

## Robinson Looks Forward at Heli Expo



Kurt Robinson addresses the media.

Frank Robinson, who retired in August of 2010, opened Robinson's press conference at HAI with a few comments regarding the health of Robinson Helicopter Company. He stated that with the certification of the R66, sales have strengthened and the future looks very promising. "I can't think of anything bad to say" he said before turning the microphone over to Kurt Robinson, the company's new President.

Kurt briefly recapped 2010's sales noting that for the first half of the year Robinson focused on moving unsold inventory left behind by an ailing economy. By mid-year the inventory was sold and new orders began to accumulate. Despite a significant drop in overall production, (40) R22s, (112) R44s and (10) R66s, 162 total aircraft compared to 433 in 2009, Robinson finished the year with a backlog of 169 new orders.

To meet the increasing demand, Robinson ramped-up overall production from three to seven aircraft per week; including one R22, four R44s and two R66s. Kurt stated that because R66 sales have sur-

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## FAA Approves R66 Air Conditioning



RHC's Steve Turnour receives the FAA Certificate for the R66's Air Conditioning from the FAA's Venessa Steiger.

On 25 February 2011, the FAA certificated the air conditioning unit for the R66 Turbine. The simple, lightweight system provides air conditioned comfort and reduces humidity throughout the five-seat cabin.

An overhead console provides vents for each seat with 250 CFM total airflow. The 42 lb air conditioner uses the latest automotive refrigerant and has 17,000 BTU/hr cooling capacity. The system is controlled by a toggle switch with low and high fan settings and uses approximately three horsepower during operation. The evaporator and fan are mounted under the aft center seat, preserving all four under-seat baggage compartments. The compressor engages when the fan is switched on and automatically disengages during autorotation entry to maximize glide performance.

The air conditioning option is \$23,000 USD. Production of new air conditioned R66 helicopters is underway. The first air conditioned R66 was displayed at this year's Heli-Expo in Orlando, Florida. Robinson's R66 dealer, Florida Suncoast, took delivery of the aircraft following the show.



Vents distribute cool air throughout the cabin

## R44 Pilot Makes First Hong Kong to Mainland China Flight



*Wolfgang Bern is the first pilot legally to fly his helicopter from Hong Kong to mainland China.*

On 29 December 2010, Hong Kong resident Wolfgang Bern became the first private helicopter pilot to fly across the Hong Kong/mainland China border legally.

While Hong Kong and mainland China are officially one country, they operate under two different systems of government. It took Bern more than a year to get the required approvals from the local Civil Aviation Authority, government ministries, and finally the Chinese military.

## Russia Relaxes Flight Requirements

In an effort to stimulate general aviation, new more liberal rules governing Russia's airspace were put into effect on 1 November 2010.

The new system provides for three classes of airspace. The lower class, Class G, is intended for small light aircraft flying at lower altitudes and allows pilots to submit flight details on the Federal Air Transport Agency's website one hour before a flight rather than 24 hours, as per the old system.

The agency also plans to open up the country's airspace by cutting the number of no-fly zones, although Moscow will remain off-limits.

# Police Helicopter Tops 10,000 Hours

The El Monte Police Department Region One Air Support Unit's first R44 Police Helicopter (N171WC) recently topped 10,000 flight hours, making it the first Robinson Police Helicopter to reach such a milestone.

N171WC (S/N 0331) Robinson's first R44 Police helicopter went into service in late 1998, replacing El Monte's R22 the department acquired in 1993. Pleased with the effectiveness of the R22, El Monte decided to upgrade to an R44. At the behest of Police Chief Wayne Clayton, Sergeant Bob Muse, the officer in charge of the Air Support Unit, considered the Bell Long Ranger, the MD 500C, the EC 120 and the Robinson R44. While each aircraft was a worthy candidate, it was the operational costs that separated the R44 from the pack. Muse emphasized that the maintenance and operational costs of the turbine helicopters were simply not feasible for a city the size of El Monte.

With lower operating costs and minimal maintenance, El Monte's Air Support Unit is able to fly the police helicopter more frequently. Muse says the R44 is the perfect helicopter for providing air support to ground patrol units, adding he never remembers N171WC being grounded due to unscheduled maintenance. In early 2011, thirteen years after joining the force, N171WC returned to the factory for its fifth overall. While the industry standard is to retire a helicopter after 10,000 hours because maintenance becomes more frequent and too expensive, Muse says that N171WC requires no more regular maintenance today than it did in 1998.

The El Monte Region One Air Support Unit now operates three Robinson R44 Police Helicopters providing patrol services to the cities of Irwindale, Montebello, West Covina, Azusa, Baldwin Park, and the Baldwin Park School District Police. All of the R44s are equipped with forward-looking infrared imaging (FLIR) systems, searchlights, public address systems, LoJack recovery systems and computerized moving maps.

To date, Robinson has delivered 49 R44 Police Helicopters into 16 countries.

## Salvation Army Uses R44 in Flood Relief Efforts

Based at Mt. Isla in Australia's outback, Simon and Natalie Steele fly the Salvation Army's R44 providing support and supplies to very remote areas and communities in Australia. In January 2011, severe floods devastated huge areas of Queensland cutting off 22 towns and affecting 200,000 people. Pilot Simon Steele flew the Salvation Army's R44 over remote towns transporting aid and identifying houses and homesteads in need of relief.

The Salvation Army acquired the R44 in 2010. The helicopter replaced a series of fixed-wing planes operated by the Salvation Army Australia Eastern Territory since 1965. The helicopter has allowed them to reach very isolated areas that are otherwise inaccessible.



*Designated N171WC in honor of El Monte Police Chief Wayne Clayton who established the helicopter unit.*



*Simon Steele pilots the Salvation Army's R44.*

# Frank Robinson Twice Honored for Engineering Achievements

On 21 January 2011, the "Living Legends of Aviation" presented Frank Robinson with the Lifetime Aviation Engineering Award for creating the R22, R44 and R66 helicopters. The "Living Legends of Aviation" are individuals whose accomplishments in aviation are considered remarkable. The Legends meet yearly to recognize and honor those select members who have made significant contributions to the advancement of aviation.

Robinson was again honored in February when elected to the U.S. National Academy of Engineering (NAE) for the conception, design, and manufacture of low-noise, low life-cycle cost, and high-reliability helicopters.

Election to the NAE is among the highest professional distinctions accorded to an engineer. Established in 1964, the academy has more than 2000 members.

Candidates must be nominated for membership by current NAE members. Robinson was nominated by NAE member Mr. Wesley Harris, the Charles Stark Draper Professor of Aeronautics and Astronautics and Associate Provost at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

The NAE induction ceremony is scheduled for October 2011 in Washington DC.



Frank Robinson holds the Lifetime Aviation Engineering Award awarded by the Living Legends of Aviation

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passed initial projections, the company will further increase R66 production from two to four aircraft per week.



RHC's R44 final assembly line.

Kurt went on to report that so far 51 R66 dealers have been approved in 27 countries making foreign certification of the R66 a top priority. Robinson continues to work closely with the foreign agencies to facilitate the process. Other projects for the company include the development of pop-out floats, a four-point shoulder harness and a cargo hook for the R66. The company is also evaluating new avionics for all of its models.

## R44s Deliver Aid After New Zealand Earthquake

Pilots Ben Walker and Doug Hamilton used their R44s to deliver aid to areas around Christchurch, New Zealand which were devastated by the magnitude 6.3 earthquake that struck on 22 February 2011.



Volunteers load supplies into Doug Hamilton's R44.

Walker and Hamilton teamed up with Rangiora Earthquake Express to deliver water and supplies that had been donated by private individuals and businesses into hard hit areas like Rapaki and Lyttelton.

Organizer Matt Malone said helicopters were crucial in getting to remote areas where access roads had been severely damaged leaving people with no food or water. Malone stated that with a helicopter all they needed was a patch of grass.

### Countries with R66 Dealerships

Argentina	Guatemala
Australia	India
Austria	Japan
Belgium	Malaysia
Brazil	Mexico
Canada	New Zealand
Chile	Panama
China	Russia
Colombia	South Africa
Costa Rica	Spain
Finland	Switzerland
France	United Kingdom
Germany	United States
Greece	

# Robinson Adds 133,000 Square Feet to Manufacturing Floor



*Robinson's 617,000 square foot facility.*

In October of 2010 Robinson finished construction on a 133,000 square foot addition to its west building, bringing the company's total manufacturing space to 617,000 square feet.

The new addition allows Robinson to expand as production demands increase. Robinson also added 281 parking spaces in anticipation of increasing its work force. The company currently occupies 28 acres on the Zamperini Field Airport in Torrance, California.



*Cabin assembly in Robinson's new 133,000 square foot addition.*

