INTERNATIONAL MILITARY HELICOPTER

2025 POST-SHOW REPORT

> We're very privileged at IMH to have a wealth of knowledge and experience in the presentations in the forums that take place here. But also crucially, it's in the networking that takes place you know, if you're not part of that team, you won't get that situational awareness, you won't get that intelligence. So come and join us."
>
> **Chief of Staff, Airbus Helicopters**

Defence iQ

INTRODUCTION

The 24th annual International Military Helicopter (IMH) conference took place from 25–27 February 2025 at the Novotel London West, London, UK. Welcoming over 500 delegates representing over 35 countries, this event gathered influential stakeholders from across military, industry, R&D, and academia, for the world's leading forum for the military rotorcraft ecosystem.

Throughout the three-day event, attendees - including military leaders, technical specialists, procurement decision-makers, and industry executives - were able to reconnect, exchange perspectives, and discuss shared challenges, shaping the future of rotary aviation to 2040 and beyond. Multiple networking opportunities set the stage for collaborative dialogue throughout the conference.

The conference provided detailed insights into lessons learned from recent conflicts, notably highlighting the performance of the Russian KA-52 attack helicopter as an effective 'tank killer' in Ukraine. Additionally, future plans and programmes of military helicopter operators from Europe, North America, and the Asia-Pacific region were presented, alongside discussions on upcoming technological advances shaping future capabilities.

500+
Speakers from over 15 nations

75+
Unique Organisations

500+
Attendees

35+
Nations

Watch the IMH 2025 Highlights Video

CHAIRMAN'S SUMMARY

IMH25 once again provided an excellent three-day forum for key stakeholders from across the global rotary community to join forces to hear, share and determine both current and next generation rotary capabilities. In all, over 500 delegates attended with representations predominantly from the UK, US, NATO allies, alongside a significant number of other key international military and industry partners.

Against a backdrop of increased global tensions and uncertainty, key themes throughout the Conference focussed on the lessons from Ukraine (false ones, too); the need to significantly accelerate national and international procurement processes; the balance between, and utility of, Crewed-Uncrewed platforms; modification and upgrading of legacy fleets; the importance of Modular Open Systems Architectures, and the need for agreed national and alliance standards; how to manage and control the increasingly cluttered and congested battle/airspace; interoperability and interchangeability of systems, components, platforms and training; and the need for even closer collaboration between militaries and industry partners.

Last year's growing sense that Uncrewed/Remote and Autonomous is the future was discussed and challenged throughout IMH25, with a growing acknowledgement and acceptance that certain crewed platforms will be here for the foreseeable future – certainly as nations grapple with the ethics, practicalities and risks associated with moving personnel in numbers across the battlespace.

Platform speed, range and endurance was a core theme; but where nations are seeking to procure platforms and capabilities that meet multiple requirements, compromise seems inevitable given likely national resource envelopes and caveats.

The various updates provided by requirement setters and industry partners for NGRC, FLRAA, Crewed-Uncrewed Teaming and the UK's New Medium Helicopter all highlighted significant advances in enabling future procurement decisions. But understandably, much of the conference's emphasis was about the pace with which decisions can, and must be made, in order to meet the pressing need of militaries in meeting today's contemporary challenges.

Overall, feedback on the conference was once again very positive. The Ukraine and Gaza conflicts alongside the emphasis on digitisation, data, systems of systems and network integration continue to drive the pathways for individual nations and alliances' Crewed-Uncrewed platform mix. No doubt this will continue to be one of the major themes for next year's Conference.

Major General (Retd) James Illingworth OBE
Former Director Land Warfare & Former Deputy Commander Joint Helicopter Command
IMH 2024 Conference Chairman

PRAISE FOR IMH 2025

> We're very privileged at IMH to have a wealth of knowledge and experience in the presentations, and in the forums that take place here. But also crucially, it's in the networking that take place in the coffee, in the lunch conversations, and if you're not part of that team, you won't get that situational awareness, and you won't get that vital intelligence.

Steve Doubleday, Chief of Staff, Airbus Helicopters UK

> It's an excellent opportunity for industry and military people to interact and engage and plan for the future.

Commodore Matt Royals, Commander Fleet Air Arm, Royal Australian Navy

> IMH is a great forum for the international military helicopter user, maintainers, logistics and operator community to come together and share and discuss current experiences, ways of working and associated challenges.

MAA Futures & Strategy Development, MAA

> The most important thing for us is just getting to talk to partners, allies, listening to those some of their challenges and especially listening to what the industry is doing for the future so we can go in the same direction.

Colonel Eirik Stueland, Commander of Project New Air Force Helicopters, Royal Norwegian Air Force

> You've got the very best of the primes, you've got subject matter experts across industry, and then of course, you've got militaries from around the world. It's a really unique event in terms of its size and shape as a Rotary wing event, and it's really, really impressive.

Commodore Steve Bolton, Deputy Director Aviation Programmes and Futures, Royal Navy

> It's a key opportunity to connect with people having a role to play in the rotorcraft environment. So you have operators, you have acquisition agencies, you have industry, and as it's a key event to connect with these people and to know more about the new trends and the feedback for current operations.

Cyril Heckel, NGRC Programme Manager, NSPA

> Everything has been impressive. The presenters and everything that that they've been talking about is really interesting.

Deputy Head of Chilean Naval Mission

www.defenceiq.com/events-militaryhelicopter

DOWNLOAD AGENDA | REGISTER FOR IMH 2026 | SPONSOR

SNAPSHOT OF KEY LEADERS WHO SPOKE AT IMH 2025

Vice Admiral Sir Martin Connell KCB CBE
Second Sea Lord and Deputy Chief of Naval Staff
Royal Navy

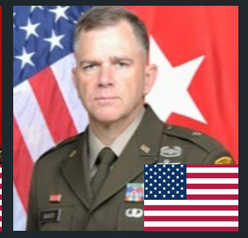
Air Vice Marshal Alastair Smith
Commander
Joint Aviation Command

Major General David Hafner AM CSC
Commander, Aviation Command
Australian Army

First Admiral Ruzman Bin Mat
Commander, Naval Wing
Royal Malaysian Navy

Major General Muhammad Saeed Anwar Khan
General Officer
Pakistan Army Aviation

Brigadier General Matthew Braman
Director, Army Aviation
US Army



Brigadier General Cain Baker
Director, Future of Vertical Lift Cross Functional Team
US Army

Brigadier General David Phillips
Program Executive Officer, PEO Aviation

Brigadier General David Walsh
Program Executive Officer, Air Anti-Submarine Warfare, Assault and Special Miss
Department of the Navy

Brigadier Nick English MBE PhD
Commander
1st Aviation Brigade Combat Team

Brigadier General Brendan Cook
Director General Air and Space Force Development
Royal Canadian Air Force

Brigadier General David Cruzille
Commanding General
French Army Aviation

Brigadier General Diego Sismondini
Deputy Commander, 1st Aviation Brigade for Special Operations
Italian Air Force

Brigadier Christopher King
Head of Military Capability Plans
British Army

Commodore Steve Bolton
Deputy Director Aviation Programmes and Futures
Royal Navy

Commodore Matt Royals
Commander Fleet Air Arm
Royal Australian Navy

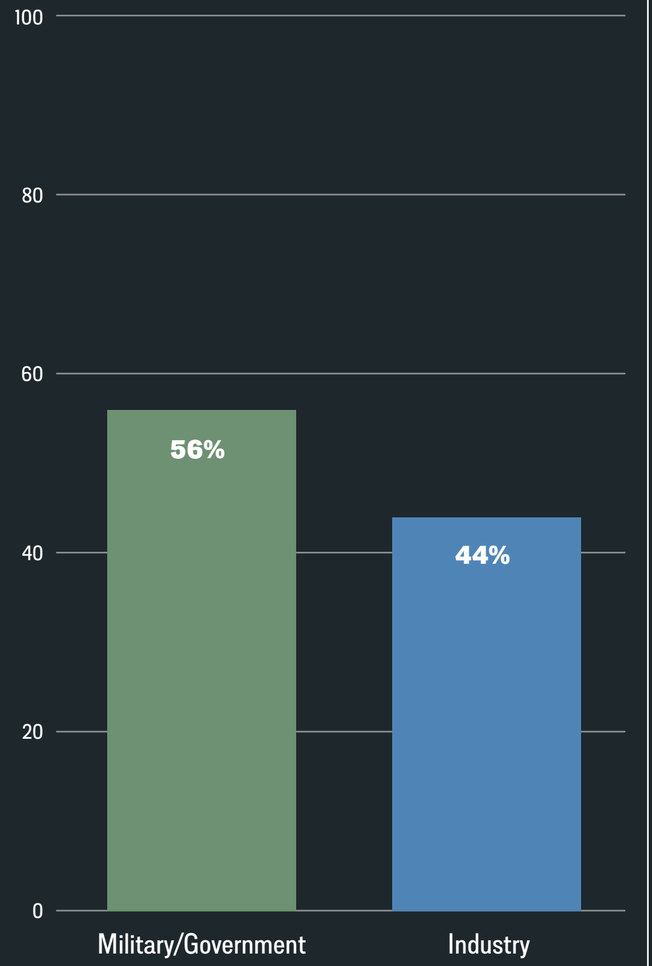
Cyril Heckel
NGRC Programme Manager
NATO Support and Procurement Agency

Mark Langrill
Director Rotary Wing & Uncrewed Air Systems
DE&S - UK MoD

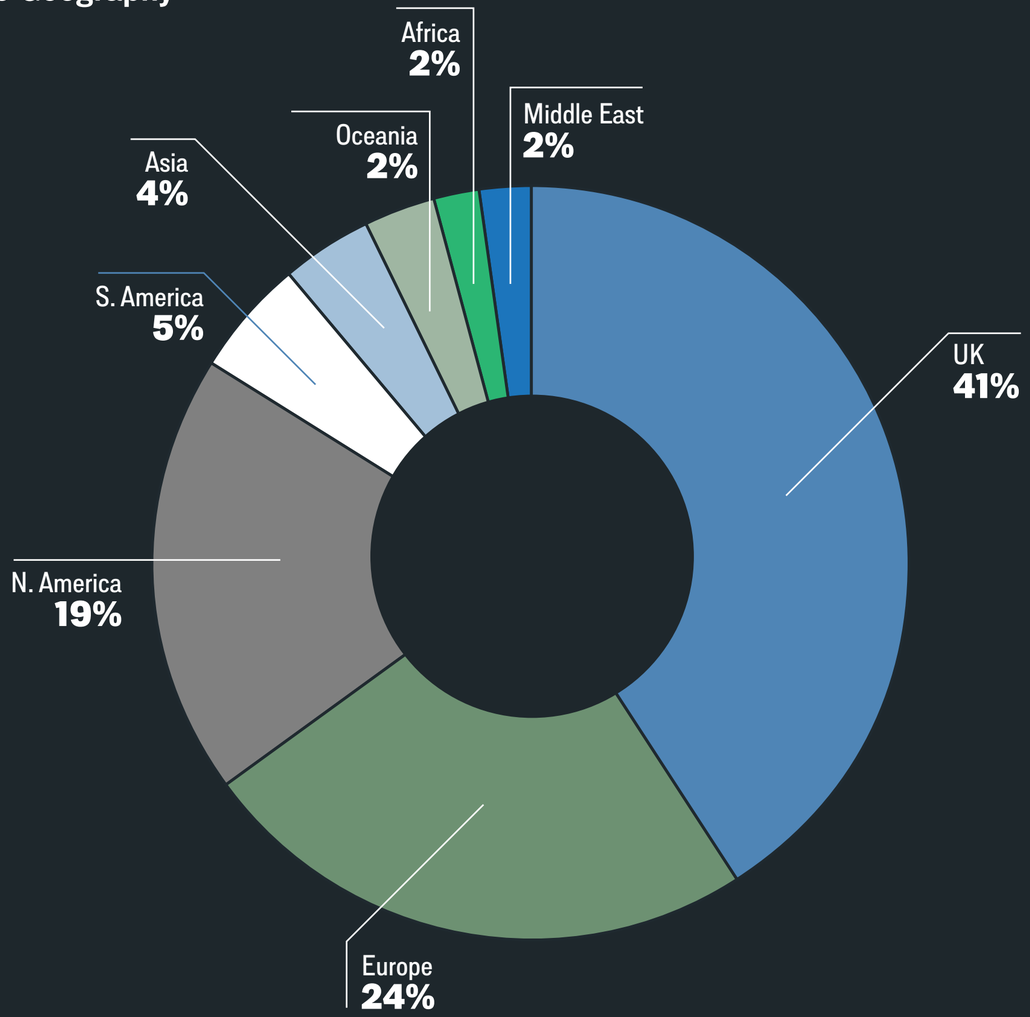
Helen Wheatley
NGRC and NMH Lead
DE&S - UK MoD

DEMOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN

Military/Government : Industry ratio



Attendee Geography



New Nations in 2025

KEY EVENT TAKEAWAYS BY NATION
COUNTRY-BY-COUNTRY PLANS, PROGRAMMES, AND PRIORITIES

UKRAINE

The JAPCC presented an extensive evaluation of Russian rotorcraft operations and associated losses, focusing specifically on three helicopter types: the KA-52 Hokum-B, Mi-28 Havoc, and Mi-24/35 Hind D.

It was clear from the brief that Russia is learning from its earlier mistakes by increasing aviation operations, including successfully blunting the Ukrainian offensive in Kursk.

At the outset of the conflict, total fleet numbers and availability were:

- KA-52: 115 total, with 75 available
- Mi-28: 80 total, with 55 available
- Mi-24/35: 150 total, with 95 available

In the first year of the conflict, Russia lost 57 helicopters, representing a 28% loss rate: 41 were shot down, 15 destroyed or damaged on the ground, and one lost in a raid. Of these losses, 62% were KA-52s, 17% were Mi-28s, and 21% were Mi-24/35s.

Primary causes of these helicopter losses were:

- MANPADS – 49%
- Anti-aircraft artillery – 22%
- Small arms fire – 17%
- Anti-tank weapons – 12%

Identified technological gaps included:

- Low efficiency of decoy flares, including late flare emissions
- Poor performance of night vision systems
- High vulnerability due to exposed flight profiles
- Lack of effective joint operations
- Inadequate training levels
- Outdated, 20th-century doctrine
- Poor battlefield information, notably outdated maps of Ukraine

However, during the second year of the war, Russian helicopters played a more critical role, with the KA-52 becoming a notably effective tank-killer. Losses reduced significantly, with only 19 helicopters shot down and 17 destroyed on the ground.

New technologies were introduced, and logistics capabilities were better utilised. Updated helicopter variants, such as the Mi-28NM and KA-52M, have entered service. Enhanced self-protection, night vision, and target acquisition systems were deployed alongside the new LMUR anti-tank missile, effective up to a range of 14 kilometres.

Armoured protection improved, alongside enhanced combined capabilities such as electronic warfare (EW) paired with attack missions, and greater use of night operations. UAS have been integrated for operational observation, and updated mapping has improved tactical awareness.

Conclusions drawn underline the continued validity of the attack helicopter, influencing industry alignment with real-war requirements. There is now greater emphasis on force protection in logistics and maintenance areas, and increased standardisation in ammunition, spare parts, and mechanical fluids.

Additionally, drones represent a new challenge for military helicopter operations.

DSTL reported approximate equipment losses in the Ukraine conflict as follows:

Equipment	Russian Losses	Ukrainian Losses
Tanks	3,744	1,070
Air Defence	375	170
Fixed-wing	136	103
UAVs	546	465
Helicopters	151	50

UK

The British Army is developing a Consumable Air-Launched Effects Demonstrator and plans to operate attritable Mule drones alongside AH-64E attack helicopters.

The UK NMH requirement is nearing a decision. DE&S Future Capabilities will spend $1 billion on uncrewed systems next year, though there is a need to accelerate acquisitions, align technology to threats, and adopt agile, spiral acquisition methods. Malloy quadcopters have proven highly effective in Ukraine.

The Royal Navy is transitioning towards a combination of crewed and uncrewed systems, with a target of 80% uncrewed within a decade.

The Maritime Aviation Transformation (MATX) focuses on three key themes:

- Threat-led and capability-driven solutions delivering effects-based outcomes
- Prioritising uncrewed where possible, crewed only where necessary
- Thinking big, starting small, and scaling rapidly

People and skills are being developed, alongside tests of autonomy in contested environments, exemplified by the Proteus demonstration project with Leonardo. Human-machine teaming is advancing through the Banshee demonstrator, and the kill chain for Uncrewed Strike is under development, relying on:

- Machine Learning and AI
- Robust data links and information flows
- Development of Strikenet as a key success factor

Embedding standards in data, network, and modularity

Commodore Steve Bolton
Deputy Director Aviation Programmes and Futures
Royal Navy

USA

For the U.S. Army, the FLRAA (Future Long-Range Assault Aircraft) will be a game changer, though additional sensors are needed. Version 2 will be optionally crewed, incorporating an air-to-ground littoral ecosystem and autonomy-focused Human-Machine Interface (HMI).

Additionally, there are 35 Army Aviation initiatives planned with international partners through 2030.

U.S. Army Special Operations Command will operate an SOF-specific variant of the FLRAA upon its entry into service.

Other U.S. military helicopter plans include:

- MH-60R – Next-generation cockpit
- MH-60M – Launch effects
- MH-47G – Next-generation RF countermeasures
- MQ-1C ER – Next-generation tactical radio system

FRANCE

The French Army operates 270 helicopters, logging around 725,000 flight hours annually. High-tempo operations are expected to continue.

Key operational requirements include:

- Extended range and endurance
- Effective Nap-of-the-Earth (NOE) flying capability
- Air-Launched Effects

The Dronization action plan revolves around three axes:

- Air-Launched Effects
- Loyal Wingman development
- Interoperability with other operational drones

A Tactical Airmobile Drone (TAD) is planned as a Loyal Wingman platform.

Brigadier General David Cruzille
Commanding General
French Army Aviation

GERMANY

Germany's Manned/Unmanned Teaming (MUM-T) programme requires three core capabilities:

- Agility
- Rapid effects
- Responsiveness

MUM-T will become essential for battlefield superiority, alongside information superiority and stand-off capability. Additional MUM-T components include remote sensors, long-range effectors, a tactical C2 element, and a delivery platform. Implementation is targeted by 2030.

The German Navy continues integrating NH-90 lessons learned, currently operating it for SAR and transport, with next-generation NH-90 aircraft planned. The first upgraded engine enters service in November 2025, with Link 22 capability planned. The Sea Lynx out-of-service date is 2026.

ITALY

The Italian Air Force operates the HH101A Caesar for special operations missions, equipped with three mini-guns each carrying 4,400 rounds of 7.62mm ammunition. Air-to-Air refuelling is critical, supported by Tetra radars tracking cell phones. Other vital equipment includes a laser rangefinder, Helmet Mounted Display (HMD), and cabin mission display.

The EW suite comprises passive and active jammers, complemented by a Vortex-1 data link, improved rotor-blade efficiency, Gabbiano radar, Terrain Awareness Warning System, Obstacle Warning System, and the M134D mini-gun. In its special operations configuration, it carries 16 troops.

The Italian Army is enhancing its AH-129D fleet and developing the AH-249 Phoenix as a multi-domain system. New requirements include:

- AI-supported flight and logistics
- Air-launched effects and loitering ammunition
- Very long-range missiles
- Anti-UAS capabilities

Future plans include a Next Generation Battlefield Management System, advanced C4 systems, improved self-protection and survivability, and Crewed-Uncrewed Teaming (CUC-T).

SWEDEN

Sweden operates four military helicopter squadrons totalling 53 helicopters:

- 9 NH90 TTH
- 9 NH90 ASW/ASuW
- 12 A.109 LBO
- 8 A.109 SBO
- 15 UH-60M

Platform upgrades are planned over the next 15 years. Replacement of A.109 helicopters is scheduled for 2028-2032, with UH-60Ms replacing NH90s. Many decisions are pending, expected in spring. Asked how professionalism is maintained, strong public trust in the armed forces was highlighted.

PORTUGAL

Portugal is transforming its Airborne Search and Rescue (SAR) capability.

Currently:

- 552 Squadron operates AW119 helicopters for SAR missions up to 5 nautical miles.
- 751/752 Squadrons use AW101 helicopters for missions up to 400 nautical miles.

Fixed-wing aircraft handle longer-range missions. Portugal's SAR responsibility covers 5,646,550 km², coordinated from Rescue Coordination Centres in Lisbon and Lages. The Matrice 300 RTK UAS is now integrated into SAR operations.

FINLAND

The Finnish Army operates 20 NH-90 TTH and 7 MD500 helicopters, with logistics always challenging due to harsh climates. Recent NH-90 avionics upgrades include airborne radar, Helmet-Mounted Sight (HMS), RJ4S Ethernet cable for digital maps, and advanced EW systems.

MD500 upgrades involve a radar suite, digital map, NVG, and a primary flight display attitude indicator, although the MD500 has limitations at high latitudes. Future upgrades will feature IFF Mode 5, EO sensors, Link 16, drone sensors, and CRPA antennas.

LITHUANIA

Lithuania is upgrading its rotary fleet, aiming for maximum availability of four incoming UH-60M Black Hawks. Interoperability with Polish and Latvian rotary-wing assets is a key priority.

Brigadier General Brendan Cook
Director General Air and Space Force Development
Royal Canadian Air Force

CANADA

The Canadian Air Force helicopter fleet includes:

- CH-146 Griffon (Life Extension: IOC 2028, FOC 2030) – 82 aircraft
- CH-147F Chinook (MLU: IOC 2032, FOC 2033) – 14 aircraft
- CH-148 Cyclone – 27 aircraft
- CH-149 Cormorant (MLU: IOC 2027, FOC 2029) – 13 aircraft

Training occurs on CH-139 and Bell 412CF helicopters, both scheduled for replacement by H135 from 2026. Canada's tactical helicopter battlegroup in Latvia will remain. 78 RCAF projects worth $155 billion are planned over 20 years starting 2028.

The Next Tactical Aviation Capability Set (nTACS) is in operational analysis, targeting IOC in 2033 and FOC in 2038. Finding a helicopter meeting all Canadian requirements may be challenging. A fly-by-wire capability is being considered but not confirmed.

AUSTRALIA

Australian Army Aviation is optimised for Littoral Operations, comprising one brigade and training formations. UH-60M has reached IOC, with the first AH-64E scheduled for 2025 to replace Tiger helicopters.

MALAYSIA

Malaysia requires new ASW helicopters by 2026. Current inventory includes Fennec trainers (since 2004), Scan Eagle UAS (2020), and AW139 helicopters (2022).

Future operational needs include jointness, mission orientation, interoperability, technology focus, multi-theatre capability, and cooperation with Royal Malaysian Air Force MPA aircraft. Acquisition models, leasing, technology transfers, and industry involvement are under review.

PAKISTAN

Pakistan's diverse climate significantly influences military helicopter operations. Key roles include disaster management and UN peacekeeping—supporting 44 missions since 1960. Integration of manned and unmanned assets is essential, with new military helicopter simulators like the operational Mi-17 simulator.

Older helicopters are being phased out, weapon systems are upgraded, and mission-specific training is expanding.

NGRC (NEXT-GENERATION ROTORCRAFT CAPABILITY)

There are currently seven participating nations: Canada, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Netherlands, and the U.K.

Five concept studies have either been undertaken or are scheduled:

- Novel Powerplant (2023–2024): Conducted by GE Aerospace.
- Operational Analysis (2023): Conducted by DSTL and DGA.
- Open Systems Architectures (2024): Conducted by Lockheed Martin.
- Novel Technologies (2023–2024): Reviewing similar previous studies.
- Integrated Platform Concepts (three studies, 2024–2025): Conducted by Airbus, Leonardo, and Sikorsky.

Concept design studies will follow in 2026–2027, with preparation and de-risk activities set for 2028–2029.

Key NGRC attributes include:

- Open Systems Architectures
- Multi-role, Multi-Mission, and Multi-Domain capability
- Novel Powerplant technology
- High Availability and Reliability
- Competitive Flyaway Cost and low Cost-per-Hour
- Advanced Training systems

It was queried whether the planned timescales might be overly long, and it was acknowledged that this could be the case.

Kevin Luxford
Technical Director NGRC
NSPA

NFTE (NATO FLIGHT TRAINING EUROPE)

Currently, there is a 30% shortfall in training capacity. While international collaboration is particularly critical for fast jet pilots, NFTE aims to coordinate all aircrew training requirements.

Stage 1 involves pooling and sharing resources, running until 2027, with Full Operational Capability (FOC) planned for 2024.

Stage 2 will involve commercial training solutions contracted through NSPA.

NFTE presently includes 13 member nations and eight observer nations, with Canada and Denmark set to join as full members in June 2025.

The steering board meets three times annually, and specialist working groups include a rotary-wing training group.

For NFTE to succeed, a significant shift in mindset will be necessary.

HELICOPTER PROGRAMMES

NH-90

Block 1 was launched in 2024.

Block 2 will be tailored for the 2040 battlefield, incorporating:

- Advanced Sustainment capabilities
- Advanced Avionics systems
- Extended Payload and Range
- Enhanced Survivability features
- Increased Lethality
- Reduced Pilot Workload

CH-53K

First deployment is scheduled for 2026.

Weapons

- Spike Missile

Spike missiles are currently used by 43 countries. To date, 50,000 missiles have been ordered, with approximately 10,000 already fired. Production is distributed across 10 international manufacturing lines.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

DAY 1 - OBSERVATIONS FROM CURRENT CONFLICTS & NEXT-GENERATION PROGRAMME UPDATES

The 24th annual International Military Helicopter conference commenced at the Novotel London West, UK, with delegates gathering to explore themes including delivering platforms for current and future operational environments, updates on rotary wing programmes, and insights from recent conflicts.

Following welcome remarks, conference chairman Major General (Retd) James Illingworth OBE officially opened proceedings. Vice Admiral Sir Martin Connell delivered a keynote on the Royal Navy's rotary wing priorities, emphasising integrating crewed and autonomous systems for future naval operations.

Brigadier Christopher King, Head of Military Capability Plans, British Army then outlined the UK's rotary aviation capabilities, reflecting on lessons from Ukraine and highlighting modernisation opportunities. Expanding on this, Brigadier General Matthew Braman (US Army) discussed how US Army Aviation has reshaped its requirements, notably after cancelling the Future Attack Reconnaissance Aircraft (FARA) and shifting emphasis towards the Future Long-Range Assault Aircraft (FLRAA).

Providing an international perspective, First Admiral Ruzman Bin Mat from the Royal Malaysian Navy outlined specific naval aviation needs for Anti-Surface Warfare (ASuW) and Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW), stressing the importance of industry partnerships for Maintenance, Repair, and Overhaul (MRO).

Following a productive networking break, an in-depth UK-focused panel discussion took place, focusing on the UK perspective on current and future rotorcraft capabilities, featuring insights from Air Vice Marshal Alistair Smith, Commander of the Joint Aviation Command, James Gavin, Head of Future Capabilities Group at DE&S, and Helen Wheatley, NMH and Next Generation Rotary Head at DE&S. The panel explored how the UK military is planning to adapt to account for unmanned and uncrewed developments, and shed light on how UK departments interact with each other when determining new rotary capabilities.

Industry perspectives were offered by Air Vice Marshal (Retd) Nigel Colman (Leonardo), who discussed autonomous systems, fast rotorcraft, and evolution in crewed helicopters. Cyril Heckel from NSPA provided updates on the Next Generation Rotorcraft Capability (NGRC), highlighting development milestones and open-system architectures.

In the afternoon, Brigadier General Brendan Cook and Lieutenant Colonel Jeremy Fountain (Royal Canadian Air Force) described Canada's helicopter modernisation initiative "Our North, Strong and Free," addressing unique defence challenges including climate change and geographical considerations.

An Industry Leaders' Panel featuring Airbus and Leonardo executives tackled lessons learned from Ukraine and the future of system architectures suited for contested environments like the Indo-Pacific. Brigadier General David Cruzille (French Army Aviation) concluded with updates on the RMV Tigre helicopter upgrade and drone-helicopter cooperation, sharing insights directly from Ukraine.

Day one concluded with a networking drinks reception, including an invitation-only Chairman's Dinner hosted by Airbus.

DAY 2 - DEVELOPMENTS IN UNCREWED CAPABILITIES & INCREASING LETHALITY

The second day, chaired by Major General Illingworth, centred on current and future rotorcraft capabilities and operational insights. Kevin Luxford, Principal Technical Officer for NGRC at NSPA, opened with a technical overview of the NGRC programme, highlighting requirements for future rotary capability developments.

A prominent panel moderated by Illingworth, including Brigadier General Braman (US Army) and Lieutenant Colonel Fountain (Royal Canadian Air Force), emphasised interoperability, multi-mission capabilities, and sustainment strategies critical for future combat effectiveness.

Lieutenant Colonel Emiliano Pellegrini from the Joint Air Power Competency Centre (JAPCC) shared key observations on attack helicopter operations from the ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict, stressing evolving vulnerabilities and necessary operational adjustments.

Major General David Hafner (Australian Army Aviation Command) then outlined Australia's preparations for the arrival of its new Apache fleets, discussing enhanced cooperation between Australia, the UK, and the USA for increased operational readiness.

Parallel sessions highlighted multinational NATO helicopter readiness training initiatives and weapon solutions for rotorcraft, notably Moog Inc.'s advancements in missile launcher retrofits and advanced weapon management systems.

Afternoon sessions saw Colonel Guido Krahl and Lieutenant Colonel Robert Borowski (German Bundeswehr) detail manned-unmanned teaming (MUM-T) for helicopters, examining the operational integration of autonomous systems.

Brigadier Nick English (British Army's 1st Aviation Brigade Combat Team) subsequently presented the emerging role of uncrewed systems in lift, reconnaissance, and attack missions. Concurrently, Colonel Kate Fleeger (NAVAIR) addressed logistical strategies for ensuring the survivability of the CH-53K heavy-lift helicopter, particularly in the Indo-Pacific region.

Later discussions, debated practical challenges and opportunities of integrating uncrewed aviation, considering near-term priorities and the balance between crewed and autonomous assets.

The day's plenary sessions concluded with Commander Brett Gillies and Stephanie Griffiths (Royal Navy) presenting innovative use of digital and AI tools to enhance helicopter readiness, followed by Captain Joe Dransfield (Military Aviation Authority) addressing certification challenges and cybersecurity threats for integrating uncrewed aerial systems (UAS).

DAY 3 - MAXIMISING INDUSTRY COLLABORATION & ENHANCING FLEET MODERNISATION

On the final day, the conference emphasised industry collaboration, technical innovation, and complex operational requirements including Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW), Search and Rescue (SAR), and Multi-Domain Operations (MDO).

Interactive roundtables facilitated industry and defence dialogue on future rotary-wing technology developments, including electrification, hybrid propulsion, sensor integration, and advanced avionics.

Colonel Mats-Uno Runeson (Swedish Armed Forces) detailed NATO's newest ally's operational shift, emphasising enhanced Nordic cooperation and Baltic Sea ASW capabilities.

Major Jorge Liquito (Portuguese Air Force) then described technological advancements transforming airborne SAR missions, incorporating lessons from Ukraine and integrating unmanned systems for increased effectiveness.

Commander Sebastian Schimera (German Navy) presented insights into German Naval Aviation priorities, outlining transitional challenges moving from the Sea Lynx Mk88a to the NH90 Sea Tiger helicopter.

Lieutenant Colonel Ville Siiropaa (Finnish Army) discussed Finland's approach to upgrading communication and flight management systems to enhance helicopter mission effectiveness, highlighting improvements within the NH90 fleet.

Colonel Krezimir Razov (Croatian Air Force) focused on innovative helicopter pilot training concepts, discussing emerging AI-driven technologies for enhanced human-machine integration.

Brigadier General Diego Sismondini (Italian Air Force) articulated stringent requirements for next-generation helicopter technologies, stressing increased speed, range, and manoeuvrability to effectively counter Surface-to-Air Missiles (SAMs).

Commodore Steve Bolton (Royal Navy) detailed the Maritime Aviation Transformation (MATX) programme, examining integration strategies for crewed and autonomous systems in contested environments and developing strike capabilities using uncrewed rotorcraft.

A panel moderated by Major General Illingworth explored adopting Modular Open System Architecture (MOSA), highlighting its cost-efficiency and interoperability advantages. Panellists included Brigadier General David Phillips (US Army) and representatives from Airbus Helicopters.

Major General Muhammed Saeed Anwar Khan Niazi (Pakistan Army Aviation) shared Pakistan's current rotary capabilities and future operational needs, considering diverse climatic conditions and varied mission profiles.

The conference concluded with a multi-domain operations panel moderated by Rear Admiral Matt Briers. Discussions addressed enhanced communication strategies, multinational exercises, and optimised battlespace management. Commander Alex Haupt (US Navy), Commander Schimera (German Navy), and Major Bart Prins (Royal Netherlands Air Force) offered multinational perspectives.

In closing, Major General Illingworth summarised the conference's key themes and actionable insights, highlighting the exceptional quality of discussions and depth of international collaboration. The event successfully brought together military leaders, technical experts, and industry innovators, fostering productive dialogue and partnerships essential to addressing future operational challenges. Attendees concluded the event by joining a final social hour, reinforcing the significance of ongoing cooperation and technological advancement within the global rotary-wing community, ensuring preparedness and capability for the missions of tomorrow.

DRIVING THE EVENT FORWARD TO 2026

Returning in 2026, the 25th Annual IMH will bring together the most influential stakeholders from across the global rotary wing community for a productive week of information exchange, problem solving, and unmatched networking opportunities.

The need to develop advanced rotorcraft to carry out the specific mission sets required in a modern multi-domain battlespace, whilst retaining survivability and effectiveness, has become more important than ever before. IMH provides the ideal platform for Armed Forces around the world to discuss the capabilities of their current and future rotorcraft, and the need for greater speed, endurance, agility, and survivability to meet todays and tomorrow's threats.

Defence iQ reiterates out promise to support the needs of our military and industry attendees who are working under increased pressure and tempo and need to maximise their time. With a team dedicated to bringing together the right delegation from across NATO and NATO allies, IMH guarantees to create the right environment for building lasting business relationships with the people that matter.

We're excited to bring together the global military helicopter community in 2026 to learn, network, share ideas, and inform collective endeavours that will deliver the next generation of rotary capabilities to 2040 and beyond.

Alice Andrews
Conference Director
IMH 2026

WHAT TO EXPECT IN 2026

- Programme updates on FVL, NMH and NGRC
- Dedicated conference tracks on uncrewed systems, avionics, weapons, and more
- More briefings from naval aviators, highlighting the multi-domain role of rotary aviation
- Return of the Industry Morning for direct engagement with technical industry experts
- Extended breaks and extra social activities to maximise collaboration onsite

WITH SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR 2025 PARTNERS

Four Star Lead Partner

AIRBUS

Three Star Lead Partner

LEONARDO

Two Star Partners

BELL · BOEING · HENSOLDT Detect and Protect. · MOOG · NHindustries · RTX COLLINS AEROSPACE | PRATT & WHITNEY | RAYTHEON · RAFAEL ADVANCED DEFENSE SYSTEMS LTD. · SIKORSKY A LOCKHEED MARTIN COMPANY

One Star Partners

APPLIED VIRTUAL AVS SIMULATION · Camcode GLOBAL · DILLON AERO · GE Aerospace · GTA · Nova Systems · QINETIQ · THALES Building a future we can all trust

2026 PARTERNSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

International Military Helicopter 2026 (IMH), provides the market's leading forum for military and industry leaders working within the vertical lift community, to share their perspectives and forge the business relationships that will drive capability forward.

Networking

We can create a platform for you to interact effectively with your top customers and prospects in the environment of your choice.

- Exhibiting
- Display your vehicle
- Exclusive Coffee Break Sponsor
- Sponsored Drinks Reception
- Gala Dinner Sponsor

Thought Leadership

Thought Leadership: Demonstrate your market knowledge and expertise through a thought leadership opportunity, such as speaking, hosting a workshop or chairing to elevate your profile as an industry leader.

- Main Day Presentation
- Host a Stream Session
- Panel Sponsorship
- Host a Workshop
- VIP Breakfast Briefing

Branding

In a fiercely competitive market, you must ensure that your brand is differentiated from the competition.

- Welcome Bag
- Lanyard Sponsor
- Badge Sponsor
- Seat Drop
- Keycard Sponsorship
- Wi-Fi Sponsor
- Bottled Water Sponsor
- Stationary Sponsor
- Sponsored Plenary Room Seating

Sponsorship Benefits

Demonstrate thought leadership: Speaking on the program will allow you to demonstrate your market knowledge and expertise to an audience of high-level decision-makers.

Positioning your company brand: Commitment to this event positions you and your organisation as a global industry player in the armoured vehicle market.

Building customer loyalty: Face-to-face contact at conferences and showing continued support to the market helps develop client loyalty and cement your position as an industry leader.

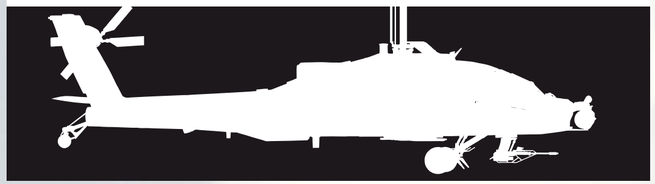
Generate new sales leads: IMH 2026 will bring together solution providers and key decision-makers under one roof, all of whom have strong business reasons for attending.

Launch new products or services: With the most senior figures from the military and industry in attendance, plus carefully selected media partners at the event, generate a buzz.

THE WORLD'S LEADING CONFERENCE FOR THE ENTIRE MILITARY ROTORCRAFT ECOSYSTEM

Defence iQ

INTERNATIONAL MILITARY HELICOPTER



JOIN US FOR THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE INTERNATIONAL MILITARY HELICOPTER CONFERNECE

Mark your calendars for the **24-26 February 2026** as IMH returns to the **Novotel London West.** Connect with global rotary leaders and explore the future of rotary aviation as we work to achieve capabilities for 2040 and beyond. We look forward to welcoming you to IMH 2026!

ENQUIRE HERE

VISIT WEBSITE

EARLY CONFIRMED 2026 SPONSORS

Three Star ★★★

AIRBUS

Two Star ★★★

HENSOLDT Detect and Protect.

LOCKHEED MARTIN

SIKORSKY A LOCKHEED MARTIN COMPANY

BELL

One Star ★★★

DILLON AERO

GTA

QINETIQ

www.defenceiq.com/events-militaryhelicopter

DOWNLOAD AGENDA

REGISTER FOR IMH 2026

SPONSOR