

ROTOR



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for future battles

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Matthieu Louvot,
CEO of Airbus Helicopters

Helicopters have never mattered more. Every day, lives are saved, fires are extinguished, and vital supplies are delivered to remote areas by machines that can reach places no other aircraft can. In an increasingly unpredictable world, governments tasked with protecting their citizens must prepare for multifaceted threats — and adapt to entirely new crises. Unfortunately, war is the ultimate crisis that people can face, and conflicts have taken new and unpredictable forms in recent years, but in all of them helicopters have confirmed how essential and versatile they are — be it to rescue soldiers, lead special operations or protect against drones. In 2025, we were honoured to achieve the number one position in military helicopter bookings, in terms of units. It is confirmation that our range provides what armed forces require: multi-role, agile and effective helicopters and uncrewed aerial systems. At the same time, this honour comes with a deep responsibility to ensure what matters most — availability and safety in operations. Our capacity to cater to every

EVERY DAY, LIVES ARE SAVED, FIRES ARE EXTINGUISHED, AND VITAL SUPPLIES ARE DELIVERED

operator stems from the inherent versatility of the Airbus dual range, combined with our specialised military platforms. The H225M and H145M leverage thousands of flight hours proven in crucial civil and parapublic missions. Meanwhile, the latest addition to our military fleet, the H160M, inherits the significant wave of innovation present and matured in its civil counterpart while utilising state-of-the-art weaponry and connectivity integrated via HForce. Alongside these, the NH90 continues to go from strength to strength as it evolves to meet future demands. This edition of *Rotor* highlights the vast spectrum of roles our aircraft perform and I am delighted to share these stories with you. From Will Banks filming breathtaking scenes for the cinema industry with the H125, to the H130 delivering critical aid to flood victims in Mozambique, helicopters and their crews achieve extraordinary things. They do everything from enriching lives to saving them. That is why I am immensely proud to return to Airbus Helicopters and step into the role of CEO for this exceptional company, serving amazing customers.

SAVING

at their side

ENGINEERING THE SHIELD

ARTICLES—
Ben Peggie
Lou Massé and
Alexandre Marchand

THAT PROTECTS US

The rules of the world have changed and in this increasingly volatile context, conflict has changed too. When facing a multitude of rapidly evolving threats, the capacity a country has to defend itself has never been more vital. Defence is important for us all. By equipping its customers and air forces to prevent crises, protect citizens and restore stability, Airbus is shaping the future of defence to ensure European countries and their allies remain strong, independent and resilient. Furthermore, investing in defence drives the high-tech innovations and growth that help secure the Europe of tomorrow.

VERTICAL THINKING

DESIGNING A STRATEGY TO NAVIGATE THE NEW NORMAL

Helicopters are the backbone of disaster relief and military missions. In an increasingly blurry global security context, their role remains vital for decades to come.

ARTICLE — Ben Peggie

Defence and security operators are responding to diversifying and intensifying threats, explains Mathilde Royer, Executive Vice President Strategy and Sustainability at Airbus Helicopters. "Climate-related natural disasters have been on the rise for years, and now many countries are enhancing their preparations for conflict. Combat tactics and strategies are also changing, with increasing use of uncrewed aerial systems (UAS), and we expect to see an increase in hybrid warfare operations in the future." Royer insists on the importance of rotorcraft in this context. "When responding to critical situations, dual-use helicopters can offer a tactical advantage in military operations, rescue people from catastrophes and restore vital infrastructure." With specialised military aircraft, such as the NH90 and Tiger, as well as militarised versions of its civil range, Royer believes that Airbus Helicopters provides ideal solutions. "In this changing world, we must move beyond the silo of aircraft-only platforms toward integrated, multi-domain ecosystems. ...

► The VSR700 will be able to supply battlefield intelligence but could even be equipped for light attack or target acquisition missions.



... The H160M offers new possibilities to military operators, while the flexibility and adaptability of the modular H145M means that it is tailored for multi-mission requirements, for which there will be a strong demand, as the deployment of hybrid warfare tactics proliferates and evolves. The HForce system and Airbus' modularity allow the H145M and H225M to pivot rapidly between light attack, firefighting, and tactical transport — as recently demonstrated by Hungary's rapid deployment to Albania," says Royer.

A REVOLUTIONARY APPROACH

Integrating drones will be vital in future conflicts. "Airbus Helicopters offers a range of tactical UAS for high-risk intelligence and multi-role operations," says Royer. She highlights assets such as the Flexrotor, CapaX and VSR700 that are able to perform intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) missions at first but which will ultimately be multi-role. Cargo is also a likely mission, but teaming will be a game-changer. "Collaborative teaming with UAS will enhance helicopter survivability and lethality in contested battlefields," says Royer. Airbus Helicopters' HTeaming solution will facilitate stand-off attacks, with UAS performing stand-off ISR missions and target acquisition in the future. "The integration of air-launched effects [drones

or effectors launched from helicopters], will deliver the capacity to strike at very long range. Helicopters will evolve into multi-role airborne hubs for drone-swarm command," emphasises Royer. Airbus' long-term strategy revolves around spearheading next-generation rotorcraft (NGRC) to ensure European strategic autonomy. "Rather than relying on non-European platforms or transatlantic partnerships, we are proactively leading the effort to shape a truly sovereign solution," she says. "Through our leadership in the European-funded ENGRT project, we are maturing the critical technologies — such as modular open systems and advanced connectivity — necessary for future military rotorcraft. Airbus is uniquely positioned to offer NATO nations the most competitive solution that is conceived, built and sustained within Europe. We are not just building a platform; we are ensuring the future of European defence industrial independence, while making sure that all critical missions can be successfully accomplished." As Royer concludes: "In an era of unpredictability, the helicopter remains a dependable tool of flexibility." By supplying the necessary versatility to respond to these challenges, Airbus is ensuring that while the battlefield may change, the relevance of the vertical lift asset remains absolute.



▲ Mathilde Royer, Executive Vice President Strategy and Sustainability at Airbus Helicopters



▲ Hungary's H225M helicopters were deployed in Albania for firefighting missions in the summer of 2025. ▼



► Teaming drones like the Aliaca with crewed helicopters will offer operators significant advantages in combat missions.

CANADA'S CT-153 JUNO GETS READY FOR TRAINING

There is a global trend towards increasing military spending, and Canada is investing heavily to ensure its air force is ready for the variety of challenges it might face. The initial phase focuses on securing the best possible helicopter for its training programme.

ARTICLE — Ben Peggie



▲ Colonel Lauri Denis,
Royal Canadian Air Force



The Royal Canadian Air Force's first H135 in flight

June 2026 saw the first delivery of the Airbus H135 to the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF), marking the launch of its Future Aircrew Training (FAcT) programme. Christened the CT-153 Juno, the helicopter's name reflects its importance within the history of the nation's military. The Juno's livery is composed of a dark blue mixed with historic 'training yellow.' This was deliberately chosen to ensure that one of the proudest chapters of Canadian aviation history, the British Commonwealth Air Training Program, where Canada played a massive role in preparing Allied pilots during the Second World War, remains a visible part of its present. The Juno aspect also calls to mind the critical role Canada had in the D-Day landings at Juno beach. Today, geopolitical tensions are as fraught as they have been since that global conflict. With active warfare in Europe and the Middle East, countries around the world are assessing if they have the right tools for the job. Canada is no different. Programme provider, SkyAlyne, placed an order for 19 H135 helicopters to rejuvenate the RCAF's training fleet, the first of which has now been received.

HOW TO BE THE BEST? TRAINING

The arrival of this aircraft is part of a complete update of the RCAF's training pipeline. With a total investment of of CAD 11.2 billion, 71 new aircraft will be delivered over the course of the 25-year project. "The Future Aircrew Training programme is basically a reset of everything to do with RCAF aircrews training," explains Kevin Lemke, general manager of SkyAlyne. SkyAlyne, a joint venture formed by Canadian aviation and defence leaders, CAE and KF Aerospace, serves as the prime contractor managing the initiative. "This is a generational programme for the Canadian government. It's the largest services contract in the history of the Canadian government." Indeed, this is a root and branch modernisation of the RCAF's training offer. Leadership has identified this step as building the essential foundations that will lead to the creation of an advanced air power. The logic is simple: if you want your air force to be the best, before you think about having the best aircraft, you have to have the pilots to fly them. "Doesn't matter how much you buy," notes Lemke. "If you don't have the aircrews to operate these systems, you don't have an air force."

THE H135: THE BEST OF BOTH WORLDS

There is a school of thought that to really learn flying, you need to learn on a machine which doesn't help you, so you train without the aid of sophisticated avionics that reduce pilot workload. Another theory is that training student pilots on cutting-edge helicopters introduces them to the kinds of technology early that they will encounter during their flying careers. The advantage of the H135 is that it not only allows pilots to train on Helionix avionics, but it also allows certain features and functionalities to be removed. Trainees experience the best of both worlds: next-generation technology and old-school fundamentals. In the context of having the right tools to train future pilots who are likely to face varied threats, the RCAF's Colonel Lauri Denis believes that the CT-153 Juno perfectly fits the bill. "It's exactly what today's aircrews need to train on to then go to our advanced platforms and operational units to fight with our allies in the defence of Canada," Denis notes. "We don't have to tell anybody here that the threat out there is real."

"It's exactly what today's aircrews need to train on to then go to our advanced platforms and operational units to fight with our allies in the defence of Canada."

COLONEL LAURI DENIS,
ROYAL CANADIAN
AIR FORCE

SAVING



▲ Celebrating a successful HTeaming demonstration between the Flexrotor and the H225M



TEAMING FOR TEAMING

AIRBUS CONNECTS WITH SINGAPORE FOR PIONEERING COLLABORATION

Imagine a rescuer that could stay in the air for 14 hours, day and night, relaying videos and images, mapping terrain and supplying instant information to its colleagues — without getting tired or needing a break. Look no further than the Airbus Flexrotor, especially when it is working in perfect synchronisation with an H225M, thanks to HTeaming.

ARTICLE — Ben Peggie

at their side

For a search and rescue mission, visibility could be the difference between life and death. So, in January 2026, an Airbus Flexrotor uncrewed aerial system (UAS) was teamed with a Republic of Singapore Air Force H225M for the very first time using Airbus' HTeaming system, to simulate this vital operation. By using HTeaming, the Flexrotor could provide vital intelligence directly to the H225M's crew, and would allow the pilots to directly command and control the drone, using a specialised datalink that enables immediate data processing without overloading the pilot's workload.

RELATIONSHIP GOALS

Teaming brings significant advantages to combat search and rescue (CSAR) and SAR missions. Firstly, in terms of situational awareness, it is a game changer. The Flexrotor significantly extends the visual range beyond what can be seen from the helicopter it is linked to. It also minimises the chance of the helicopter crew being exposed to a high-risk environment, as it will have already surveyed the area. Finally, it facilitates quicker decision making, as the data is received directly by the pilots. This means pilots can take almost immediate action once they have seen something interesting or potentially found what they are looking for. The demonstration was conducted with the support of Singapore's Defence Science and Technology Agency (DSTA) and the Republic of Singapore Air Force (RSAF). Programme Manager Lim Jiaxu explains the added value of HTeaming. "Teaming is a game changer for more dynamic operations. The increased stand-off distance isn't just about safety, it's also about mission effectiveness. Helicopter air crew can obtain real-time data in order to make informed decisions."

▼ The Republic of Singapore Air Force's Major Lim Ryan, Staff Officer in the Air Plans Department



► An Airbus crew member watches on as the Flexrotor prepares to take off



► A close-up view of the HTeaming tablet. The tablet enables the crew to benefit from real-time information from the Flexrotor.



For the Republic of Singapore Air Force's Major Lim Ryan, Staff Officer in the Air Plans Department, the demonstration was extremely useful: "The Flexrotor UAS provided forward intelligence of the area of operations, enhancing the situational awareness of the air crew, which enabled them to make real-time tactical decisions, improving threat reaction and increasing mission success, given the additional stand-off range that the Flexrotor provides."

MOTIVATED TO MAKE TOMORROW'S MISSIONS MORE EFFICIENT

When it introduced HTeaming, conscious of its future importance, Airbus Helicopters designed the system to be fully agnostic, compatible with any type of helicopter and to be able to take control of any type of drone. Lim Jiaxu also recognises that this demonstration represents only part of the journey toward that end, but it is hugely motivating to imagine what could come next. "This successful demo offers a glimpse into the exciting potential that teaming has to offer," he enthuses. "It drives DSTA to push further, working with Airbus and the RSAF to shape new solutions that could significantly enhance operations. This is just the beginning. We are already working with Airbus to push this technology further to enhance mission effectiveness for more complex missions."

SHARPENING ITS CLAWS: THE TIGER GETS READY FOR FUTURE BATTLES

The Tiger Mark III programme is modernising a tried-and-tested combat helicopter, incorporating next-generation avionics and weaponry into a platform with a proven track record. This mid-life upgrade will ensure that these attack helicopters remain relevant for decades to come, ready to face the new challenges of high-intensity battlefields.

ARTICLE — Lou Massé



high-performance weapon systems (optronic sight, touchscreen cockpit, digital helmet). The entire wiring system is being overhauled to accommodate all modern data streams and enable higher throughput and greater communication capacity. Recently, the Tiger Mark III has reached some significant milestones, including the entry into service of 'helicopter zero', a ground test bed designed to test new systems. The target for 2026 is the Tiger Mark III's first flight, a major milestone for this project.

TARGETING THE DIGITALISED BATTLEFIELD

"We plan to equip the Tiger Mark III with the means to interoperate with third-dimensional assets, such as drones," explains Cindy Mécirin. "We are integrating state-of-the-art weapons; the Euroflir 510 sight allows us to see much further, with improved targeting performance. We want a helicopter suited to high-intensity and aggressive battlefields, so we can see before we are seen," adds Marie Thomines. "The Mark III programme will improve the Tiger's performance and enhance crew safety as its new avionics will reduce much of the pilot workload often required in intense combat zones, allowing uncrewed systems to perform them instead. We have an extended weapon system, so we can penetrate specific combat zones more easily without endangering the crew or the mission," explains Cindy Mécirin. "By reducing the cognitive load and enhancing accuracy through its new infrared sensors, the Tiger Mark III will be able to avoid exposing the helicopter and its crew to immediate danger when they are operating behind enemy lines," she explains. The Mark III programme promises "an aircraft that will remain agile thanks to its continued high performance, allowing it to deploy rapidly and maintain its full speed and manoeuvrability." The project meets all current European requirements, while remaining adaptable to the future needs of individual nations. "The Mark III has growth potential across the entire range of avionics systems. This will make it possible in the future to have modular and scalable avionics. This is a state-of-the-art aircraft that has already proven itself, and will continue to do so," concludes Cindy Mécirin.

THE FUTURE OF EUROPEAN DEFENCE

"Cooperation between France and Spain means we can pool our efforts to develop the most effective modern combat helicopter," explains Marie Thomines, Tiger Programme Manager. With Cindy Mécirin, Chief of Engineering, they are leading the development of the large-scale Tiger Mark III project at Airbus Helicopters. Launched in 2022, with the backing of the Joint Organisation for Armament Cooperation for France and Spain, it was developed in response to a crucial need: to address the new realities of modern battlefields. "The Mark III represents the true challenge of European cooperation. It's a collective success that bridges the gap between two nations," explains Marie Thomines. The programme builds on the Tiger's proven agility and stealth. "We're keeping the elements that make the aircraft so effective, ensuring we'll maintain its performance," explains Cindy Mécirin. With this mid-life upgrade, the Tiger will be equipped with brand-new digital avionics and new



◀ Looking at the majestic Tiger

▲ The Tiger in flight

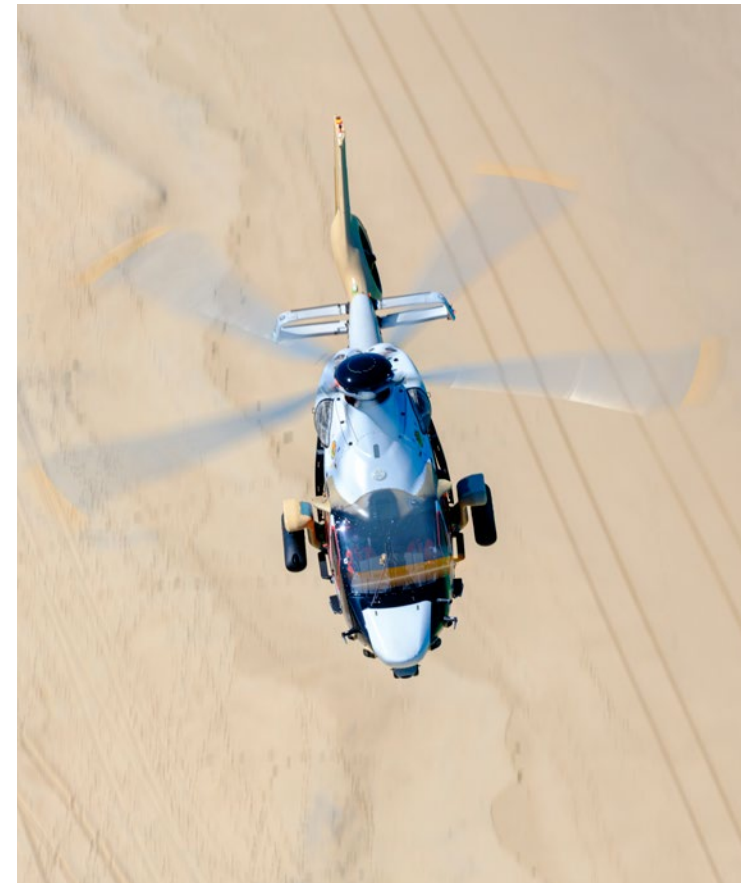




THE H160 GETS FIRED UP FOR ITS NEXT TEST CAMPAIGN

By offering various levels of potential militarisation, the H160 allows for a response to a wide range of governmental missions, starting today.

ARTICLE — Alexandre Marchand



▲ The H160M's weapons pylons will be able to incorporate new weaponry in the future.

Airbus Helicopters is preparing to conduct a first firing campaign with the H160M equipped with a 12.7 mm axial machine gun. "This is a major event for a military aircraft, which features a very high level of integration of its weaponry with its sensors, its avionics, its mission system and even the autopilot," emphasises Vincent Chenot, head of the H160M programme. "This integration allows us to develop innovative firing modes to maximise the performance of firing passes, not only for the axial machine gun but for other future armaments." This integration results in automatic target tracking, with the autopilot ultimately responsible for piloting the aircraft's trajectory in yaw and pitch to guarantee firing accuracy. The H160M will also be equipped with the TopOwl helmet, identical to that of the Tiger, with identical modes and functions, and it will use the same electronic warfare suite as the combat helicopter. "With its large-format touchscreens, the new FlytX avionics installed on the H160M further facilitate mission management," notes Charles Lanzalavi, Technical Manager of the programme. The H160M carries a mission assistant for this purpose, developed with Airbus Defence and Space. "This highly integrated and automated avionics will

offer users the possibility of conducting complex missions with a crew of only two people. For the navy, this will involve pilots operating a latest-generation tactical radar equipped with numerous modes, without having to involve a third crew member." The aircraft will also be natively equipped with a capability for collaboration with drones. The H160M's weapon pylons and the associated reinforcements of the structure give it significant growth potential for new developments, such as the integration of new types of air launched effects, missiles, but also remotely operated munitions (drones). "The H160M's weapon pylons must anticipate these needs in terms of physical interfaces," specifies Chenot. The French Defence Procurement Agency (DGA) has green-lit studies on the integration of MBDA's Akeron LP missile. The Akeron LP is a long-range, lightweight multi-role air-to-ground missile, versatile enough to handle anti-tank missions as well as anti-surface or possibly anti-drone missions. The H160M can be fitted with two internal 250-litre auxiliary tanks, further extending its already impressive range. By 2030, at the end of the development and qualification work, all these characteristics will ensure the H160M has power and endurance. "But not all users will necessarily require such a level of performance," emphasises Chenot. "By taking advantage of the developments already carried out for the Gendarmerie [French national police] and French Navy, we are already able to offer a version of the H160 today that is perfectly capable of performing a very wide range of military missions." The French Navy has been using its aircraft since 2022, and the Gendarmerie received its first aircraft in 2025. These aircraft are notably equipped with a Safran EOS410 electro-optical turret, a searchlight, a hoist and fast ropes, and optional armour. The mission system coupled with specific communication means and data links will enable complex missions. Interoperability with drones constitutes a strong axis of development, with a flight demonstration planned. The integration of cabin-door weaponry is also conceivable. The missions planned for these aircraft include protecting vessels and coastal areas, observation, counter-terrorism, and reconnaissance or support for ground forces. "The H160 already delivers an extensive suite of capabilities today; these will only be bolstered in the coming years as the H160M pushes into the highest end of the operational spectrum," concludes Vincent Chenot.

THE NH90'S NEW LEASE ON LIFE

With more than 530 aircraft in service and 500,000 flight hours recorded worldwide, the NH90 is firmly established in the military landscape. The focus has now shifted toward preparing for the future, with the launch of several projects designed to keep the aircraft at the highest standard.

ARTICLE — Alexandre Marchand

The NH90 was a highly ambitious and forward-thinking programme, both in its technical choices and its collaborative industrial framework. "Over the years, we have devoted a great deal of effort to development, qualification, the industrial ramp-up, and then resolving maturity issues," explains Axel Aloccio, NH90 Programme Director for Airbus Helicopters. "With the industrial system and technical configurations now mature, our work today is focused more on supporting helicopters in service to provide our customers with more flight hours and better availability." Aloccio cites various areas for improvement, while also noting an increased awareness among most customers. Numerous services are offered under the Through Life Support (TLS) contract, which nearly all nations operating the NH90 have joined through the NATO Helicopter Management Agency (NAHEMA). A new type of support contract, the NH90 Operational Support (NOS) contract, has also emerged. Currently including France, Germany, and Belgium among its customers, it offers completely integrated management of the entire logistics flow, strong commitments on parts availability, and a full range of additional services that can be activated on demand by these countries. Significant efforts have been dedicated to increasing the production and repair capacity for the most critical parts. The results are evident: in just a few years, the volume of ...



▲ Axel Aloccio,
NH90 Programme Director
for Airbus Helicopters

*The German Navy received
its first NH90 Sea Tiger
in December 2025.*



▲ Crew members onboard an NH90 TTH scan the horizon.

... delivered critical parts has doubled. For the past 18 months, the NH90 support system has also benefited from a new service: standard exchange. This allows NH90 customers to receive new or refurbished parts within extremely short timeframes by performing an immediate exchange with NHIndustries. "This represents a major shift in mindset and demonstrates the commitment of NHIndustries and the NH90 nations to work on innovative solutions to improve the programme's logistical performance," emphasises Axel Aloccio. In the medium term, the goal is to evolve the aircraft in both its tactical transport helicopter (TTH) and NATO frigate helicopter (NFH) variants, with a 'Block 1' featuring software upgrades and new capabilities in connectivity, interoperability, data transmission and electronic warfare. Development is already underway; the expected upgrades will be qualified starting in 2028, and discussions are ongoing with NAHEMA to finalise contracts by the end of the year for retrofit activities covering more than 200 NH90s. "We are also working with NAHEMA on finalising the extension of the aircraft's service life, which will increase from 30 to 50 years," adds Axel Aloccio. Consequently, the aircraft recently ordered by Spain, to be delivered after 2030, will remain active until the 2080s. This very long-term vision could

also apply to aircraft for future customers in Asia, the Middle East, or NATO countries. The long-term focus is the NH90 'Block 2.' "We have just signed an architecture study contract with NAHEMA, which aims to offer our customers different scenarios and options for long-term improvements," reveals Aloccio. This study will focus on: defining a new modular avionics suite to better integrate new technologies; defining a new maintenance plan for improved fleet availability and reduced operating costs; and introducing new mission capabilities, particularly regarding connectivity and collaboration with drones, in line with the needs of the 2040+ battlefield. All of this is intended to ensure the aircraft reaches the 2080s in peak condition.

"This represents a major shift in mindset and demonstrates the commitment of NHIndustries and the NH90 nations to work on innovative solutions to improve the programme's logistical performance."

AXEL ALOCCIO, NH90 PROGRAMME
DIRECTOR FOR AIRBUS HELICOPTERS



◀ Two Swedish NH90 TTH helicopters in action



SAVING

How does defence affect your life?

Far from the battlefield and close to home, defence and security assets can play a key role in our everyday lives.

at their side

Maritime surveillance



NH90
Anti-submarine

Disaster relief



H175M

CAPA-X

Search & rescue



H145M

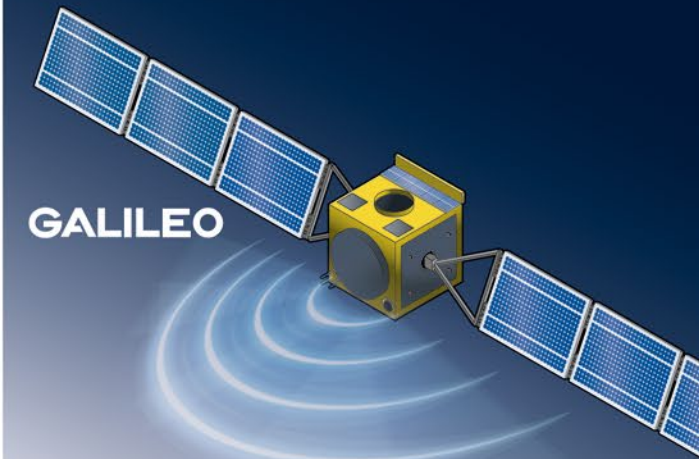
ALIACA

Firefighting



H225M

GALILEO



Global navigation

FLEXROTOR



A400M



C295

STYRIS

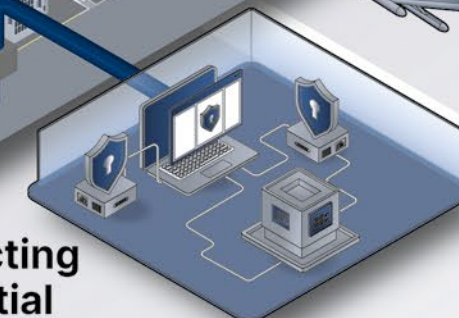


Securing the airspace



EUROFIGHTER

Protecting essential services



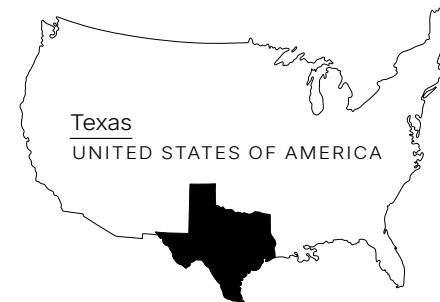
CYBERSECURITY



FIFTY YEARS OF FIRSTS: The H160 JOINS Life Flight

Memorial Hermann Life Flight is legendary in the world of helicopter emergency medical services. It was the first air medical programme in Texas and the second in the US. The programme, founded by Dr. James Henry 'Red' Duke, was pioneering when it launched in 1976. Fifty years on, it continues to break ground, introducing the first H160 with an air medical cabin, completed by Metro Aviation.

ARTICLE—Ben Peggie



◀ The first HEMS H160 in flight for Memorial Hermann

According to Life Flight's Programme Director Rudy Cabrera, the founding principles remain: innovation and putting in the 'extra miles' for patient care. With 34 years of nursing experience, Cabrera's dedication is clear, as is his admiration for the man who initiated what is now a massive operation. "Dr. 'Red' Duke was the innovator for this," explains Cabrera. "He was the sole person who came to Memorial Hermann to institute a flight programme. With this H160, we're still fulfilling his mission, his dreams in reaching patients even further out and returning them to definitive care. We've changed our air medical helicopters, but the mission remains: bringing the Memorial Hermann Critical Care ICU to the patients."

The missing link

The decision to use the H160 is strategic. While the current H145 fleet handles core urban missions, Life Flight believes the larger H160 can extend the reach of Memorial Hermann to patients further away — without necessarily relying on fixed-wing aircraft — offering direct routes with fewer transfers. Damon Sanger, Director of Aviation, explains: "The H160 will give us more options: further distance, increased speed. We can reach out to patient populations that would not be within range of our current fleet. The safety of the avionics, the Helionix cockpit and the autopilots are the specific reasons we went with the H160; it allows us to do this job more efficiently for our patients."

Engineering the flying ICU

Metro Aviation in Shreveport, Louisiana had the responsibility of optimising the H160's larger cabin. For Milton Geltz, Managing Director at Metro, the key

was creating an ergonomically perfect environment. "At Metro Aviation, we spend a large amount of time pouring over designs to ensure any configuration exceeds expectations and eases the burden of air medical professionals faced with a stressful job," explains Geltz. "This cabin was laid out to ensure medical crews have the room and flexibility they need to work efficiently with the right equipment at their fingertips." Amy McMullen, Metro's Director of Aircraft Configuration, points to one major advantage, especially for neonatal transports. "For neonates, the cabin size is going to be a plus, because they're going to be able to sit on both sides and take care of the baby," she says. "In a smaller aircraft, they don't always have that flexibility or reach."

Supporting the crew

Ultimately, the H160's advanced avionics simply support a trained crew to focus on the mission. "When it comes to air medical, we use a lot of autonomy," says Cabrera. "You are responsible for the care of that patient from the beginning. It is on you to make those life-saving decisions in an environment where you no longer have resources to go to the hospital." Despite demanding conditions, the teams continue to succeed. "They make it look so easy, but it's not," Sanger concludes. "The demands on them are real. You can have the best training programme, but at 2:00 in the morning, it's the professionalism of our pilots and medical crews that makes this programme run. We cannot be successful without them being successful."



▲ A close up of Memorial Hermann's logo



▲ The H160's spacious cabin ensures crews have the space and flexibility they need to save lives.

Help and healing

HAWAIIAN-STYLE

The residents of Hawai'i Island have collectively funded their emergency services with world-class equipment over the course of 28+ years. It all started with a search for beauty.

ARTICLE—Heather Couthaud

No one just ends up on Hawai'i; you've chosen it — or it's chosen you. To people living here, the Big Island, as the largest of the state's islands is known, means the shimmer of cooled lava flows or a favourite spot to see a waterfall rainbow. It was this love of the island that took Daniel R. Sayre's life in 1997 while he was hiking to Kapaloa Falls in Pololu Valley. In the wake of their loss, his parents, Dr. Frank Sayre and Laura-Mallery Sayre, created a memorial foundation to honour the first responders who had worked 10 unrelenting hours to recover Daniel's body. In 28+ years, the Daniel R. Sayre Memorial Foundation has gone on to impact more lives on Hawai'i than they could have anticipated.

Too little for too long

"The rescue team was at the bottom of the barrel for receiving money," remembers Laura Mallery-Sayre, the Foundation's Executive Director. When they started out, the Sayres learned that the Hawai'i Fire Department — which handles search and rescue, emergency medical service, fire suppression and lifeguarding — lacked basic gear for their job. "They had made do with so little so long that it was just

an expectation they would continue to do so. We've changed that." The island's 4,000 sq. miles is home to 200,000 residents spread over towns, farms, remote cottages and everywhere in between. Boating accidents occur, adventurers get lost and stroke victims need transport. The fire department was dealing with it all... so the Sayres stepped into fundraising in the community, using the money to buy cold-weather gear, trucks, vessels, training — all donated to the fire department.

Fire to flight

A key moment came in the aftermath of a wildfire that threatened the house of one of the island's benefactors. That launched a collaboration with the Sayre Foundation to fund large purchases, one of which was their first H125 helicopter, christened Ka'lo, or 'The hawk'. A proven performer in high altitudes, the H125 was chosen for its ability to ascend Hawai'i's highest volcanos, Mauna Loa and Mauna Kea, each just under 14,000 ft (4,000 m), terrain that presents an attraction for climbers and skiers. When accidents occurred, rescuers "would have to load these people onto stretchers and hike them down. It was dangerous for everybody. Now

"We've made everyone in the community aware of how important it is that our fire department have not only the equipment they need, but the best equipment."

LAURA MALLERY-SAYRE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND DR FRANK SAYRE, PRESIDENT, AND CO-FOUNDERS OF THE DANIEL R. SAYRE MEMORIAL FOUNDATION



horizons

► The Hawaiian H125 in action.

with the H125, they can fly to the top of any mountain on our island," says Laura Mallery-Sayre. In addition, the helicopter's range means it reaches everywhere on the island. Laura Mallery-Sayre recounts how a man in the south lost his leg below the knee in a mower accident. "It is so remote down there, but Ka'lo flew down and the EMS team put a tourniquet on his leg. An ambulance would have taken an hour and a half and Ka'lo got there in 25 minutes, got him to the hospital and saved his life".

The next chapter

In the fall, the Foundation and the community will welcome a second Airbus helicopter: an H145 equipped with an Aerolite medical interior, to fly critical care patients from the Big Island to Oahu. It will be operated by non-profit Life Flight Network as part of a larger mission to expand access to critical care across the island. Meanwhile, the fire department continues its vital work saving lives. Laura Mallery-Sayre remembers seeing the H125 circling the bay, searching for both a swimmer and a boat in distress, while two rescue boats assisted. "It was amazing to see all three assets that we had donated, out there doing rescues," she says.





WOMEN IN COMMAND

From rescue missions to precision in the supply chain, the helicopter industry is looking to further consolidate its reputation for maturity by attracting talent that transcends gender and focuses solely on results. Meet three female leaders in Latin America who are rewriting the rules of aviation and operational management with their impressive track record.

ARTICLE — Belen Morant



In a sector where safety is the number one priority and cannot be compromised, gender diversity has established itself as a driver of innovation and operational precision. It is not about ticking boxes, but about ensuring that the most qualified talent takes their place in the hangar or the cockpit. Women currently make up 23% of the workforce at Airbus Helicopters in Latin America, a figure that rises to nearly 30% at Airbus Helicopters Mexico. These figures set a new standard in the global aviation industry, where women account for just 5% of pilots and hold around 9% of technical maintenance roles, according to data from Women in Aviation International (WAI).

Taking command from the skies and leading rescue missions

In high-altitude aviation and tactical operations, where safety depends entirely on the precision of every manoeuvre, Captain María José Narváez has broken new ground by becoming the first woman in the Ecuadorian Air Force to pilot an H145. In these scenarios, operational performance renders any differences that may exist beneath the uniform irrelevant. "During missions, you fly with your helmet on, and you can't tell whether the pilot is a man or a woman, but when I land, power down the aircraft and take off my helmet, people are often taken aback," says Narváez. With no female role models to look up to, Narváez earned command of the H145 through pure discipline and diligent study. Her career demonstrates that the sector reaches maturity when professionalism triumphs over prejudice. "The obstacles you need to overcome are mainly those within yourself; it's simply a matter of accepting the challenge, studying and passing each phase," explains the captain, who is convinced that "the only limits are the ones we set for ourselves in our minds."

Clinical decision-making under pressure

In Colombia, Dr. Adriana Valero, Medical Director of Helistar, leads aeromedical evacuations in challenging environments. Her authority does not stem from her title, but from her ability to stabilise patients in extreme conditions. "In pre-hospital care, you are the ultimate authority; you are the one who has to make critical decisions on scene," explains Valero. Her leadership is

horizons

"You are the ultimate authority; you are the one who has to make critical decisions on scene."

DR. ADRIANA VALERO,
MEDICAL DIRECTOR
OF HELISTAR

underpinned by a comprehensive vision that seeks to elevate the region's aeromedical care to world-class standards through ongoing training. Far from ideological approaches, she sees her role as a validation of natural abilities and a source of family pride. "It's not about sexism or feminism, but about feeling proud as a woman when doing things we once thought were impossible," she says with the conviction of someone who has made the rotor her greatest ally in saving lives.

Balancing work and family

From the Airbus facility in Querétaro, Mexico – a key part of Airbus' global industrial strategy – Ana Molina manages more than 200 employees in her role as production manager. Molina, who launched the Training Academy in 2018, firmly believes in human potential: "Anyone with the right attitude can be trained." Her leadership reflects how the industry in Latin America is evolving by integrating women into critical roles within the supply chain. This strategic vision will help build a more resilient regional structure that is better prepared to face the sector's challenges. For Molina, herself the mother of a teenager, professional success in a senior management role doesn't mean sacrificing family life: "We can be leaders in the industry and still be there for our families. We can be whatever we choose to be."

◀ The work of Captain María José Narváez at the helm of the Ecuadorian Air Force's H145 ranges from troop infiltration to rescue operations during natural disasters.



▲ Dr. Adriana Valero,
Medical Director of Helistar



▲ Ana Molina, Single Parts
Manager at Airbus Helicopters
in Mexico

RAISING AWARENESS FOR HELICOPTERS AND A DRIVE TO SAVE LIVES

Behind every successful mission is a story that continues long after the aircraft lands. Airbus Helicopters' Emergency Medical Services (EMS) promoter, Eoin Walker, sits down with cardiac arrest survivor Shane Bradley to discuss how a helicopter helped save his life, his road to recovery and an incredible 1,060-mile (1,705 km) charity ride.

ARTICLE—Eoin Walker



▲ Shane Bradley

► Devon Air Ambulance's H135. Thanks to a helicopter, Bradley was able to receive life-saving care more quickly.

▼ Shane Bradley's 1,000 mile route

An ordinary Sunday turned fight-for-life

EOIN WALKER: Shane, take us back to 27 July 2025. It was supposed to be a normal morning. When did you realise something was seriously wrong?

SHANE BRADLEY: I woke up early with what I thought was indigestion and pottered around for four hours. I was talking with my wife when I suddenly felt a real tightness in my chest. I dropped to my knees, sweating profusely. It went very quickly from "I've got indigestion" to "something is really not right here."

E.W.: Your family got you to the local community hospital quickly. What do you remember before Devon Air Ambulance arrived?

S.B.: The hospital nurses were fantastic — well-drilled and reassuring. They gave me a GTN (Glyceryl Trinitrate) spray and called the paramedics, who gave me morphine. My wife actually apologised to the staff, telling them I was being dramatic. I'll never forget the look on her face when the nurse gently corrected her: "No, he's having a heart attack."

The crucial HEMS link

E.W.: We often say it takes a system to save a life. Do you remember the air ambulance arriving?

S.B.: I was fading in and out. The helicopter landed 300 m away at a school car park. I remember a crew member waking me up in the ambulance, bantering with me to keep me awake and ease the fright of the



situation. Later, my consultant told me the helicopter gave him "something to work with" because of the time saved. I lived up to 55 miles (88 km) away from the specialist hospital on poor roads. Time was working against me, and that helicopter was the vital link — it beat the clock and bought the hospital medical team the precious minutes they needed to save my life. I was taken straight to the operating theatre to have a stent fitted. The moment it deployed, the relief was absolute. I felt like I was being born again.

Life as "Shane 2.0"

E.W.: As clinicians, we rarely get to see the full rehabilitation journey. What were the following weeks like for you and your family?

S.B.: The physical shock was massive. I've been active all my life, an infantry Army Reservist and a runner; my family couldn't believe it happened to me. The weakness was frustrating. A week in, I just wanted to do something normal, like cooking the evening meal. The next week, visiting my work colleagues for just 20 minutes left me utterly shattered. But it completely changed my perspective. I am a much more relaxed person now — I call myself "Shane 2.0." I have more patience, I roll with the punches, and I wake up every morning just pleased to be here. Thank you to the crew for sparing my family the grief that would have come with losing me. I wake up every morning and realise that life is precious.

The ultimate thank you

E.W.: To mark the anniversary of your second chance, you are embarking on an extraordinary motorcycle challenge for Devon Air Ambulance. Tell us about it.

S.B.: I'm actually the third member of my immediate family to be airlifted, so I know how vital this is. On 26 July, alongside two co-riders, I am launching an Iron Butt Association "SaddleSore 1000" challenge. We will ride 1,060-mile (1,705 km) in under 24 hours. We start at the school car park where the helicopter picked me up, stop at the Devon Air Ambulance base, cross to Calais, and finish at the Airbus Helicopters factory in Donauwörth, Germany, where the aircraft was built. Tying my love of motorcycling to the very machine that saved me is incredibly symbolic. We need to support this service; you never know when you or a loved one will need it.

From the sea TO the stars

Will Banks' career began with the Royal Navy. Now he flies for the film industry, with a career that has seen him responsible for capturing some of Tom Cruise's most hair-raising stunts.

ARTICLE — Ben Peggie



▲ Will Banks,
Manager of GB Helicopters

"In February 1997, I was on the HMS Monmouth when the ship turned across the sea, and we snapped our lashings and rolled off the back of the ship, upside down into the water," explains Will Banks, Manager of GB Helicopters. "It brought my career in the navy to an abrupt end, understandably." Banks became an airline pilot for around eight years before returning to helicopters through corporate aviation — a move which saw him acquire the Empire Test Pilots School's former H125 and establish Cheshire Helicopters, later rebranded as GB Helicopters to reflect its international reach. He also co-founded The Aerial Film Company with aerial DP and partner Phil Arntz, building an international aerial cinematography operation that provides helicopters, fixed-wing aircraft, Shotover systems and specialist crews to film and television productions worldwide.

H125: a scene stealer

For his work with the film industry, Banks wanted to create a holistic operation to respond to film production companies'

need for flexibility when dates and plans can change at a moment's notice.

"For the film world, we basically created a one-stop shop," explains Banks.

"We have all the accessories to be able to control the entire support for a production, which becomes very important when dates change. We can facilitate everything from the ground support to every aircraft accessory along with fully qualified personnel from all disciplines." While GB Helicopters has a range of aircraft in its fleet, Banks is effusive in his praise for one Airbus helicopter in particular, without which, making movies would be significantly harder. "The manoeuvrability of the H125 is realistically unrivalled by anything else, both the twin-engine and the single," he states. "Obviously, the single is the absolute epitome and it's just a superb machine. There's very little you can really do to improve it: the versatility of it, including the sheer number of accessories that are available to facilitate the tasks that we need to do are unrivalled. If we're filming remotely, its serviceability and reduced in-field maintenance ...

at their side

"The manoeuvrability of the H125 is realistically unrivalled by anything else, both the twin-engine and the single."

WILL BANKS,
MANAGER OF GB HELICOPTERS



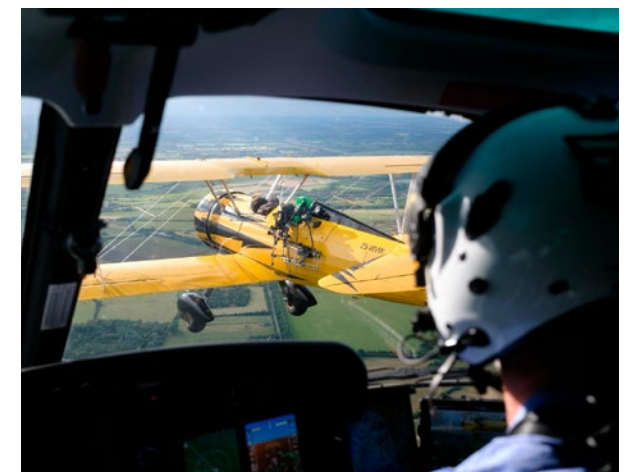


▲ An extreme close-up with the H125

... requirement means it keeps flying with little intervention from any support team. You've got equipment baskets for moving kit, physical frames available to carry the large Shotover... There is no other aircraft that can film with the large K1. It does it all."

Mission: Improbable

One of Banks' most recent highlights was working on a blockbuster featuring stunts like no other. "We've done the last two *Mission: Impossible* movies in just about their entirety, which is a massive achievement," enthuses Banks. "We had around four and a half months in Africa, over two trips. It was high-energy, intense filming in very close proximity to fixed-wing aircraft, shooting wide-angle lenses on canyon runs to fill the screen with the biplane and still get the canyons in. We were exceedingly close at high speed in confined areas. It was fantastic..." In terms of next steps, like any actor, Banks would love a shot at a classic British franchise. "Obviously, the Bond films are iconic. Guy Ritchie would also be a great one. I love that genre." Across a lifetime in aviation that has spanned both fixed and rotary-wing aircraft, commercial airlines, and high-profile cinema, one thing is certain: Banks won't be abandoning helicopters anytime soon. "I love the helicopter world, I love what you can achieve, and the different roles that we can carry out, from load-lifting poles to filming high-action movies," Banks says. "Every day is different."



▲ The H125 delivers everything Banks needs for his movie work.

► Getting the perfect shot of a submarine

► Filming the iconic biplane scene

▼ Will Banks and Phil Arntz

"I love the helicopter world, I love what you can achieve, and the different roles that we can carry out, from load-lifting poles to filming high-action movies."

WILL BANKS,
MANAGER OF GB HELICOPTERS



▲
Will Banks with his head (and helicopter) in the clouds

◀ An aerial view of the H145 as a medical crew transfers a patient to receive life-saving treatment.

A HIGHER POWER TO CARE

Jump aboard ChristianaCare's new five-bladed H145 and spend time with the crew saving lives at a moment's notice.

ARTICLE — Ben Peggie

ChristianaCare LifeNet, operated by Air Methods, is a helicopter emergency medical services (HEMS) operator serving Delaware and surrounding areas. Flight Paramedic and Operations Manager John Damiani has been there since the programme's 2001 inception, witnessing its evolution into today's efficient service. Damiani believes the helicopter is like a new teammate bringing vital operational possibilities. "The five-bladed H145 allows us to have more access to the patient, carry more equipment and improve our standards of treatment and care," says Damiani.

These possibilities stem from the aircraft's power. Damiani asserts: "It's a heavy lifter. We want to be able to do things like extracorporeal membrane oxygenation (ECMO) patients and neonatal intensive care (NICU) transports and offer that capacity to our region — transporting patients that normally wouldn't be able to be carried by a normal helicopter."

Care rises to new heights

"At ChristianaCare, everything we do is grounded in our values of love and excellence — treating every patient like family and delivering the very best

care, every time," said John Roussis, Director of Pre-Hospital Services at ChristianaCare. "We play a critical role in advancing that mission by bringing hospital-level care directly to patients." Enhancing critical care transport is clearly a priority and it explains why HEMS providers are upgrading their fleets. Transport teams now care for increasingly complex patients using sophisticated onboard equipment. What was once a helicopter carrying a patient and a medical crew has become a flying intensive care unit. When ChristianaCare chose the H145, the decision was about ensuring preparedness for the next generation of critical care. The helicopter's increased payload capacity and spacious cabin provide the flexibility to safely accommodate evolving mission requirements while maintaining a comfortable working environment for caregivers.

Quiet cabins save lives

Advanced avionics, automation, and pilot-assist technologies reduce pilot workload, allowing crews to focus on safety and patient care. As the lone pilot, Colin Hague is separated from the life-saving work behind him.

...



▲ Colin Hague, Pilot

“Having that increased capability that Helionix offers as far as pilot workload reduction and the increased situational awareness, is really a game changer.”

COLIN HAGUE, PILOT



▲ Flight Paramedic and Operations Manager, John Damiani



▲ John Roussis, Director of Pre-Hospital Care

... For him, communication is essential, and the H145 has a huge advantage. “The newer technology makes it a lot quieter inside the cabin, allowing the communication between the crew members to be that much clearer, creating a safer work environment that is more efficient,” notes Hague. Hague points out that their home base is one of the busiest regions in the US. Constantly on alert with a high frequency of calls, he appreciates the advantages offered by the H145’s avionics. “Having that increased capability that Helionix offers as far as pilot workload reduction and the increased situational awareness, is really a game changer,” emphasises Hague. According to Hague, the helicopter’s Fenestron is also ideal for HEMS operations. “It not only reduces noise for the surrounding community, it actually increases safety, especially landing at scene calls and fields or on the road where we have a lot of first responders, firefighters, police officers or civilians walking around that could come close to the aircraft, as well as crew members who are loading the patient into the back of the aircraft.” In service for just over a month at the time of the interview, the H145 is already impressing colleagues with more power, safer flying and capacity for more patients, promising to save lives for another 25 years and beyond.



▲ ChristianaCare's H145 in flight. Reduced sound and vibrations make it an ideal helicopter for HEMS operations.

▼ Medical crew prepare to load a patient into the H145's medical cabin





Delivering

WHEN IT COUNTS

In early 2026, Mozambique experienced record-breaking floods that left hundreds of thousands without food and basic supplies. BAC Helicopters' EC130 was there to deliver relief to communities unapproachable by land.

ARTICLE—Heather Couthaud

▲ A cockpit view of the floods

Impassable scrub and dug-out channels lay beyond the base camp at Xai-xai, where the World Food Program was delivering food and supplies to Mozambican communities stranded after weeks of rain and flooding that destroyed bridges and roads. While relief efforts had mobilised heavy aircraft, nobody expected the EC130 helicopter to end up on the toughest job of all, carrying out hundreds of deliveries from a water-logged regional airport for two weeks straight. It started on 4 February 2026, when BAC Helicopters received a call from the Airbus Foundation, whose humanitarian mission coordinates with programmes such as the World Food Program (WFP) on relief missions. Pilot

Frasier Cilliers flew the EC130 to Gaza province and coordinated with the WFP, staying on site for the duration and flying over 50 hours.

Designed for a challenge

The flight challenges dictated an adaptable, durable helicopter. The EC130 was well-equipped to handle the challenge. BAC Helicopters had reconfigured the helicopter for cargo transport, taking the rear seats out to use the wide cabin to its fullest. The Airbus EC130 removable seats allow for the largest cabin space in its class — an attribute that has made it an industry leader for tourism and passenger transport. In Cillier's case, that and the 2,427 kg (5,351 lbs)

maximum takeoff weight meant he was able to keep up continuous supply drops throughout the mission.

Working at max

In Xai-xai, where the food was distributed, the team followed a rigorous plan. Everything was bundled and waiting in piles, ready for loading the next morning, when the pressure would kick in. Each day saw Cilliers doing quick turnarounds at remote landing zones while ground crews prepared the second load. Conditions were fair, but it was the rainy season and they had to monitor afternoon thunderstorms. Weight and balance calculations had to be spot on. Evaluating the cargo to the pound determined how much fuel the EC130 could take, maximising the capability of the machine to get in as many loads as possible.

See and be seen

For a first landing, the pilot would do an aerial reconnaissance and determine if there was a better landing option. The EC130's wrap-around bubble windows give it unparalleled visibility, so pilots like Cilliers have no trouble identifying patches of dry ground from above.

▼ People were dependent on vital supplies.



▲ The EC130 gets ready for take off



▼ The EC130 loaded with supplies



"There were a couple times where Frasier decided to land slightly away from where they'd discussed with the WFP, because it was flatter or the grass was shorter or it had less dust," says Greg Strydom, Flight Safety Security Manager at BAC Helicopters. Everyone at the drop site had been trained by Cilliers and his WFP counterpart not to approach the aircraft until the engines had shut down. The pilot would give a briefing of aircraft safety and how to approach the machine to unload it. "One of the dangers in these kinds of missions is that because there's always a large number of people waiting, they tend to rush to the helicopter. The tail rotor can be quite a danger, but luckily the EC130 has got a Fenestron, so that mitigates the risk," says Strydom. The EC130's wide cabin, enclosed tail rotor and compact size were crucial elements to everyone's success. "If the next drop was close enough, they would do everything while the blades were turning," says Strydom. "They'd just load and get as much delivered as possible."

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