

ROTOR



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Mexico's aerial scanner

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"The last of the originals"

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Bruno Even,
CEO of Airbus Helicopters

HELICOPTERS WILL ALWAYS BE THERE TO KEEP THE WORLD SAFE

The Verticon air show remains a cornerstone of the vertical lift calendar, particularly for our customers throughout the Americas. This event offers a vital opportunity to engage with client priorities; we recognise that only when aircraft are mission-ready can critical missions be possible. Our presence at Verticon also showcases our deep roots in North America. From 'made-for-Canada' solutions to our US manufacturing facilities, we invest in local talent to ensure our products are built and supported by those who truly understand the needs of the people they serve. This edition of *Rotor* highlights the immense variety of customers' critical missions. Whether in law enforcement, search and rescue (SAR), firefighting, or emergency medical services (EMS), their crews save lives in extreme circumstances. Providing the advanced technology and adapted support required for these challenging operations is a privilege shared by everyone at Airbus.

I am equally inspired by the potential of our uncrewed aerial systems (UAS). As a global leader, our responsibility is to ensure this technology is robust and ethically deployed. With the launch of HTeaming — a pioneering first for the company — we are already bringing the power of interconnectivity to the front line. As this is my final editorial as CEO of Airbus Helicopters, I find myself reflecting on our journey. It has been easy to stay motivated by the profound impact our customers have on global citizens. They are a testament to the vital role vertical flight plays in public safety. However, this impact is only made possible by the unwavering passion of our employees and the deep-rooted trust of our partners and customers. To each of you: thank you for being the heartbeat of this company. While we cannot know exactly what lies around the corner, we can rest assured that helicopters — and the remarkable people who support them — will always be there to keep the world safe.

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to get the job done**

HELICOPTER CREWS

Helicopter crews need to be prepared, day or night. Whether it is stopping a spark from turning into an inferno, rescuing stranded citizens from rising floods or getting a patient to a hospital in time — every second can make a difference. When lives are on the line, the people answering the call are always on alert — and they require the certainty that their equipment is just as prepared as they are.

ARTICLES—Renata Ahumada, Belén Morant and Ben Peggie

READY FOR THE CALL

DESIGNING RELIABILITY IN TIMES OF CRISIS

William Sampson, Airbus Helicopters Vice President Head of Market Operations, explains why the company's helicopters are always ready to make a difference to the people they serve.

ARTICLE — Ben Peggie

"The world in 2026 is a challenging space for everyone, from decision-making in government down to citizens living in the world," says William Sampson. "And it's our job at Airbus Helicopters to work with both authorities trying to manage this situation and to work with the operators who protect citizens and save lives." For Sampson, today's febrile context goes beyond tension and is moving so fast that the very nature of what conflict is has become less apparent. "The threat picture is evolving rapidly so, worryingly, that traditional divide between war and peace is, I would argue, increasingly porous." According to Sampson in this uncertain period of geopolitical realignment, assets must be as adaptable as threats are unpredictable.

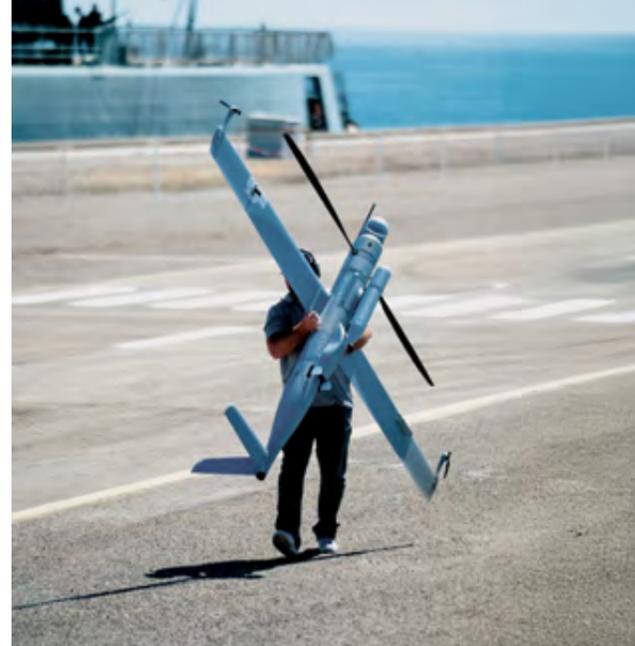


▲ William Sampson, Airbus Helicopters Vice President Head of Market Operations

SHARP SOLUTIONS FOR A BLURRY WORLD

What hasn't changed is what helicopters do. "Our operators work to prevent problems," Sampson explains. "Should there be a situation that can't be prevented, the aim is then for assets to protect citizens. And finally, when disaster strikes — and we are seeing increasing numbers of natural disasters — the first response is very often by helicopters which save people, bring critical supplies and begin the rebuilding and restoration." Helicopter operators have always faced some of the most challenging situations imaginable. However, now, Sampson points out, whether it is a civil or military operator taking responsibility for a mission is less clear. "That kind of grey space between the two, let's call it a 'space of hybrid warfare,' is really

► Helicopters must be able to deal with Canada's beautiful but rugged scenery.



◀ Flexrotor: lightweight but technologically advanced

at their side

where I think the helicopter's role is critical." Sampson asserts that this is a major factor in the increasing market success of Airbus' dual-use range of helicopters and uncrewed aerial systems. As the difference between civil and military deployments becomes blurry, you need aircraft adept at delivering both. The principles of Airbus' design philosophy have ensured its helicopters have the necessary technology so they are ready for missions to evolve. What's more, Sampson argues that the dual-use range is not simply a one-size-fits-all solution that performs a range of operations adequately, but that instead, these solutions can be adapted or teamed — and this, not only to get the job done, but to secure the best result possible. "Only rotary assets can offer everything you need in that toolbox, so they are really uniquely suited to these 'protect' operations," says Sampson.

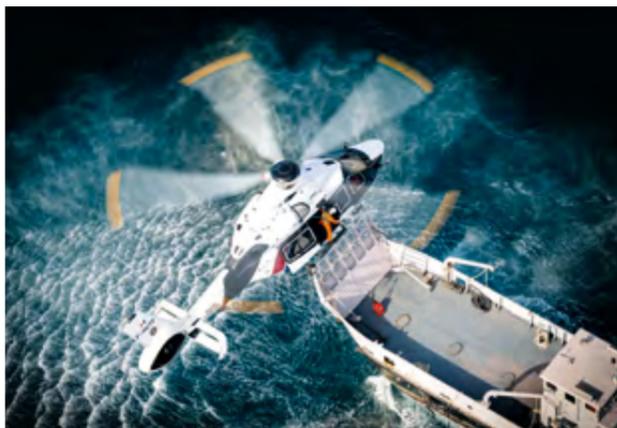
BEYOND THE HORIZON

While the dual-use range ensures all Airbus helicopters are modular and therefore inherently flexible to ensure missions are accomplished, it is not the only reason. Sampson highlights the company's innovation strategy as being vital to its helicopters' operational superiority, ensuring that the ongoing development of its products is perfectly tailored to customer needs. In particular, he highlights the recent conceptual shift towards delivering solutions to the myriad unpredictable problems operators face — rather than only focusing on upgrades or efficiency improvements. "We design and deliver aircraft which can work as a system to meet your needs, rather than as individual platforms." For Sampson, nowhere is this philosophy more apparent than in Airbus' newest helicopters. This is evident in taking the lessons from the H160 — already a generational leap for innovation — and refining them further for the H140. "Building on the experience in the H160, with the H140, we integrated our operators into the design and conceptualisation phase to build a mission-capable aircraft from the outset. So one which was not only focused on a single mission, but also with a programme of developments available for it to develop into other mission segments," says Sampson. This is true not only for the latest helicopters; the H145's mission system was recently enhanced for the Bavarian Police, improving the scope of policing operations that this ...





◀ The Bavarian Police's H145 has a next-generation mission system.



◀ The H160 set a new standard for helicopter design.

... helicopter can support. Sampson believes that helicopters like the H145 and H160, with next-generation surveillance capabilities and enhanced connectivity represent a leap forward in situational awareness — seeing the 'mission environment' like never before. Avionics also benefit from continuous improvement and Sampson believes that this standardisation leads to safety as well as mission superiority. Workload is reduced, so pilots can focus on the mission, not the flying. Sampson emphasises that Airbus is taking a twin approach, improving the product and the system. "Our innovation roadmap is increasing what our operators can do with their machines so that it's increasingly beneficial for their operations and cost effectiveness. Our products' evolution is not just to their mission systems; it's to their fundamental aircraft architecture as well."

TAKING THE LEAD ON TEAMING

Sampson clearly sees a role for uncrewed aerial systems for civil and parapublic missions. He stresses the role of respon-



▶ The H140 performing its cold weather testing

sibility that mature companies like Airbus have in bringing these solutions to market. The value of Airbus' uncrewed aerial systems is that they are sophisticated, durable and reliable technology that will make an operational difference, rather than something that's been conceptualised to be scalable in a way that supports an entrepreneurs' cash-out price. "Public safety isn't a 'disruptable' commodity for a Silicon Valley balance sheet; it's a high-stakes mission that requires the hallmark of quality and reliability that comes from decades in the field." Sampson also believes that teaming these assets with crewed helicopters will support the work of civil and parapublic operators. "The real power and the benefit for our societies comes from teaming helicopters and drones with different and complementary mission capabilities... it just seems to me like a game-changing and ultimately beneficial solution." Beyond the social responsibility of how to introduce new technology, Sampson also argues that Airbus' industrial and design maturity affords it advantages over a fragmented group of start ups and competitors, occupying an already crowded space. Last year, for example, Airbus introduced HTeaming, already allowing operators to control a UAS from a mission tablet.

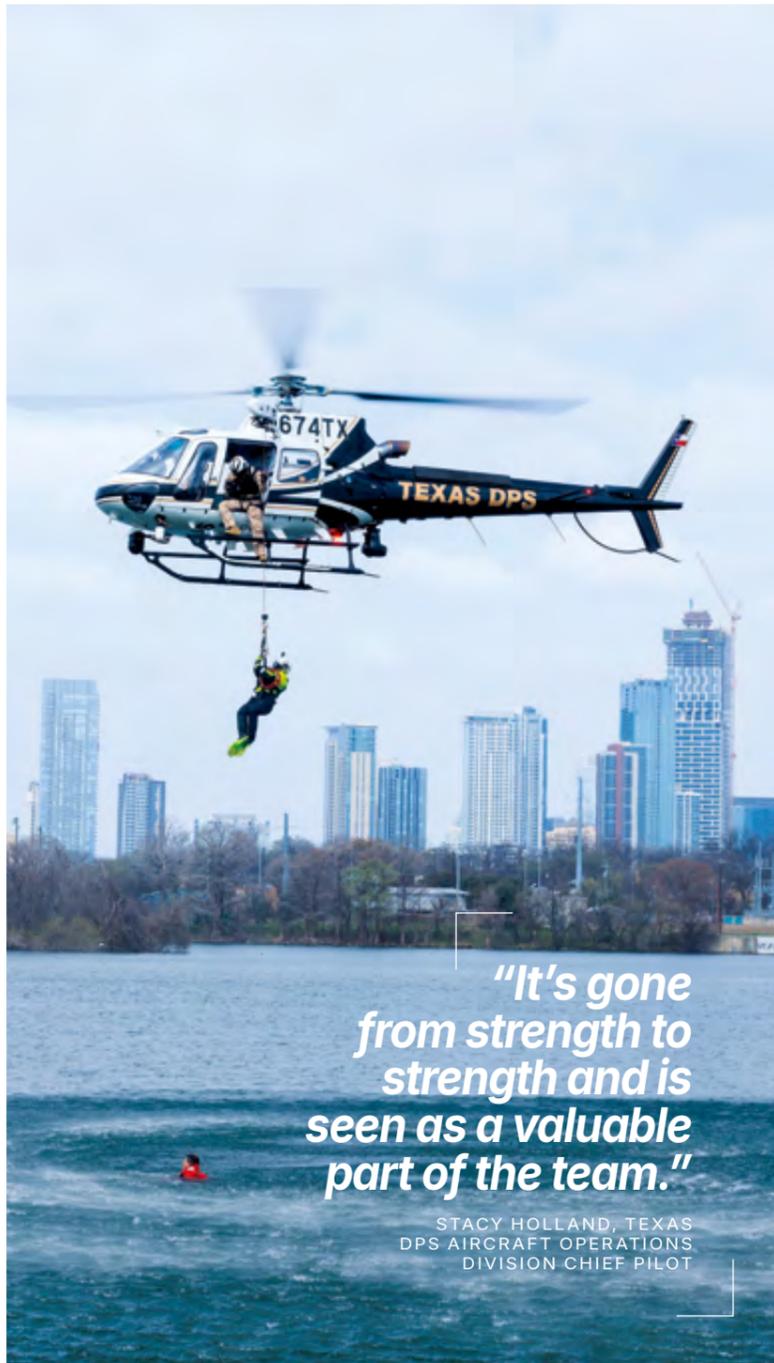
THE ULTIMATE PROVING GROUND

For many associated with the helicopter industry, the first focus of the year is Verticon, and Sampson is energised by what the air show represents. "Verticon goes around year on year to the biggest cities in the US, the biggest helicopter market in the world... the US with its culture of innovation and inventiveness, [is] absolutely amazing." Beyond the show itself, Sampson says that the Americas themselves are the ultimate proving ground for helicopters: "From the extreme Arctic conditions in Canada... to Latin America with the challenges which are being posed by the different public safety and disaster missions in terrain which is so varied." Air shows are also an occasion for industry professionals to meet and discuss current challenges and Sampson is relishing these opportunities, insisting that the focus has to be about what Airbus can do better for its operators, whether that is developing products or enhancing aircraft availability. "Looking from the customer's point of view: What do they need in order to do their job most efficiently and most reliably? How do we tailor and make sure that our aircraft keep evolving in order to do so?"

LIFE, DEATH AND TEXAS: THE H125

One of the key challenges facing Texas's Department of Public Safety (DPS) is the sheer size of the state. Aircraft Operations Division Chief Pilot, Stacy Holland, and Assistant Chief Pilot, Marcus Tomerlin, explain why the Airbus H125 has long been the backbone of the Lone Star State's law enforcement operations.

ARTICLE — Ben Peggie



"It's gone from strength to strength and is seen as a valuable part of the team."

STACY HOLLAND, TEXAS DPS AIRCRAFT OPERATIONS DIVISION CHIEF PILOT

With a jurisdiction covering 1,250 miles of border, 254 counties and needing to liaise with nearly 3,000 law enforcement agencies, the Texas DPS needs a helicopter that can deal with the state's rugged terrain, long distances and diversity and frequency of operations demanded. "Our bread-and-butter missions are legacy patrol, violent crime, inner-city patrol, gang enforcement, border enforcement, lost children, hoist rescue or search and rescue (SAR)," explains Stacy Holland. "The workhorse of the fleet is the Airbus H125... having a very capable light single-engine helicopter that can not

only work locally but go cross-country is a real advantage when you're trying to cover a state the size of Texas." Marcus Tomerlin also highlights how the diversity of operations necessitates having a high-performance helicopter on call. "We often get requests for high-altitude surveillance, where we may have to go up to 10,000 feet and perform operations in a more discreet manner."

HURRICANE HARVEY

In late August of 2017, Category 4 Hurricane Harvey arrived in South Eastern Texas, unleashing 50 inches of rain over the course



▲ Stacy Holland, Texas DPS Aircraft Operations Division Chief Pilot

of several days, leading to significant flooding in Houston. Holland recalls the logistics of working alongside many other operators as the DPS aircraft transitioned from patrol operations to command-and-control and life-saving SAR overnight. Holland credits how well the H125 held up while working under extremely dangerous conditions, alongside the military and the US Coast Guard, to save lives, with many people stranded and in jeopardy. "When Houston was devastated in that flood, we repositioned several helicopters to the disaster area, allowing us to execute over 250 hoist missions," says Holland. "Serving the citizens of the state of Texas, utilising these aircraft, saving lives in real time, during dangerous operations... I was very proud of how our aircraft held up."

THE SECRET TO ITS SUCCESS

The H125 is not only called upon during times of crisis — its use is continuous. Tomerlin points out that the DPS's entire fleet is clocking around 14,000 flight hours annually, with about 6,000 for fixed wing aircraft and 8,000 for their helicopters. "These H125s will fly 800 to 1,000 hours per machine a year," explains Tomerlin — reinforcing the machine's workhorse credentials. "The only thing that's limiting us dispatching our helicopter fleet more is the downtime for scheduled maintenance intervals," he says. Such power and reliability in the rugged terrain of Texas explains why the H125 is the number one choice for law enforcement across the US. And as Tomerlin points out, it is also extremely versatile. "The H125 can be equipped with a camera, video downlink, mapping systems, search lights... It is capable of doing a wide variety of missions, including high altitude, low altitude, SAR, and hoist. I've accrued over 3,500 hours in an H125 helicopter... It's a safe and reliable helicopter, and we intend to continue using it as a part of our entire airborne law enforcement fleet."

40 YEARS OF FLYING

The success of this helicopter in Texas is not a mere flash in the pan. The H125 has been flying in the state for 40 years. Holland says that immediately on its arrival in the DPS's fleet in the mid-80s, the helicopter proved its worth. Since then, it's gone from strength to strength and is seen as a valuable part of the team. "Airbus has supported our fleet very well over the last 40 years," says Holland. "[The H125s have] treated me very well and taken care of my crew and my passengers."

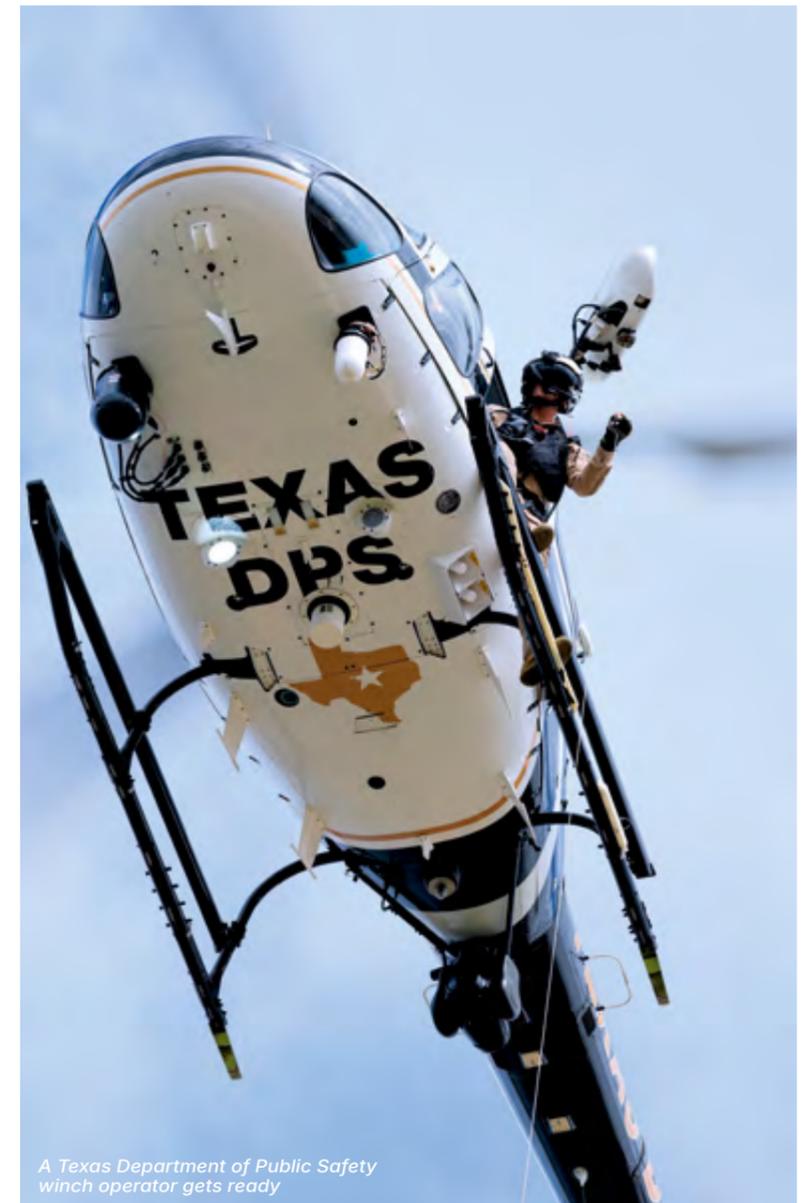
at their side

"It's a safe and reliable helicopter, and we intend to continue using it as a part of our entire airborne law enforcement fleet."

MARCUS TOMERLIN



▲ Marcus Tomerlin, Texas DPS Assistant Chief Pilot



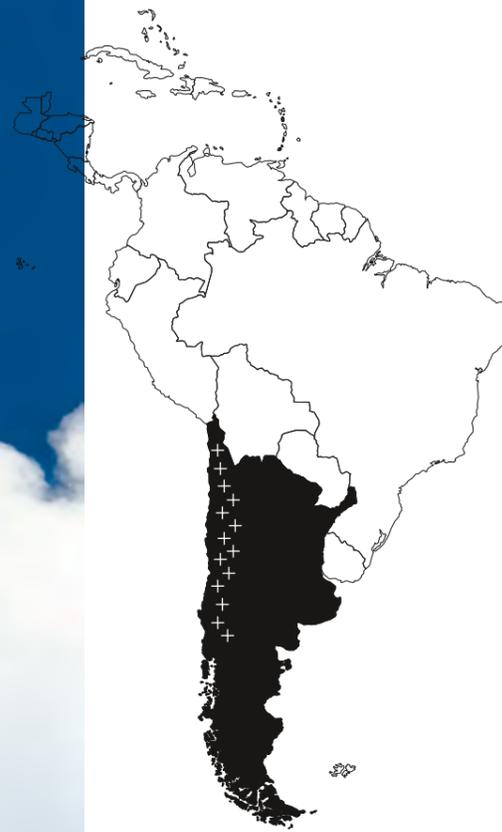
A Texas Department of Public Safety winch operator gets ready



SAVING LIVES AT OVER 6,000 METRES

On both sides of the Andes, in the peaks of Chile and Argentina, Rotortec Helicopters and Helicopters AR have shown how the combination of technology and human expertise can save lives in extreme conditions.

ARTICLE — Renata Ahumada



Andes
CHILE & ARGENTINA

◀ Up in the clouds for a high-altitude rescue

▼ Loading a stretcher onto the H125



at their side

In the Andes mountain range, mistakes can be costly, both for aircraft and for the hundreds of tourists who visit the area's parks every year. At altitudes where the human body slows down and the air is so thin that it is barely enough to prevent unconsciousness, the difference between whether someone meets a tragic end or gets to see their loved ones again depends on two factors: the skill of the pilots and the technical capabilities of an aircraft able to perform at its best at high altitude. Recently, two rescue operations, one in Chile involving Rotortec Helicopters, and the other in Argentina involving Helicopters AR, have again demonstrated that, at the top of the world, the H125 is a real lifesaver.

MIRACLE AT CAMP CÓLERA

In the afternoon of Thursday, 22 January 2026, an emergency situation arose on Mount Aconcagua. A Brazilian mountain climber got into difficulty at Camp Cólera, at an altitude of almost 6,000 metres, and was unable to move without assistance. At that elevation, where the air density is such that an enormous force is required, the helicopter had to perform a perfect hover to save a life. Diego Góngora, one of the partners at Helicopters AR, recalls the team's determination in the face of this challenge: "When the mountaineer's insurance provider asked if we were able to evacuate at that altitude, our response was a resounding 'yes'. Not because we are overconfident, but because we have years of training and are supported by a helicopter that we trust completely." As the terrain did not allow the helicopter to land, the team used a short sling to hoist the climber in a high-precision manoeuvre. The rescuer and the casualty were transported using the sling, maintaining constant radio communication until they

reached the Nido de Cóndores camp. There, at an altitude of 5,556 metres, the H125 was finally able to land, allowing the medical team to complete the chain of survival.

HOPE AT CERRO LEONERA

A few weeks before, in Farellones, Chile, the Rotortec Helicopters crew faced a challenge of its own near the summit of Cerro Leonera. 25-year-old Daniela Sáez had been missing for 48 hours, having become separated from her trekking group. She had spent two nights in freezing temperatures and entirely alone in the vastness of the Andean mountains. Visibility was poor due to gusts of wind and variable cloud cover. Francisco Fluxá, pilot and managing director of Rotortec, describes the moment they discovered her as being a mixture of relief and adrenaline. The image of Sáez, exhausted but conscious, gave meaning to a massive human effort that capitalised on each window of good weather to rescue her. After she had been stabilised, a diagnosis of hypothermia and dehydration confirmed that the speed of the aircraft was key to her survival.

MAXIMUM PERFORMANCE IN EXTREME CONDITIONS

Why is the H125 central to these stories? At altitudes where other helicopters reach their limits, the H125 maintains lift and responds with agility. With its power margin, it is the perfect aircraft to offer maximum performance under conditions of extreme heat and altitude, enabling approaches on hillsides where landing is impossible. "The fundamental factor here is the power," explains Diego Góngora. "For example, in the case of a rescue, like the one we performed a few weeks ago at 6,505 metres, with temperatures of -10°C, the density altitude calculation result was extreme. For a pilot, these are the conditions that make this work difficult but exciting." However, as well as the power of the helicopter, it is the human factor that is crucial. Success is the result of rescuers, pilots and technology all working together effectively. Today, thanks to the perseverance of teams like those at Rotortec Helicopters and Helicopters AR, two people have returned home, and the story of H125 rescues in the Andes has two new chapters.

VERSATILITY AT THE HEART OF RESCUE OPERATIONS IN MEXICO

From providing humanitarian aid during the flooding in Veracruz to leading the way in offshore rescue, the Mexican operator, Transportes Aéreos Pegaso, is redefining how the H175 is used in critical missions.

ARTICLE—Belén Morant



Winching down from the H175



▲ The H175 could carry 1,000 kg of food and supplies.

With a 45-year history in the sector, Transportes Aéreos Pegaso has evolved from operating light aircraft to managing the modern H175, while always maintaining its focus on safety and adaptability. This flexibility has enabled the Mexican company not only to provide support to the energy sector, but also to transform itself into a key player in search and rescue (SAR) and humanitarian aid missions.

GUARDIAN ANGELS IN VERACRUZ

In October 2025, Pegaso's responsiveness was put to the test when faced with a national emergency sparked by flooding in the state of Veracruz. At the request of Pemex (Petróleos Mexicanos), Mexico's state-owned oil company, an H175 was mobilised to provide support to communities in the mountainous areas near Poza Rica, which had been completely cut off by road. The mission required the immediate transformation of the helicopter. The seats were easily removed in just a few minutes to convert the flat-floored cabin into a cargo transport capable of carrying 1,000 kg of food and supplies at a time, as well as transporting two medics into the devastated regions on each trip. Aerial reconnaissance flights were also carried out to assess damage, alongside urgent aeromedical transfers. The surroundings presented major challenges, with high-voltage cables crossing rivers and hills, as well as clouds of dust and sand that made landings difficult. "The H175 is extremely safe in flight, thanks to its power and stability; the use of systems like Helionix

and synthetic vision were key to maintaining situational awareness, while the sliding doors were very helpful when loading and unloading the 1,000 kg of supplies," explains Carlos Ramírez Torres, the captain in charge of operations in Veracruz. "The local people were always glad to see us and called us their guardian angels, as they had been cut off. I am very happy that I was able to use my skills to support people and I have the satisfaction of a job well done," he adds.

AT THE FOREFRONT IN OFFSHORE RESCUE

In 2026, Pegaso is starting a new chapter with the implementation of SAR capabilities, using a rescue winch for offshore operations. This project represents a milestone, with official certification being obtained that makes Pegaso the only company in Mexico's oil and gas industry to have this capability recognised by authorities. The operations take place in deep waters, with services being provided to Woodside Energy in the Trion oil field. "Having a search and rescue team available is a major step forward for Mexican aviation. The greatest challenge is the distance, operating at more than 110 nautical miles from the coast, which requires thorough mission planning," stresses Israel Gómez Arzate, a captain and member of the SAR team. To that end, the company has ensured its crews are trained to international standards, using rescue winches and life raft deployment systems equipped with survival kits. "A SAR aircraft increases and prioritises the value of human life. It offers assurance for national and foreign investment in the Gulf of Mexico," notes Aníbal Rodrigo Astudillo Constantino, a captain and SAR training specialist.

A COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE

The history of Pegaso, which is currently expanding internationally with contracts in countries such as Suriname, can be summed up as an ethos of continuous improvement and operational rigour. "The company demonstrates that the versatility of its aircraft, together with an elite level of training, is key to its ability to weather any storm. As the company policy states, 'our values guarantee our work'," emphasises José Erosa, Director of Operations at Pegaso. It is a premise that is confirmed every time an H175 is deployed to save a life or help an isolated community.



FLEXROTOR: NIGHTWATCH FOR THE "THREE DS"

Oregon-based operator, Precision, was an early adopter of the Flexrotor drone, deploying the platform as far back as 2014. While CEO David Rath envisions a future of seamless teaming with crewed assets, the aircraft currently serves as a tireless eye in the sky - taking over the 'Dull, Dirty, and Dangerous' missions after dark while the majority of the company's fire suppression crew take their well-earned rest.

ARTICLE—Ben Peggie & Kelsey Young

Precision Helicopters utilizes H215 Super Pumas and H125s for the most vital firefighting missions, and the workload is intensifying. "The firefighting industry has grown immensely over the last 15 years," explains Rath. "Contracts that used to be 30 days are now four or five months. With fire danger increasing, this is becoming a year-round mission in the US." To meet this demand, Precision has integrated the Flexrotor — a vertical take off and landing (VTOL) uncrewed aerial system (UAS) — into a high-stakes federal contract. As one of only two companies active in the Department

of Interior's long-duration, on-call aerial mapping contract, Precision now looks to a future where it may start to offer dedicated 90- to 120-day availability — a shift from the older 'call when needed' model that often left assets sidelined during critical windows of time.

PRECISION MAPPING IN THE BLIND

Wildfires move with devastating unpredictability. Matt Parker, President of Precision's Uncrewed Business, is convinced the Flexrotor offers the right

blend of durability to supplement crewed aircraft. "This technology has provided real-time intelligence for our military overseas for decades; it is time we offer those same capabilities to our firefighters." The mission profile typically sees the Flexrotor launch in the evening to fly the fire's perimeter. Working alongside a government geospatial specialist, the team uses video feeds with GPS references to track how acreage is growing and identify 'high-value targets' — such as critical infrastructure — that ground teams can then move to protect.

'POST-CONTAINMENT' AUDIT

The most technical challenge isn't finding the main fire — satellites can see the smoke — but identifying the hidden 'hot spots' left behind. "Those hot spots are what firefighters must attack to ensure they don't develop into another large fire," Parker notes. These infrared audits are a vital safeguard against the kind of catastrophic re-ignitions seen in the California Carr Fire, where incomplete 'mopping up' led to disaster even after 100% containment was declared. By guiding ground teams via radio to these invisible embers, the Flexrotor ensures a fire is truly out.

TEAMING: THE FUTURE

While modern aviation rules are still evolving to keep pace with the rapid nature of fire response, Rath believes the industry's effectiveness depends on crewed-uncrewed teaming. By working in concert with partners to commit assets and share the operational burden, companies can better navigate the high costs and technical hurdles of early-stage UAS deployment. Precision is already looking toward 'Initial Attack' missions where this teaming becomes a tactical reality. In this scenario, a Flexrotor would be deployed alongside a Super Puma responding to lightning strikes to proactively find small embers before they become large fires. "The goal is a seamless digital handover," says Rath. "We foresee a scenario where the Flexrotor lasers a hot spot with an infrared beam for a pilot with night vision goggles, or even transmits a direct GPS coordinate to an H215, which then automatically flies to the location for a precision water drop. That level of teaming is the only way to meet the mission going forward." Fires keep burning after the sun goes down; but as the crews rest, the Flexrotor maintains its watch, ready to pass the torch to the crewed assets at dawn.

at their side



▲ Rath and Parker with their first Flexrotor

... before flying horizontally



"This technology has provided real-time intelligence for our military overseas for decades; it is time we offer those same capabilities to our firefighters."

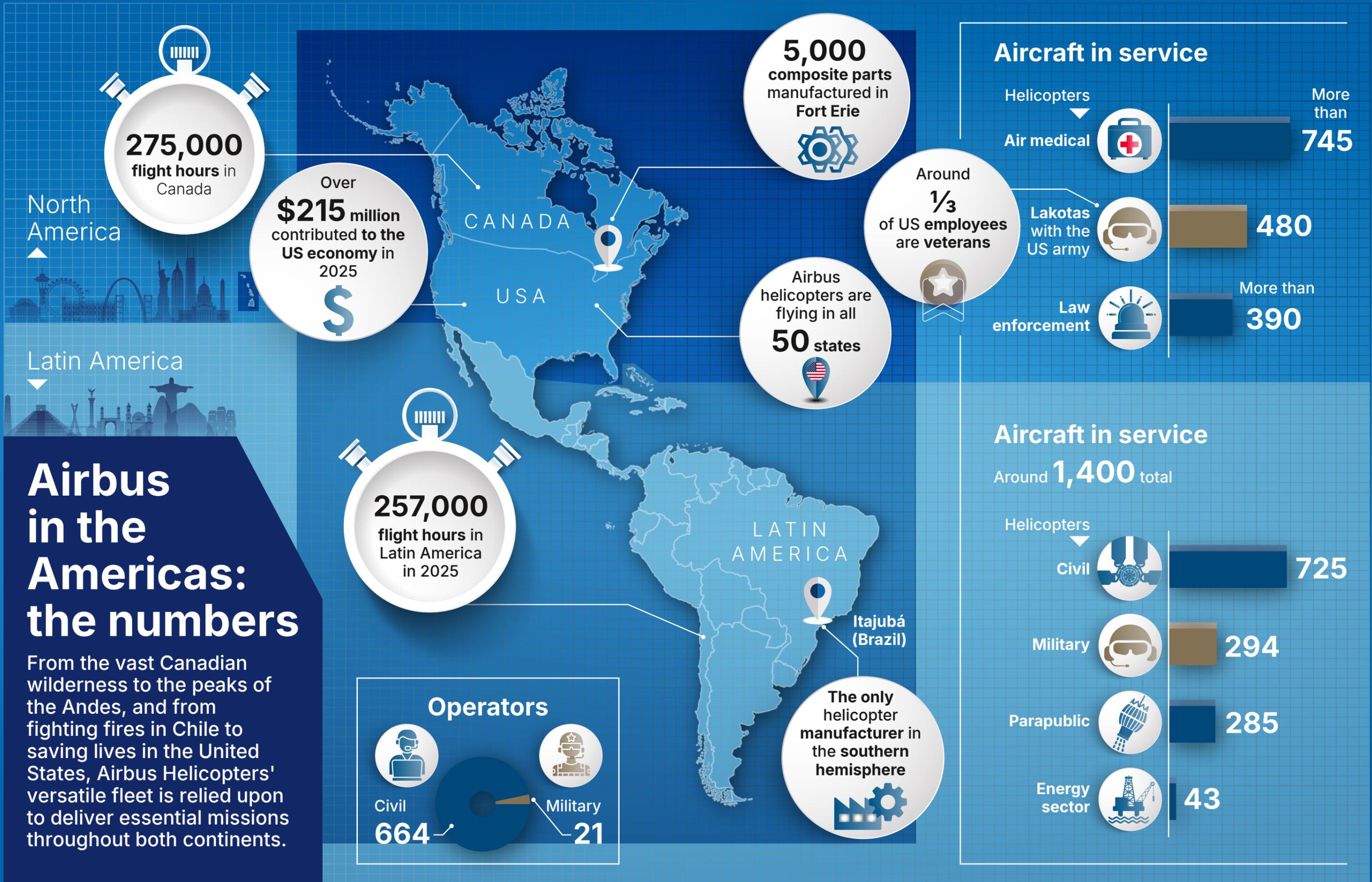
MATT PARKER, PRESIDENT OF
PRECISION'S UNCREWED BUSINESS

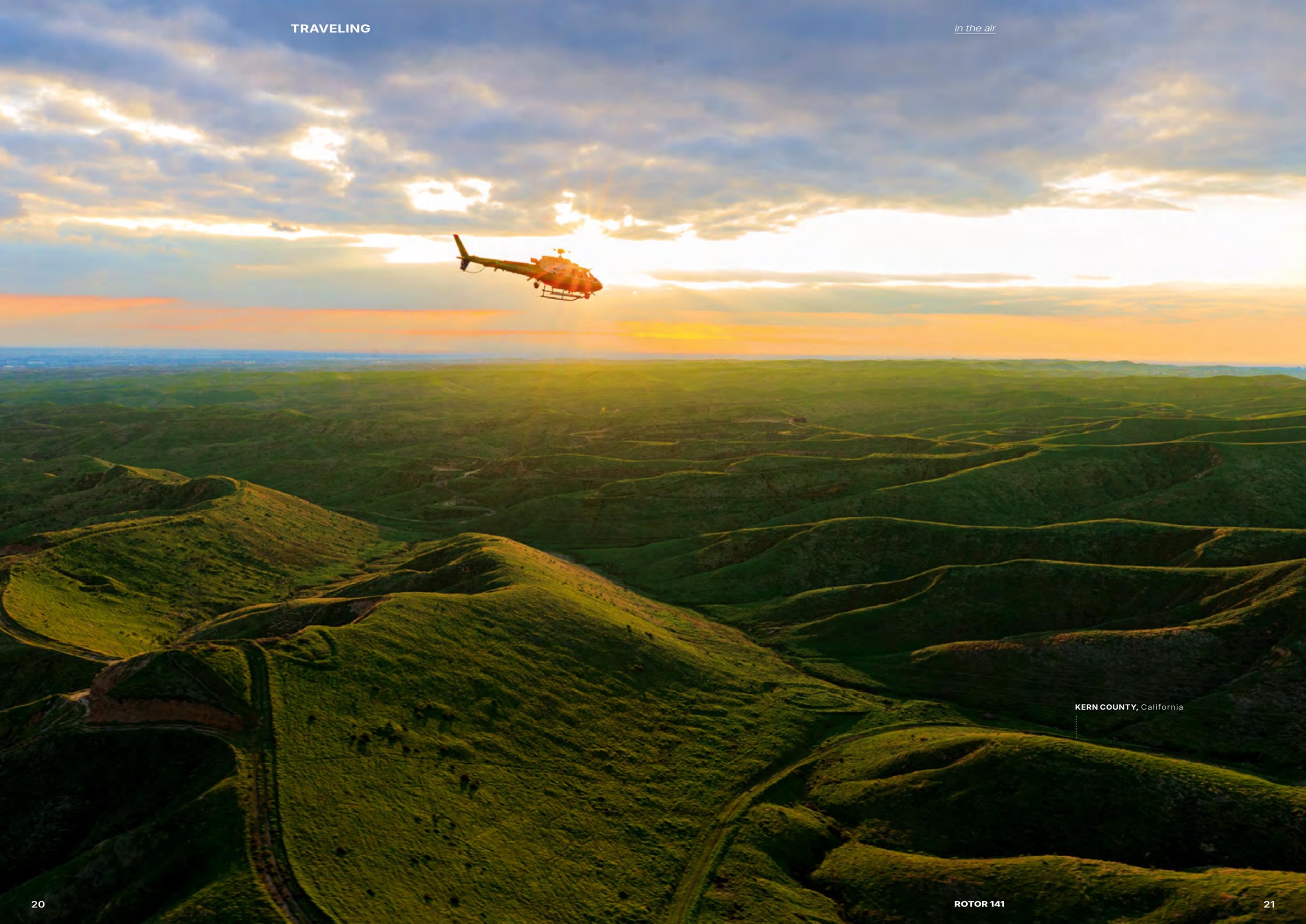
The Flexrotor
launches vertically...

Airbus in the Americas: the numbers

From the vast Canadian wilderness to the peaks of the Andes, and from fighting fires in Chile to saving lives in the United States, Airbus Helicopters' versatile fleet is relied upon to deliver essential missions throughout both continents.

Infographic: BeatrizSantacruz.com and Airbus





KERN COUNTY, California

FOCUS ON Support & Services

Airbus Helicopters is embarking on a cultural revolution to regain lost ground in terms of operator support. Its goal is ambitious: to become number one by 2028.

ARTICLE — Alexandre Marchand

Romain Trapp, Executive Vice President Customer Support & Services at Airbus Helicopters since 2023, paints a stark but accurate picture: "Ten years ago, the primary criterion for selecting a helicopter was its performance level. But requirements have evolved, and availability has become increasingly important to our customers. While our helicopters are still recognised as among the best on the market, our Support services don't enjoy the same reputation." COVID dealt a severe blow to Customer Support operations, resulting in dissatisfaction levels that were too high to ignore. "This is what prompted us to make customer satisfaction the focus of our transformation. We want to be seen as a reliable supplier," he concludes. To achieve this, Romain Trapp wanted to base his teams' work on three pillars, the first of which he calls 'customer obsession'. "Although operational performance remains essential, all the company's functions must be centred around customer satisfaction, which involves simplifying processes and improving the way we interact with operators." One of the criticisms levelled at Airbus Helicopters concerned its difficulty in committing to deadlines. "We've worked on our ability to give precise dates and stick to them. This is the second area we are focusing on." Lastly, Trapp's ambition is to move beyond a simple

commercial relationship and towards a strategic partnership with customers, with helicopter availability as the key objective. "This approach is already in place with some of our military customers, and we now want to develop it with civil operators. Increasing fly-by-the-hour contracts may be a part of this, but more importantly, it will involve fundamental work on the root causes of non-availability," says Trapp. The growing use of digital solutions, particularly artificial intelligence, is bolstering these efforts: "50% of the orders we receive require delivery in less than five days for parts that our suppliers deliver on average nine months after they are ordered. This huge gap can only be effectively managed with excellent predictive tools," says Trapp. The impact of the work carried out since 2023 can be expressed in a few striking figures: 20% more spare parts delivered to Support activities by suppliers in 2024, an additional 15% again in 2025, and the same level of growth expected in 2026. "It's even more impressive for dynamic assemblies, with an increase of as much as 50% between 2023 and 2025," says Romain Trapp. "We are in a delivery dynamic that directly benefits our customers." Satisfaction surveys conducted within the industry show that this groundwork is beginning to pay off. The 2028 target is within reach!

SECURING HUMAN RESOURCES

"The number one difficulty cited by our customers is a lack of technicians [to perform maintenance]," Romain Trapp explains. "This is the main factor behind the non-availability of their helicopters. To address this, we are developing our training capabilities and signing partnerships with schools abroad, which also provides valuable geographical proximity for our customers." An H160 simulator will enter service in the US in 2026, followed by an H175 simulator in Malaysia the following year and a third H160/H175 simulator in Brazil in 2028. Following the entry into service of the first H125 virtual reality simulator, the development of this technology will continue with the deployment of a new H145 simulator this year.

ON THE INVENTORY FRONT

Three new logistics platforms were brought into service in 2025, in Fort Erie (Canada), Perth (Australia) and Singapore. Here too, geographical proximity is the key factor, with several thousand parts immediately available at sites that are as close as possible to local operators.



◀ Romain Trapp, Executive Vice President Customer Support and Services



◀ Airbus Helicopters has invested in a new test bench at Grand Prairie as part of its efforts to reduce customer wait times.



◀ An Airbus Helicopters colleague vice President makes an adjustment

Mexico's AERIAL scanner

The Mexican Geological Survey is challenging the laws of physics to map out some of the country's hidden gems. From the skies, the H125 operates like a technological platform capable of discovering what lies beneath the earth and transforming hostile terrain into economic progress.

ARTICLE—Juliana Fandino



◀ *The H125 allows geographical surveying to be done in environments where otherwise it would not be possible.*

The Mexican Geological Survey has been tasked with generating a treasure map of a nation spanning two million km². Their mission is not just about examining the surface – they are also 'X-raying' what lies beneath it to turn areas of geological potential into tangible growth poles. In a nation where the terrain, abounding with hills and mountains, imposes physical barriers, the H125 is a strategic asset that is vital to Mexico's scientific sovereignty.

Cutting-edge technology suspended in mid-air

The key to Mexican Geological Survey missions lies in high-resolution aerial magnetometry. The H125 is equipped with an aerogeophysical data acquisition system comprising an integrated multiparameter console and a series of specialised external sensors. The star component is the magnetic sensor, weighing approximately 500 kg, which hangs down from the helicopter to take detailed measurements of the intensity of the Earth's magnetic field. This system detects variances caused by rocks and gamma ray radiation. This allows the Mexican Geological Survey to locate deposits of iron, uranium and rare earths, delineate watersheds and detect critical faults to prevent disasters. Without the H125's flight capability, this data capture would be simply infeasible.

High and hot power

"We carry out our missions in the mountains and hills, at high altitudes and high temperatures (around 40°C) – conditions that degrade the performance of most aircraft," explains Mexican Geological Survey pilot José Sanchez. "The H125, with its Arriel 2D engine, has a higher power reserve, which allows it to operate safely in areas where the air is less dense and navigate rocky terrain and steep slopes. It has worked really well for us." Héctor Alba, Director of Geological Operations at the Mexican Geological Survey ...



▲ *The H125 is ready for take off.*



▲ *An aerial shot of the H125 and its rig*



◀ Taking notes



◀ The H125 is compact and agile enough to land anywhere.



◀ The information the H125 helps gather is synthesised into a map.



The H125 is capable of transporting heavy drilling equipment to mountain summits.

“The H125 is the ideal helicopter thanks to its efficiency at high temperatures. We frequently land on uneven terrain and it responds exceptionally well.”

HÉCTOR ALBA, DIRECTOR OF GEOLOGICAL OPERATIONS AT THE MEXICAN GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

... highlights that the H125 “is the ideal helicopter thanks to its efficiency at high temperatures. We frequently land on uneven terrain and it responds exceptionally well.” This power allows the H125 to run like a workhorse that is also capable of transporting heavy drilling equipment to inaccessible summits, making it possible to evaluate deposits in situ and determine their exploitation viability. Héctor Alba adds: “using the H125 allows us to cut costs and, of course, reduce the time needed to explore the terrain.”

Impact on national development

For Flor de María Harp, General Director of the Mexican Geological Survey, the added value is vital: “Without the support of this aircraft, it would be impossible to cover the immense surface

area for which we are responsible.” The mission goes beyond mining; it is a tool to aid land use planning. The data gathered assists in this regard as well as when it comes to identifying geothermal areas, promoting the sustainable use of resources. Furthermore, the H125’s versatility makes it possible to react quickly to crises. During the floods of October 2025, the fleet was integrated into Rapid Disaster Response missions, demonstrating that the agility needed to find minerals is also crucial for saving lives. The half-century collaboration between the Mexican Geological Survey and Airbus ensures that every piece of data captured from the skies is converted into a strategic and scientific decision for the country. With the H125, Mexican science is raising its sights to dig deeper into its roots.



The three H140 prototypes lift off in Donauwörth.

THE H140: TO THE POWER OF THREE

One year on from its launch at Verticon 2025, whether in realms of commercialisation, certification, or new missions, the H140 continues its impressive progress. Head of the H135 and H140 Programme, Dirk Petry, gives an update on everything H140.

ARTICLE — Jörg Michel

Flight testing is well underway for the H140. How is the campaign towards certification progressing?

DIRK PETRY: Our flight tests are running exactly according to plan. We currently have a fleet of three prototypes dedicated to our flight campaigns, with the third prototype (PT3) having completed its first flight late last year. As we speak, PT2 is in Finland and Norway for the certification campaign. In Finland, we are pushing the H140 to its limits in extreme cold conditions down to -40°C, while in Norway, we are focusing on engine air intake tests under heavy snow conditions. It was a very emotional moment for the entire team to see all three prototypes in the air together just before Christmas. We have now surpassed a significant number of flight hours, and this progress is a testament to our great, competent and ambitious team. Helicopter development is incredibly complex, and following our schedule so

closely is a major success. Looking ahead, PT2 will travel to the US this summer for high and hot testing. 2026 will truly be the 'year of testing,' not just for the prototypes but also across our labs for component and functional verification.

It has been one year since the H140 was unveiled at Verticon. How successful was the helicopter's initial launch?

D.P.: Verticon 2025 was a massive success for us. We gathered more than 74 commitments just during the show, and in recent months, we've been successfully converting those into firm bookings. We are currently at over 100 total commitments, 61 of which are firm contracts. This makes the H140 the most successful light twin-engine helicopter currently on the market. While our initial success has been heavily concentrated in the emergency medical services (EMS)



◀ Dirk Petry, Head of the H135 and H140 Programme



High-altitude testing in the Pyrenees

"This makes the H140 the most successful light twin-engine helicopter currently on the market."

DIRK PETRY,
HEAD OF THE H135
AND H140 PROGRAMME

segment, we are now beginning to address further market sectors. We have already recorded our first bookings for the passenger transport and utility segment, which marks the start of our expansion into new markets. We are firmly on track for the first entry into service in 2028.

What are the next strategic steps for the programme in terms of design and production?

D.P.: We are entering a very exciting phase. At this year's Verticon, we are unveiling the ACH140 with a full-scale cabin mockup featuring the new ACH Line interior. This concept is being developed internally in close collaboration with Airbus Helicopters Italy colleagues and cutting-edge suppliers who are pioneering innovative and sustainable

materials and designs. The H140 is a true multipurpose helicopter; following the EMS and private and business aviation markets, we will tackle the law enforcement and offshore energy segments. On the industrial side, everything is in full swing. We are introducing a fourth prototype (PT4) which is being built in a serial production environment. It is currently in the major component assembly (MCA) stage, will move to the final assembly line (FAL) shortly, and is expected to take off for the first time this coming winter. Furthermore, industrial production of the first serial helicopters has started. This fifth H140 will be operated by Airbus Helicopters to support certification of optional equipment, and I am proud to say that the first customer aircraft is also entering production as we speak.

FROM THE FLAMES TO CONSERVATION: a Phoenix takes flight

Based in Fort McMurray, Alberta, Phoenix Heli-Flight operates in the heart of one of the largest sources of oil in the world, the Athabasca Oil Sands. CEO Paul Spring explains why this location leads them to flying a huge range of missions with their Airbus helicopters, playing a massive role in protecting the region's sensitive biodiversity while keeping the locals safe.

ARTICLE—Ben Peggie

"We're landing in some of the most inhospitable landing areas in the world, in swamps, tight confined areas where no one ever goes. This is the perfect aircraft for it."

PAUL SPRING, CEO OF PHOENIX HELI-FLIGHT

Phoenix Heli-Flight's colourful fleet

"We're a heavy oil and gas exploration development community, but we also have a large boreal forest region around us," explains Spring. "It's quite common to have forest fires of 200,000 - 300,000 hectares in size. We do a lot of environmental monitoring around the oil sands because Canada is a great place to produce, but we are also very environmentally responsible."

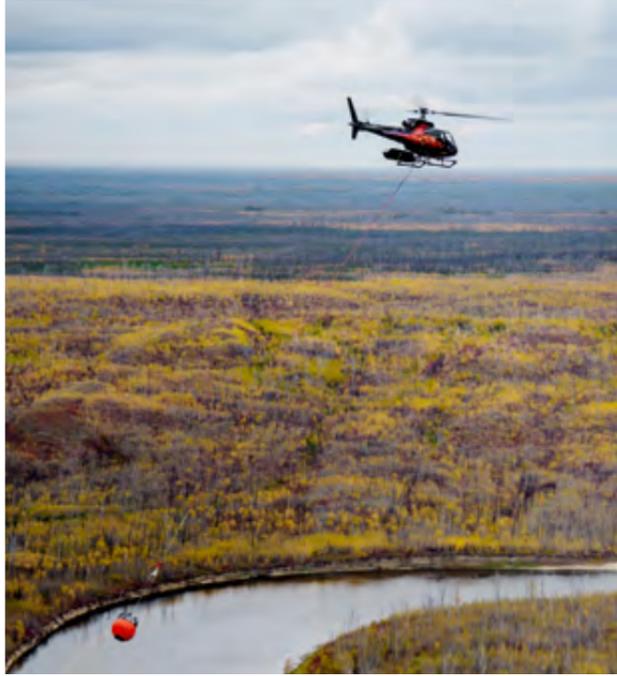
A new kind of crane lift

Spring is clearly passionate about the positive impact of Phoenix's helicopter missions and is quick to highlight one of their more specialised operations. "One of my favourite critical missions is capturing wildlife," he says. "We do a job where we monitor an endangered species called the Whooping Crane. We carry two veterinarians, a Parks Canada representative and two wildlife biologists. Besides monitoring their water habitat and their nest, we actually live-capture the chicks before they can fly and put tracking anklets on them for their life, so they can check in with GPS towers on the way back to Texas. We share that flock

of endangered species birds [between] Canada and Texas, together. I don't think I could do that job without an H125. We're landing in some of the most inhospitable landing areas in the world, in swamps, tight confined areas where no one ever goes. This is the perfect aircraft for it." The local geography presents the Phoenix team with a range of different demanding operations and operating environments. "There are so many challenging missions," notes Spring. "From landing on moving ice floes to deploying rescue swimmers to save lives, but probably the most demanding role we have is the firefighting role." He underscores the vital function that helicopters have in allowing pilots to focus on the job in hand. "[You have] long days, in the smoke, working with multiple aircraft. Visibility is key for us — having big skylights, windows, and chin bubbles [in the helicopter]. Comfort is also a factor — if you're going to spend a full day flying a helicopter waterbucketing, you might be doing a water cycle every 2 - 2.5 minutes, and you don't want to feel beat up at the end of the day because you want to be able to fly the next day." ...



▲ Paul Spring, CEO of Phoenix Heli-Flight



▲ Filling up the water bucket

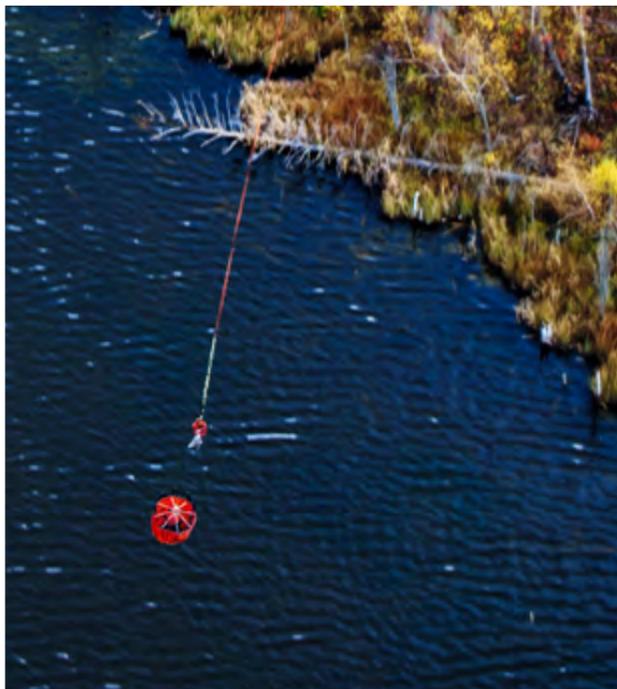
◀ Flying in Fort McMurray, Alberta, Phoenix Heli-Flight's helicopters fly a range of missions and are immediately recognisable to the local citizens.

▼ Phoenix Heli-Flight's most demanding role is firefighting with the help of a water bucket.



... **Teaming with positivity**

Spring is proud of how Phoenix Heli-Flight serves the local population and believes that the isolated geography creates a closer bond between people and the helicopters they regularly see in action. "I think that our community being remote, in a fire zone, and a heavy industrial zone, is well aware of the role that helicopters play. They see us on the highways, in the woods, helping people all the time. It's very well appreciated by the community and very well recognised. [If] someone is having a really bad day, we're there to help and we're glad we can." As well as looking to invest in more helicopters, like many, Spring sees the potential in using uncrewed aerial systems (UAS) to support their parapublic operations. "We're moving into drones now — they are now part of our search and rescue programme. We can't always deploy all the assets we need and we're finding that UAS are a valuable aid to fly near and work with helicopters. So, drones are part of our future." With such a wide array of missions and a huge area of rugged terrain, people and wildlife to protect, Phoenix Heli-Flight are well placed to be at the forefront of how teaming technology can be deployed.



"They see us on the highways, in the woods, helping people all the time. It's very well appreciated by the community and very well recognised. If someone is having a really bad day, we're there to help."

PAUL SPRING, CEO OF PHOENIX HELI-FLIGHT

▲ The isolated geography creates a bond between people and the helicopters they see in action.

"THE LAST OF THE ORIGINALS"

Flight Paramedic Jim Laird and Flight Nurse Ron Dotson have served with HealthNet Aeromedical Services for nearly 40 amazing years. Individually they have flown over 5,000 missions. A look back at the dedication of a lifetime.

ARTICLE — Heather Couthaud



West Virginia's motto, *Montani Semper Liberi* (mountaineers are always free), is a dictum that exemplifies an adventurous spirit — an appropriate motto for the hardy adventurers who launched the state's first air medical services programme in 1986. "I started flying when the programme started. I am the last of the originals," says Jim Laird, a Flight Paramedic at HealthNet, a not-for-profit air and ground transport provider of critical care. The veteran air medical worker remembers the day when West Virginia University Hospital and Charleston Area Medical Center joined forces to put two H125 'A-Star' helicopters into operation. The concept was so new that on his first mission, "we had to look for

a hospital that would accept us," Laird says. Retired Flight Nurse Ron Dotson was with HealthNet nearly as long. His colleagues' tributes say it all: "I wanted to thank you for being one of my first mentors back at Harrison County Emergency Squad in the 80s," wrote retired Flight Paramedic Carlton Burkhammer for Dotson's retirement in 2023.

From inception to full-grown

"It took a little while for flying to catch on because people weren't used to it and it's not an easy place to fly in," Laird says. West Virginia's challenges include dense cities and isolated rural regions. The Appalachian and Allegheny mountains

▲ HealthNet operates eight H135s and two H145s (not pictured)

contribute to an average elevation of 1,411 ft (430 m). Weather can change in minutes. These days, missions are flown by an experienced pilot familiar with the challenges of helicopter emergency medical services (HEMS). In the cabin, a flight nurse and flight paramedic are equipped to deal with anything from a cardiac arrest to an intubation. "When we first started we had six weeks to learn from the physicians and adapt it to the air," Laird says. "Ventilators weren't being used; now, you do. I was lucky to see what it was like as technology was introduced, because it let me embrace change."

An advanced fleet

From two H125s to a fleet that now includes eight H135s and two H145s, HealthNet today operates life-saving missions from eight bases. In September 2025, they took delivery of the first of five new state-of-the-art H135s. The HEMS-equipped helicopter is certified for instrument flight rules (IFR) operations, which supports a safer flight environment. "The safety programme has been one where you follow the same protocol every time. Then they developed the concept of a just culture, where it's okay for anyone to stop the



flight if they feel there's a risk," says Laird. HealthNet requires crews to do survival training; Air Methods, its aviation operator, requires quarterly training. Laird says: "It's evolved over time... to help everyone else achieve success." The H135 joins the fleet as a leader in not only safety features but medical configuration. Its rear clamshell doors and large cabin support the loading and transport of anyone from newborn and pediatric intensive care patients to high-risk individuals. Medical equipment includes blood and plasma supplies, antibiotics, monitors and ventilators, IV pumps, and ultrasound devices. "It's designed for patient care. The seating arrangement and the way the equipment is placed mean it's designed to succeed in your job," Laird says. For new generations of paramedics, his advice is: "Your success is only going to be what you're willing to give. When I say successful, the best day of my life was when I walked up to a patient that had arrested on us. I waved to him — and he flipped me off, because I'm the one who defibrillated him seven times. Then he laughed at me."

▲ A HealthNet H135 in the skies above West Virginia

▲ An H135 flies above a hospital



A flight AGAINST TIME in Texas

As 2026 opens with record floods in northern California, Rotor takes a look back at the Fourth of July floods in Kerrville, Texas and the Coast Guard crew who saved dozens of lives.

ARTICLE—Heather Couthaud

"My strongest impression is the resilience of a community," says US Coast Guard Petty Officer 3rd Class Seth Reeves, speaking nearly six months after the terrible Texas floods that claimed lives in Texas Hill Country. The floods were immense, showing the frightening power of nature. In the case of Kerrville, heavy rainfall in the early hours of 4 July 2025 transformed the normally lazy Guadalupe River into a rushing onslaught in less than an hour, bursting its banks and catching riverside communities by surprise. With daylight, it became clear evacuations had to be made from the air. Fast-moving water had stranded vehicles and cut off roads and bridges. Launching into the rain and wind, aerial units from multiple government agencies airlifted people trapped by the waters. Among these was a US Coast Guard MH-65 helicopter stationed at Air Station Corpus Cristi in Texas. Its team of four responded to the call that saved 15 young campers at Camp Mystic and triaged 169 others that day.

Go/no-go decisions

Just getting on scene required extraordinary measures. Aircraft commander Lt. Ian Hopper, co-pilot Lt. Blair Ogujiofor, rescue swimmer Petty Officer 3rd Class Scott Ruskan and flight mechanic Seth Reeves met extreme weather at Kerrville which forced them into a holding pattern for 45 minutes before they finally diverted to another airfield to refuel and regroup. During another attempt, "I was on the sticks, Blair Ogujiofor had comms and obstacles, Scott Ruskan had his weather radar up (so neither Blair nor I had to look down), and Seth Reeves had up Google maps (we decided to attempt to 'drive' to Camp Mystic...)," says Hopper. Inclement weather again drove them to divert and wait out the worst of the storm. At this point, the MH-65 team was assigned to work the Camp Mystic area with other aircraft, including an Army helicopter. Hopper recounts the conditions as they flew in formation to the camp, describing it as the "sketchiest leg, go/no-go decisions every 2 minutes, hill by hill... we had to go slower to avoid going IIMC [inadvertent instrument meteorological conditions] again (about 45-50 knots)... Due to the fact that we had just refueled and the altitude was higher than Corpus (not to mention it was humid and hot), we were pulling in the 90% torque at times to get over the hills but

stay under the clouds. Once we arrived on scene at the camp ground, we began to get TCAS hit after TCAS hit [aircraft traffic avoidance signals]."

Triage and tempest

Around 12 helicopters large and small were in the area, so Hopper decided to land at a small airstrip to the north. Here, he burned down fuel so the MH-65 could hover out of ground effect (HOGE) for the rescues. "We were flying to a completely new area in completely new terrain with plenty of towers on top of hills and a fairly low cloud layer," says Hopper. "The landing zones were entirely new and... required HOGE power to get in and out of. TCAS was going off constantly and the communications were going nuts... Seth Reeves expertly managed the cabin and ensured they [the campers] were all in the safest places possible even though we did not have enough restraints for all of them." Ruskan elected to stay behind with the young campers so that he, as the lead first responder on scene, could coordinate the loading of survivors into other helicopters. Hopper picked out a different landing zone, one where the ground was too soft for larger aircraft to land; here he loaded three more groups of campers over the course of 3.5 hours, before returning for Ruskan and completing a total of 7.5 hours of flight time. For their extraordinary actions, Hopper and Ruskan were awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross and Ogujiofor and Reeves were honoured with the Air Medal.

◀ A US Coast Guard Dauphin

▼ A crew member on the hoist. US Coast Guard crews received medals for their service in saving 15 young lives and triaging 169 others.





POWER TO SPARE: HELICARRIER'S SUPER PUMAS HAVE THE ENGINE TO GET THE JOB DONE

Frederic Carrier's Quebec-based helicopter company uses their Super Pumas for firefighting missions. He explains why the helicopter performs so well when the heat is on.

ARTICLE — Ben Peggie

▲ The Super Puma's engine performance makes it perfect for operating at high and hot altitudes, where it is ideal for firefighting operations.

When asked on which missions HeliCarrier's Super Pumas prove their worth, owner Fred Carrier does not hesitate: "Firefighting and construction. It's really powerful, reliable, easy to operate and dispatchable very quickly."

A reliable power

Carrier's enthusiasm for the helicopter is obvious and he attributes the Super Puma's high performance on firefighting and long-line missions to the design of the engine. "What I like about flying it is the Airbus mentality where everything is kind of derated," he states. "So you always have what you need to do the job, to always perform like it should." For the uninitiated, a derated engine is one that produces much more power than the aircraft design limitation (maximum allowed power) at sea level, on a cold day. The system does not allow the pilot to use the entirety of the engine's power potential, so its output is capped in these conditions. While that sounds limiting, the reality is that on a hot day, or at altitude, the Super Puma's engine has the reserve capacity to maintain its maximum allowed power, when weaker engines may start to fade. Extra power in high and hot environments is a clear advantage for many parapublic missions and especially firefighting. Pilots can count on the consistency of the Super Puma's performance, regardless of operating conditions. They can also have confidence that the engine has the power to spare for manoeuvres during operations as the engine has not been pushed to its thermal limit.

Ready to go

Operating below maximum thermal limits reduces 'wear and tear,' significantly boosting maintenance intervals and aircraft availability. Indeed, Carrier highlights this as another of the helicopter's strong points for firefighting — and when it's needed, it's ready to go, especially for work abroad, which is an important part of HeliCarrier's business. What's more, beyond availability, the Super Puma's performance means it can get to where it needs to go quickly and smoothly. "It's easy to get it out there and it's a quick aircraft," he states. "So for something like a ferry flight to Chile, we can complete a long ferry with autopilot and then thanks to its background of being an offshore machine it is super quick and easy to dispatch. It's got good range, good legs and is fast."

People power

Carrier also highlights the fact that the Super Puma is a Standard category aircraft.

at their side

"I'm a huge advocate of Standard category aircraft; being able to put people in it does give it an edge," he says. Unlike some heavy helicopters used in parapublic roles, the Super Puma can transport personnel. This allows it to move firefighters for logistics or evacuation — adding another powerful string to its bow as a firefighting apparatus. With so many strong attributes, it is perhaps not surprising that Carrier does not envisage using their Super Puma fleet for anything radically different — knowing that the Super Puma has the power they need to deliver. "The core business of HeliCarrier is construction, power line support, firefighting and for the next five years, we'll still be doing what we've been doing best for the last 15 years. Just what we're doing now."



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