

Airbus Helicopters UK is celebrating 40 years of operations in the United Kingdom, supporting its rotorcraft industry as a vital element of the economy, security and infrastructure.

With headquarters in Oxford, a base at Hawarden/Wales, a dedicated Oil & Gas Service Center in Aberdeen and a presence at customer operating locations across the UK and Ireland, Airbus Helicopters UK offers highly reactive, state-of-the-art support services for rotorcraft supplied by the parent company, Airbus Helicopters, along with commercial sales activity.

“During four decades in the UK, we’ve become the one-stop-shop solution for the helicopter needs of our customers, be it governmental agencies, operators or private individuals,” explained Markus Steinke, the Managing Director of Airbus Helicopters UK Ltd. “Our capabilities cover everything from design, development, customization, completion, flight testing and certification to technical support, maintenance, training and the supply of spares – for civil and military applications.”

More than 450 Airbus Helicopters aircraft operate in the UK today, forming the largest portion of the United Kingdom’s overall rotorcraft fleet – with these helicopters flown by law enforcement agencies and emergency medical service providers, companies offering utility and off-shore airlift to oil and gas platforms, businesses and corporations, as well as UK Armed Forces.

As part of Airbus Helicopters UK’s in-country resources, its Maintenance Mission Control Center at Oxford offers highly efficient around-the-clock services for users that range from individual helicopter owners to large fleet operators.

Airbus Helicopters UK also is prime contractor for the Royal Air Force’s Puma Mk2 upgrade program, which is extending the operating life and enhancing mission capabilities for this military service’s multi-role helicopter fleet – which is supported by the company as well.

Copyright helicopter Gazelle John Hutchinson (1988) : Lt Rupert Hibbert 16/5L in front of the 670 Squadron Army Air Corps hangar (R) and the Museum of Army Flying (L)



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The important role of Airbus Helicopters in the ab-initio training of British military rotorcraft pilots is being marked by Airbus Helicopters during this week’s Farnborough Airshow.

During the past four decades, thousands of British crewmembers have earned their wings, trained on mission scenarios and practiced their flying skills aboard Airbus Helicopters-designed rotorcraft.

This activity traces its origins to the early 1970s, when single-engine Gazelles were first used

for helicopter training by the Ministry of Defence with the RAF Central Flying School at RAF Tern Hill in 1973. The Gazelle also played a role at the School of Army Aviation, at Middle Wallop, where it was used to train army pilots for many years.

Since 1997, 38 AS350BB Ecureuils have been used as basic training aircraft by the Defence Helicopter Flying School (DFHS), based at Shawbury, Wales, where they have logged more than 350,000 flight hours to date for the UK armed forces.

This activity contributes to the steady supply of pilots needed to maintain the UK's defence capability, with the DFHS providing output for all three of the country's armed forces: Army, Air Force and Navy.

Worldwide, Airbus Helicopters brings its training expertise at the service of numerous armed forces. In Germany, a fleet of 14 EC135s operate with the German Army's flying training school at Bückeburg, backed by more than 60 Airbus Helicopters maintenance personnel, successfully delivering over 70,000 flight hours with more than 99 percent availability for the school.

Helidax, the French Defense Flying School, utilizes 36 EC120 rotorcraft with fully-digitized cockpits, consistently delivering over 580 hours per year per aircraft, with 54 Airbus Helicopters maintenance personnel ensuring 96 percent availability and low operating costs – providing excellent value to the customer.

Another training application for Airbus Helicopters-built rotorcraft is the Swiss Air Force helicopter school with 20 EC635s, featuring a modern glass cockpit. Completing 5,000 missions per year, the EC635 performs safely and reliably for its average 8,000 hours flown per year.

Further evidence of Airbus Helicopters' training school output can be found at facilities the world over, including the Spanish Air Force Wing 78 Armilla, operating EC120s; the Japanese Navy with 15 EC135s; the Spanish Army flying 6 EC135s; the Indonesian Armed Forces operating 17 EC120s; and the Chinese Armed Forces, commanding 24 EC120/HC120, to name a few.