FRENCH ARMY'S NH90 FOR SPECIAL FORCES HAS STARTED FLIGHT TESTING

News / Manufacturer



Airbus Helicopters has launched the flight test campaign for the prototype of the NH90 Standard 2. This standard is one of the latest NH90 configurations and is being developed specifically for the French Army Aviation, to support special forces operations. The French Ministry for Armed Forces has ordered a total of 18 NH90s in the Standard 2 configuration. Flight testing will continue until the end of the year in accordance with the schedule agreed with the French Armament General Directorate.

The Standard 2 configuration includes the integration of the Safran Euroflir 410 electro-optical system, a new digital map generator, installation for a third crew member and new enlarged rear sliding windows able to accommodate self-protection guns. The tests will validate the design of the new configuration. The prototype of the NH90 Standard 2 has also been equipped with mechanical and electrical provisions dedicated to the Distributed Aperture System and a new generation Helmet Mounted Sight Digital Display in the view of a future integration at a later stage. These systems will improve the special forces capabilities to operate in highly demanding conditions.

These flight tests are part of the programme launched in 2020 by the NATO Helicopter Management Agency and NHIndustries and its partner companies (Airbus Helicopters, Leonardo

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and Fokker) for the development and the upgrade of 10 NH90 TTHs in the Standard 2 configuration. Following the programme launch, in December 2023, NAHEMA on behalf of the French Ministry for Armed Forces, awarded a contract to NHIndustries for the production of eight additional NH90 TTHs in the Standard 2 configuration, thus renewing their confidence in the NH90 programme.

By the end of the decade, the French Army Aviation will operate 81 NH90 TTHs. The NH90 was first delivered to the French Army in 2011. Sixty-three NH90 TTHs have been delivered so far. It was deployed in operation for the first time in Mali in 2014 and has since reached 50,000 flight hours in total. French armed forces' NH90s are supported by NHI under the NH90 Operational Support contract common with Germany, a performance based agreement delegating a major part of the nation's logistics and maintenance activity to NHI and enabling the customers to focus on their critical operations.

NHIndustries is the largest rotorcraft joint venture and it is responsible for the design, manufacturing and support of the NH90 helicopter, one of the leaders in the latest generation of military helicopters. The Company takes the best from the European rotorcraft and defence industry, being owned by Airbus Helicopters (62.5%), Leonardo (32%) and GKN Fokker (5.5%). Each company has a long aerospace pedigree and brings the top of its skills and expertise to the end product.

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