

Airbus finalises acquisition of Aerovel and its UAS Flexrotor

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Bingen, Washington, 7 May 2024 - Airbus has finalised the acquisition of U.S.-based Aerovel and its unmanned aerial system (UAS), Flexrotor, in a move to strengthen its portfolio of tactical unmanned solutions. Flexrotor is a small tactical unmanned aerial system designed for intelligence, surveillance, target acquisition and reconnaissance (ISTAR) missions at sea and over land.

"We see more and more armed forces and parapublic agencies around the world looking to investigate how unmanned aerial systems can strengthen their intelligence and surveillance capabilities. The Flexrotor, as a vertical takeoff and landing UAS, fits into our strategy to expand our UAS offerings. Together with the VSR700, we will continue to develop manned-unmanned teaming to offer our customers the enhanced and expanded mission capabilities that they require to monitor and safeguard their communities and critical infrastructure, while preserving essential assets such as helicopters," said Mathilde Royer, Head of Strategy and Sustainability at Airbus Helicopters.

The Flexrotor, a modern Vertical Takeoff and Landing (VTOL) Unmanned Aircraft with a maximum launch weight of 25 kg (55 lbs), has been designed for ISTAR missions for more than 12-14 hours in a typical operational configuration. It can integrate different types of payloads including an electro-optical system and advanced sensors to suit customers' unique mission needs. With the ability to autonomously launch and recover from either land or sea requiring only a 3.7 by 3.7 m (12 by 12 ft.) area, the Flexrotor is ideal for expeditionary missions requiring minimal footprint. Through the support of the US Department of Defense (DoD), and contracted deployment in a variety of maritime security exercises, the Flexrotor is a mission-proven, force multiplier for operations in harsh, high-threat, GPS-denied environments. The Flexrotor is also being operated for parapublic missions such as forest fire surveillance (providing firefighters with critical images day or night) and can address other demanding mission needs, including ice navigation (helping guide naval vessels through ice in the Arctic ocean), law enforcement, and border patrol.

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Aerovel currently employs more than 30 people and presents a significant growth trajectory. It will continue to design and manufacture the Flexrotor in Bingen, Washington in an existing and mature UAS ecosystem.



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