

Robinson Delivers 5,000th Helicopter

Robinson Helicopter Company reached another milestone this month with the delivery of its 5,000th helicopter. Since delivering the first R22 in October 1979, Robinson Helicopter Company has produced 3,489 R22 and 1,511 R44 helicopters, including 171 R44 Raven IIs. The 5,000th helicopter, an R44 Raven II, was shipped to National Airways Corporation (NAC) of Lanseria, South Africa.

NAC became a Robinson dealership in 1990. The 57-year-old corporation is the largest general aviation company in South Africa, and one of the largest in all of Africa with offices in 7 cities. In addition to selling and maintaining Robinson helicopters, NAC offers helicopter and fixed-wing sales; maintenance and refurbishment; aircraft parts and avionics sales and support; charter; and pilot training. The recent delivery is NAC's 75th Robinson helicopter.



Flight test employees celebrate completion of the 5,000th Robinson.



Ground preparation for Robinson's new 215,000 sq. ft. building.

RHC Expansion

In July, Robinson broke ground on an additional 215,000 sq. ft. facility which will nearly double its manufacturing capacity. The new building will be used almost entirely for manufacturing, with space also designated for a delivery center and training facility. Being built on an 8.5-acre site west of the existing building, the new addition is expected to be completed around mid-2004.

With the recent high sales volume and related hiring, increasing the RHC work force to more than 850 employees, the existing 260,000 sq. ft. facility is reaching maximum capacity. Once completed, the new building will enable RHC to increase production and reduce delivery time.

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Robinson Helipad Opens

Frank Robinson landed an R44 Raven II on the first approved and permitted Robinson Helipad last June, officially opening the private helistop. Located on the Honda dealership in Santa Ana, California, the 20 x 20-foot helipad features Robinson's new lightweight deck designed for helicopters with gross weights up to 3,000 lb.

Honda of Santa Ana owner Ron Vinci took advantage of Robinson's offer to provide a helipad deck, heliport consulting, and engineering assistance if he bought a new R44. Vinci recently purchased a new R44 Raven II from Corporate Helicopters in San Diego, which he will use to visit the dealership from his home in San Diego, less than an hour's flight away by helicopter.

"This is really first class," Vinci said. "Now I can make some business calls in the morning and be up here in time for a lunch meeting with the guys."

Before his helipad, Vinci needed to schedule an entire day to visit his dealership with a 2 to 3 hour commute each way. Now he can visit more often and spend less time traveling.

The Robinson Helipad deck was designed by Robinson engineers to fill the need for a low-cost, lightweight helipad. The deck is composed of 24 10-inch by 20-foot aluminum extrusions which fit together in a tongue-in-groove arrangement and is mounted on a steel beam support structure.

Easily assembled in two days by two people with hand tools, the deck and its attachment hardware weigh less than 1,600 lb.

Robinson's offer to provide a free helipad deck is still available to American customers who purchase a new R44 (see Free Helipad story this page). A second helipad is already underway in Temecula, California.



The first Robinson Helipad.

Free Helipad

Robinson Helicopter Company is offering free helipads to Robinson customers in the United States purchasing a new R44 Raven or R44 Raven II. The helipad kit includes all hardware required to mount the lightweight deck to a standard 3-beam understructure.

In order to participate in the free helipad program, customers must have an R44 on order and request a helipad in writing.

Before the helipad is delivered, the customer must receive all federal, state, and local approvals to install the pad and send copies of the approvals to RHC. Robinson staff are available to provide some guidance to customers for this process.

Customers will be responsible for all shipping charges and their own helipad understructure.

For those wishing to purchase the helipad, the deck and its attachment hardware are available for \$6,000 plus shipping.

For more information, please call (310) 539-0508, ext. 235.

Auto Racing Champion Buys New Raven II

Heliflite of Bankstown, Australia announced the delivery of a new R44 Raven II helicopter to current V8 Supercar driver and five-time Supertouring Car Champion Paul Morris and his father Terry, owner of award winning Sirromet Wines and racing team major sponsor. This is the duo's second R44 purchase from Heliflite, with their first back in 2000.

Making the most of their valuable time, Paul and Terry fly the R44 extensively during the motor racing season, travelling between their Gold Coast area base and tracks nationwide.

While the Raven II's 245 hp rating may not compete with the 600bhp total for Morris' General Motors/ Holden Commodore race car, the sheer versatility and ease of travel make up for the brute speed.

Heliflite has so far delivered six Raven IIs, with another five on order.



Heliflite Sales Manager John Skeen delivers the keys to Paul Morris (right).

Raven II Wins Championships and Owner's Heart

Dear Robinson,

I'd like to inform you of how things are going with my new R44 Raven II, Serial Number 10,005, which was delivered in December 2002. As of this month, I have flown 197 hours.

It has been a delight from the 1st hour and I'm loving every minute of it. We have raised many an eyebrow when flying into various airfields in the UK, mainly because of how it looks and sounds. We are drawing much interest from the helicopter community and all I can say to the on-lookers is how much I enjoy the ship.

The additional power, lift, and speed has been very noticeable, together with the excellent service provided by my service center, Heli Air, who keep us flying.

We entered the British Helicopter Championships in early August this

year. We were the only Raven II in the competition in a field of Bell 206s, Lynx, Gazelles, and Schweizers.

We won the Overall Best Novice Award competing against 50 other aircraft. Many other piston machines were unable to keep up with the 30° C temperature but the Raven II performed perfect with additional power.

I have found the machine reliable with ease of starting from hot or cold (we had OAT down to -15° C early January and no problems).

Sincerely,

Graham Elliott and G-CEEE
Bedfordshire, England



Copilot Will Hanokom (left) and Raven II Owner Graham Elliott show off their Overall Best Novice Award from the 2003 British Helicopter Championships last August.

R22 Weatherman Brings Flight to Local Kids

Iowa TV viewers are seeing a lot of a Robinson R22 lately, and it's all good news. John McLaughlin, veteran chief Meteorologist at KCCI-TV in Des Moines, is using his R22 to bring aviation and weather education to state schools and communities.

"Having a weatherman fly in and visit with kids has certainly been done before," says McLaughlin. "But I don't know of any meteorologist who actually flies his own helicopter. The kids already know who I am from watching the evening news, but they really go nuts when they see me landing in the R22."

McLaughlin, 40, has been flying airplanes since 1980 and is a 3,500-hour CFII.

So why helicopters? A competing station in town starting using an R44 Newscopter leased from Sky Helicopters in Dallas about two years

ago. The dominant station in the market, KCCI was prepared to respond with a turbine helicopter purchase. However, after September 11 revenues plummeted, making the

million-dollar helicopter impractical.

McLaughlin had already started training for his helicopter add-on and was hooked. So he and his father, 64-year old John (*continued on page 4*)



KCCI Meteorologists Bryan Karrick (left) and John McLaughlin sign autographs.

Flying for Kids

(continued from page 3) Sr., purchased a 600-hour R22 and decided to use it as an education tool in John Jr.'s television work.

"I spend literally hundreds of hours meeting with school kids every year as part of KCCI-TV's SchoolNet weather education program. With the helicopter, I can minimize my travel time to the 53 schools we partner with across the state, and the R22 lets me involve aviation and physics education at the same time," he says.

KCCI installed weather sensors at each school and McLaughlin uses the R22 to ferry spare parts and perform calibrations. KCCI also began adding live cameras to many of the school sites, so he has been using his machine for speedy delivery. "It made quite an impression on these small communities to have me fly in and give them a camera," he says.

McLaughlin participated in celebrating the 100th anniversary of powered flight this year. The town of Greenfield, Iowa has an aviation museum and holds an annual festival to raise money to fund the museum and its programs. McLaughlin and fellow KCCI meteorologist Bryan Karrick spent four hours signing their 'Top Gun' autograph cards for the kids and handing out toy propellers with the SchoolNet logo.

Between father and son, the McLaughlin R22 has racked up 200 hours in five months. John Jr. is close to obtaining his CFI add-on for helicopters while John Sr. is preparing for his commercial checkride.

Estonian Rescue

On March 16, 2003, the Estonian Air Force responded to an EMS call with one of its R44 Clippers. A group of hikers decided to cross a frozen sea to the island of Keri in Estonia, about 35 kilometers Northeast of Tallinn. At 12:27 the air force received a call from emergency services that one of the hikers had injured his leg and couldn't hike out.

Estonian Air Force Pilot Eve Vernik took off from the Air Force Base at Ämari to provide assistance, arriving

on the island in about thirty minutes. "The hikers are a group of close friends who practice these types of events all year long whenever possible," Vernik relays.

"The injured hiker could be

transported in a sitting position, so there was no problem fitting him into the R44. We packed the injured hiker and his escort into the helicopter and took off for Tallinn at 14:13."

Because the hiker's injuries were not severe, Vernik transported her passengers to the Tallinn Airport where they took a car to hospital.

Since taking delivery of two R44 Ravens and two R44 Clippers in May 2002, the Estonian Air Force has flown more than 850 hours.

Vernik coordinates the rescue.



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