales alongside Lenny Brown at the ceremony to open the UK's new facilities.

**3:** The new Airbus Headquarters will offer more space and better equipment – improving Airbus Helicopters' responsiveness to its customers.



**1:** A Metropolitan Police EC145 on patrol over London.



# TAILORING THE H125 FOR AMERICA

The H125's versatility and customisation options make it the perfect fit for North American operators.

Johannes Dienemann, Vice President of Industry and Civil Programs at Airbus Helicopters in the US, explains the array of modification options and mission equipment that help the Ecureuil remain the most popular single-engine helicopter, both in the region and the world.

Article: Ben Peggie

In the US, aerial work accounts for much of the H125's activity, with 46% of the overall fleet flying such missions. Another significant factor driving its US sales is the H125's success in another market segment. "It is very popular with law enforcement," emphasises Johannes Dienemann. "Lots of law enforcement agencies around the country fly the H125." Of course, as the country's market leader, the H125 is used for a range of missions, covering emergency medical services to mosquito control and everything in between. "It is probably one of the most versatile products in the portfolio," notes Dienemann. What's behind the versatility?



**1:** Johannes Dienemann, Vice President of Industry and Civil Programs at Airbus Helicopters in the US.

**2 & 3:** Mission equipment & STCs are added in Columbus for law enforcement operators such as the Los Angeles Police Department and US Customs and Border Patrol.

"Ease of use, of flying, of maintaining," explains Dienemann. "The aircraft has kept up over time. The programme has more than 40 million flight hours, which suggests a certain history but it's been able to reach that figure because it's always been able to adapt to market needs."

### GROWING AND ADAPTING

Airbus Helicopters' site in Columbus (Mississippi) began some 21 years ago with the re-engining of US Coast Guard Dauphins, continued with a light assembly line for the H125 in 2005, and subsequently upgraded to a full production line in 2014 that builds about 22 aircraft per year, from the ground up, destined for US and Canadian customers. "We deliver more than that," explains Dienemann, "because we receive several aircraft that are already pre-manufactured in Marignane (France). These are then customised in Columbus for particular customers prior to delivery." What is often added at this stage is mission equipment and supplemental type certificates (STCs) that customers select for their helicopters to allow them to tailor their performance to their operating environments. "You can add on so many different types of products onto the aircraft and adapt it to the user – that's where the versatility of the aircraft probably comes into play," notes Dienemann. "There are so many existing STCs and customisations that are fairly simple to incorporate into the aircraft." Dienemann explains that decades'



worth of STCs can be integrated. "If you add a forward-looking infrared camera, or an electro-optical sensor (EOS), onto the aircraft, there's an STC for that. Battery relocation, there's an STC for that. If you hang a heavy weight on the front of the aircraft, you typically want to relocate some other equipment to the aft. Some international customers have chosen STCs that we have developed here, in Mississippi. We've done everything from putting two Garmin G500 Tx'i's on the instrument panel, to complex mission equipment packages developed specifically for customers flying extremely important operations. Some now exist in our catalogue for other operators to order."

### TIME FOR A CHANGE

Dienemann says that the end of 2024 will see the arrival of an upgrade which offers significant developments. "We will have the first instrument flight rules (IFR) H125 certified by the end of this year, developed in partnership with Genesys Aerosystems. The first flight has taken place and deliveries will be possible from 2025." Offering an upgraded cockpit and new autopilot, along with redundant hydraulic and electrical systems, the new features expand the helicopter's mission capabilities in instrument meteorological conditions (IMC) and poor visibility situations. "It's going to be a game changer. It takes the aircraft to another level because it provides extra flexibility for customers, particularly medical or law enforcement."



### H125 PRODUCTION IN MISSISSIPPI BY THE NUMBERS

Total U.S. fleet: **890**  
 First H125 delivery from Columbus FAL: **2015**  
 Number of H125s delivered from Columbus FAL: **160**  
 Number of employees working on H125 production: **21**





# LIFE BEGINS AT 40

Celebrating the 40th anniversary of its presence in Canada, Dwayne Charette, President of Airbus Helicopters in Canada explains why adaptability, customer focus and Airbus' global reach has seen the support offered by the site go from strength to strength – and this is only the beginning.

Article: Ben Peggie

Since opening in 1984, the Airbus Helicopters site in Fort Erie, Canada continues to evolve to address the dynamic Canadian helicopter market. "Originally the facility was established as a final assembly line (FAL) for the Bo105," notes President of Airbus Helicopters in Canada, Dwayne Charette, "but I would say the strength of the facility in Canada is our ability to be flexible and adapt." During the last 40 years the site has evolved to support a growing in-service fleet and the unique missions that require a "Made in Canada" solution, with the addition of composite manufacturing and dynamic component repair (DCR). Also responsible for in-service support, the customer centre's continuous and strong focus on the

customer has underpinned the successful integration of this diverse portfolio of activity, as Charette explains: "It's all about keeping them flying. Our customers fly critical missions, whether it's emergency medical services, airborne law enforcement, the firefighting that's been going on in Western Canada or many others. Our connection and the proximity to the customers has 'fuelled' our ability to adapt and become what we are today. It's really about being global but having a local footprint. Which ultimately is all about proximity to the customer."

### WILLING AND 'MAPLE'

Beyond providing support for 228 Canadian

customers who operate over 760 helicopters, Airbus Helicopters in Canada occupies a key role in the company's supply chain. "Everything that we make for composites, we're the sole source for Airbus Helicopters' platforms, worldwide. For dynamic component repair, we are the centre of excellence for the group, for light helicopter single-engine gearboxes. All these different business lines make Airbus Helicopters in Canada unique, because it is quite rare to find all these activities in a customer centre." Charette believes they play an important role in ensuring customers have a voice. "When we look at what our customers do here in Canada, not everything we do is different, but there is some uniqueness to it," he notes. "For example, the geographies of where our customers operate can be very different. We're able to bring the customer's concerns, their voice, their needs, address what we can, what we can't, then obviously, we're able to bring that message back to the Group as well." One example of responding to a customer requirement was a particular EMS operator who had purchased a number of H145s. Although huge numbers of H145 helicopters fly EMS missions worldwide, not all of them operate in the same temperatures as can be found in the Canadian winter. "Operating in Western Canada, occasionally we needed to improve the heating system that would respond to the -40°C temperatures," notes Charette. "That was something that we were able to design and do here. We gave that feedback to the Group. Another customer in a northern climate even ended up purchasing that STC."

### FACTS AND FIGURES

Charette believes there is more to come in the country, which will have an impact on the local site. "On the civil side there, we see significant opportunities for fleet replacement," he says. "I also think we're in the best position ever to capture more of the market in the defence realm." It has recently been announced that the H135 will be the single helicopter for the Royal Canadian Air Force Future Aircrew Training (FACT) programme. "FACT will be the first opportunity and then we plan to build from there. These will be the first Airbus helicopters to fly for the Canadian military, which is a huge step. We really do see a pathway forward to gain more market share in defence, which is key."



2

1: An H160 with blue-edge blades and an H135 with a truly Canadian livery.

2: Dwayne Charette, President of Airbus Helicopters in Canada.

3: Airbus Helicopters' Executive Vice-President Global Business, Olivier Michalon, gives a speech for guests at one of the ceremonies to celebrate the 40-year.

4: The Fort Erie facility began life as an assembly line.



3



4





# A DAY AT THE BEACH... AND AN H225 RESCUE!

1

July in Japan saw a trip to the beach turn from delight to disaster for a woman who was swept out to sea, off the coast of Nojimazaki. Thankfully she was eventually spotted by a passing cargo ship and recovered after drifting approximately 80km. A Japanese Coast Guard Airbus H225 played a key role in transporting the woman back to dry land. Its crew share their story.

Article: Ben Peggie

The summer of 2024 saw what should have been a relaxing trip to the beach end up as an ordeal for a woman in Japan, as she was swept away by currents, with her inflatable helping her stay afloat. Thankfully, luck was on her side. She was spotted by passing boats some 30 hours later and two sailors jumped into the water and brought her on board. Also on her side was the Japan Coast Guard's 3<sup>rd</sup> Headquarters, who upon receiving the initial report, sprang into action and immediately deployed patrol and surveillance boats and a special rescue team, supported by the JA690A helicopter (an Airbus H225) from Haneda Air Station.

The woman was hoisted from the boat to the helicopter and flown back to dry land to the relief of everyone involved – especially the Japan Coast Guard pilot who flew her back to the Yokohama Maritime Disaster Prevention Base: "When we found out that she was the one who had been missing since the night before the previous day, I first thought, 'What? No way!' But after I heard from the Special Rescue Team that her vital signs were stable, I felt relieved." This was a sentiment shared by the crew member operating the hoist. "There are few cases of a person being rescued after being adrift for more than 30 hours," he noted. "I was impressed by her strong will

to survive, her vitality, and the many coincidences that contributed to the success of the rescue mission. Since I had also taken part in the search mission in Shimoda the previous day, it was very moving when I realised that this was the woman for whom we had been searching." In all, the whole operation took about two hours from the incident report from the ship to the time the woman was hoisted up and delivered to the hospital.

## PERFORMANCE WHEN IT MATTERS MOST

The H225's performance makes it an ideal helicopter for search and rescue (SAR) missions, especially at long range, as was the case in this instance. As the Japanese Coast Guard pilot testifies: "It is very powerful, and has various functions of high-performance autopilot systems including the SAR mode, which result in reducing the pilot workload significantly – especially when flying missions at night or in bad weather conditions. The cabin is also very spacious, making it very easy to perform in-flight treatment on the rescued person." The Super Puma family, as a whole, is extremely effective and reliable for disaster relief missions, with exceptional power and capacity, allowing it to transport supplies and essential personnel. The pilot who helped rescue the swimmer also had experience of flying a Super Puma during another impressive rescue.

"I have also flown the H215 in the past. During the Great East Japan Earthquake, we rescued over 10 people by hoisting from a ship, and placed stretchers inside the aircraft to transport four sick people and the accompanying doctors and nurses to other hospital flying back and forth between Soma, Fukushima Prefecture and Niigata City without refuelling."

**3:** An H225 ready for takeoff. The Japan Coast Guard's crew were able to spring into action quickly to collect the missing swimmer.

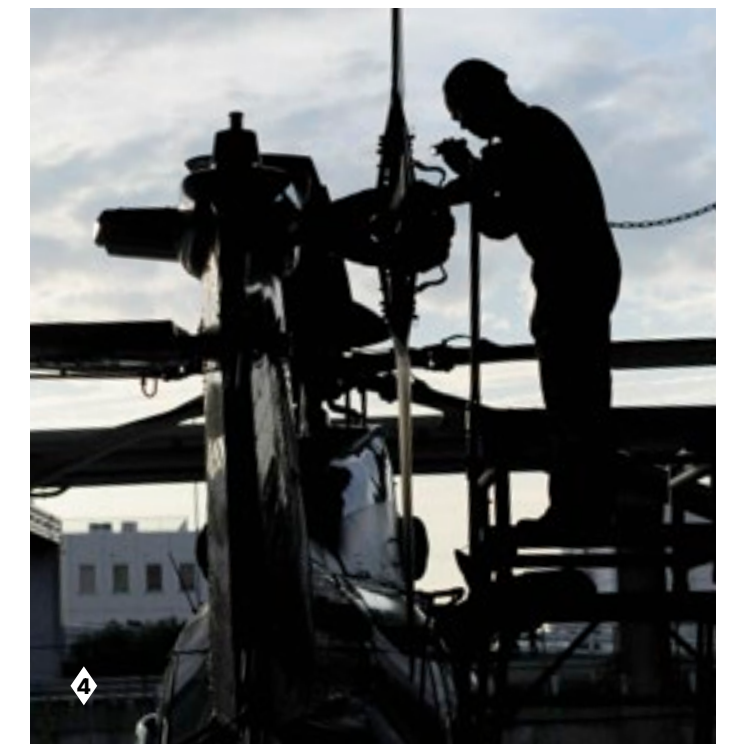
**4:** Hard at work preparing the helicopter for its next flight.



2



3



4

**1:** The H225's autopilot reduces pilot workload significantly, allowing crew to focus on the rescue.

**2:** The rescued person was winched onboard the Japan Coast Guard H225 from a boat (actual rescue not pictured).





# HELICOPTER RENDEZVOUS IN THE LAND OF THE LONG WHITE CLOUD

Airbus Helicopters organised a unique rendezvous at the beautiful Glendhu Bay, on New Zealand's South Island. The event celebrated the country's customer community which has been built across the company's four decades of presence in the country.

Article: Shayne Williams

Airbus has occupied an important presence in New Zealand, as the only helicopter manufacturer in the country for more than 30 years. With four locations – three in the north and one in the south – that host a team of 200 employees, the company supports both civil and military helicopter platforms, support to operators to ensure they can continue to fly their essential missions. Over the past 20 years in New Zealand, an impressive 90% of new helicopters sold were from Airbus. These helicopters play a critical role in the country's civil, parapublic and military missions, ranging from law enforcement, search and rescue, and medical evacuations to tourism and utility.

## A FLYING START

The Glendhu Bay event certainly captured the imagination of the nation's operators. More than 10% of the country's Airbus fleet, which currently numbers 320, flew in for the Kiwi Rendezvous. Totalling over 40 helicopters, their collective importance to the fabric of the nation was truly visible – as was the passion of the people flying them. The landing site at the event became one of the busiest heliports in the Southern Hemisphere, with a helicopter landing every six and a half minutes, bringing in a total of 38 aircraft in only four and a half hours. The remaining aircraft had arrived the previous day and were displayed next to the event marquee.

The event was designed to provide a platform to connect and strengthen the relationships between the New Zealand helicopter community and Airbus, as well as showcasing the community of helicopters flying in the country. From the single engine H120, H125 and H130 to the twin engine H145, H155 and NH90, the event highlighted the depth of Airbus Helicopters' range.

## THINKING LOCALLY

"It's really a celebration of what these helicopters have done in this community and how they've contributed to everything from agriculture to tourism," said Clint Watt, Vice President of Sales and Marketing for Australia and New Zealand. Helicopters offer significant support to agriculture and tourism operators throughout the country, with Airbus estimating that New Zealand's fleet will soon pass an expected two million flight hours in these market segments. Milestones like this are enabled by the local support supplied by Airbus in New Zealand, and at the Kiwi Rendezvous it is apparent that the dedication is reciprocated by operators, who turned up in great numbers. "If you look at the commitment these customers have made to being here it shows you how proud they are and how much they love the aircraft. It's a testament to the value of building positive relationships with customers," emphasises Watt.



This sentiment was perfectly proven by long-term customer, Graeme Gale, from HeliOtago, who shared his thoughts on the five-bladed H145 helicopter. "With the H145 for search and rescue operations, this aircraft outperforms anything on the current market today. It's lightweight, it's nimble, it's got extra power available with increased payload for rescues. When you combine all those capabilities, along with a cabin that's a great size for medical evacuations, this aircraft is so smooth, so outstanding in its capabilities – it's fantastic," he said. The Kiwi Rendezvous clearly shows that when you have a community of operators who love their helicopters and a local team who love providing them with dedicated support – it's a perfect match.

2: The New Zealand military's NH90 flew in for the event.

3: An Airbus Helicopters H155 arrives.

4: HeliOtago is extremely happy with the performance of their five-bladed H145.

1: Three H125s line up in New Zealand. Thirty-eight aircraft arrived in the space of four and a half hours.



airbus.com



# THE DIFFERENCE IS A HEARTBEAT



Seconds count when lives are on the line. It's why every feature of the Airbus H145 has been designed for safe, effective, and fast operations. With easy patient loading, state-of-the-art avionics to reduce pilot workload and a safer working area on the ground, the H145 ensures people get the medical care they need as fast as possible. All of this has made the H145 one of the emergency medical services market leaders around the globe – helping people every single day and making sure the world remains a beautiful place.

**AIRBUS**