

## 2018 Production



R66 final assembly line

Robinson's overall production in 2018 was 316 helicopters, a slight increase compared to 2017's production of 305. The R44 topped the list at 209 and again ranked as the world's best-selling helicopter according to GAMA's General Aviation Aircraft Shipment 2018 Year End Report. Production of the R66 and R22 were consistent with 2017, finishing at 74 R66s and 33 R22s.

For 2019, Robinson continues to work on technological enhancements and foreign validations for the slew of new options introduced last year.

## R22 Celebrates 40 Years



R22 flies over Southern California coast line.

**I**t was the early '70s when Frank Robinson decided to ignore the advice of colleagues, quit his secure engineering job at Hughes, and start Robinson Helicopter Company in his Palos Verdes home. He was determined to design and build a small, affordable, personal-type helicopter. After a couple of years, his start-up company moved to a tin hangar at the nearby Torrance Airport where a prototype named the R22 was built. In August of 1975, Frank flew the 2-place, piston powered R22 for the first time. Four years of testing and analysis followed. On March 16th 1979 the FAA Type Certificate was issued, and later that same year the first production R22 was delivered.

The R22's simple design, simple maintenance schedule, and \$40,000 price tag resonated with operators. At the start of 1980, Robinson had accumulated a backlog of 592 orders. With 592 non-refundable deposits in the bank, Robinson set up production and started producing one R22 per week. Fast forward ten years to 1989, 1000 R22s were in service. Two short years later, 1991, 2000 R22s were in service. With helicopter ownership no longer out of reach, the face of general aviation had changed. The R22 had captured 80% of the piston powered helicopter market,



Visit the Robinson booth (C2615) at this year's HAI Heli-Expo convention in Atlanta, March 5-7, 2019. See page 3 for more information.



Frank Robinson (left) receives FAA Type Certificate for the R22

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## Coach Recruits by Helicopter



Photo: Sean Calhoun

Georgia Tech football coach Geoff Collins (white shirt) with Carrollton High coaches (from left) Sean Calhoun, Chris Wiesehan, and Nathan Burton.

On a recent recruiting trip, Georgia Tech's (Atlanta, Georgia) head football coach Geoff Collins stepped up his game and traveled by R66 helicopter.

Driving from Atlanta to four outlying high schools typically takes close to seven hours. Traveling by the R66, allowed Collins to visit the schools, spend time with his future recruits, and return to Georgia Tech for that evening's basketball game against Notre Dame.

## Kenya Fights Deforestation with R44



Photo: The BBC

R44 passengers drop seedballs

With deforestation and soil erosion threatening to turn much of Kenya into an arid wasteland, a conservation organization named *Seedballs Kenya* is fighting back with the help of an R44 helicopter.

*Seedballs Kenya* co-founder Teddy Kinyanjui says seedballs, marble-sized pellets containing a single tree seed, are used to regrow forests. The most effective way to disperse seedballs is from a helicopter. Kinyanjui reached out to Robinson dealer Helicopter Charter (Nairobi, Kenya), and persuaded them to keep bags of seedballs in their helicopters so passengers can drop the pellets as they fly.

Kinyanjui estimates a helicopter can plant 20,000 trees in less than 20 minutes, which lowers the cost compared to transporting and planting seedlings.

## Canadians Fly R66 Around the World



R66 Pilots Ruben Dias and Mischa Gelb celebrate completion of their record-setting round-the-world trip

Canadian pilots, Ruben Dias and Mischa Gelb circumnavigated the globe, in an R66, setting two new world records.

Their journey began and ended in Whistler, Canada. Starting on May 1st and ending on August 5th (97 days) the pair flew 37,385.02 miles (60,165.36 kilometers) through 45 countries, the longest distance (in a single journey) by helicopter, thus setting the longest RTW on Heli World Record. The second record, fastest antipode RTW on Heli World Record was set when they touched down in Neiva, Colombia (western hemisphere) then Palembang, Indonesia (eastern hemisphere) - two

cities that are diametrically opposite each other.

Ruben is a fixed wing and helicopter pilot and Mischa Gelb is a CFI with 8000 hours in helicopters. The helicopter is owned by Ruben's company, EPIC World Tour Inc. EPIC stands for Empowering People and Inspiring Change.

According to Ruben, the R66 was the ideal helicopter for this kind of adventure. It has plenty of power, is economical to operate, and Jet-A fuel is readily available around the world. Even in extreme weather conditions including severe turbulence (in Alaska), the R66's performance exceeded expectations.

## Polish Air Force University Adds R44s

On November 13th, longtime Robinson dealer PHU Polinar (Poland) delivered two R44 Raven IIs to the Polish Air Force University, marking the first acquisition of American helicopters to be used for military training in Poland.

Founded in 1927, the Polish Air Force University is an accredited state owned institution that offers undergraduate degrees for officers in the Polish military as well as commercial ratings for civilian students.

According to PHU Polinar, the more than 70 Robinson helicopters successfully operating in Poland convinced the state the R44 is not only reliable, but is the right vehicle for its flight training programs.

Both R44s were equipped with a fully integrated glass cockpit featuring Garmin's GDU 1060 TXi, GTN 750 navigator, GTX 345 transponder with ADS-B In/Out, and Spidertracks for real time tracking.



One of two R44s delivered to Polish Air Force University



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## R22 Celebrates 40 Years

demand was at an all-time high, and Robinson's production was up to eight R22s per week.

From certification to present day, the R22 has undergone many design improvements; increasing the maximum gross weight from 1300 lb to 1360 lb, adding a longer range (240 miles to 287 miles) auxiliary fuel system, and replacing the original Lycoming O-320 engine with the more powerful O-360 engine.

Robinson's simple design has stood the test of time, evidenced by the remarkable number of R22s operating with 20,000-plus hours. Longtime Robinson dealer Neil Jones of Quantum Helicopters (Chandler, Arizona) has what he calls the "R22 20,000 Hour Club." Neil's fleet of 18 Robinson helicopters includes three R22s with over 20,000 hours each that are used almost exclusively for flight training, each logging 1000 hours per year on average.

Used R22s and, of course, big brother R44 have cut into the R22's market but the demand is still there (production averages approximately 40 aircraft per year). When asked if there are plans to suspend production, President Kurt Robinson says, "Absolutely not, as long as the market exists, we will support that market." Aside from a more handsome interior, better avionics (including glass avionics), and numerous design improvements, today's R22 is still the simple, reliable helicopter that was introduced 40 years ago.



R22 serial number 0001 circa 1975

*"When you consider the volume and workload we demand from our training aircraft, it's hard to imagine another helicopter being able to reliably produce day in and day out like these helicopters."*

*- Neil Jones, Quantum Helicopters,*

## President of Chile Takes R44 Instruction Flight



President Sebastian Piñera (left) and Tim Tucker (right)

On November 2, 2018, Sebastian Piñera, the sitting President of Chile and a longtime R44 pilot, took a one-hour dual flight lesson with Robinson's Chief Safety Course Instructor Tim Tucker. The flight lesson followed a safety course, presented by Tim Tucker and Bob Muse, a longtime Robinson safety course instructor, and sponsored by Sergio Nuño of Arrayan-Aeromar Ltd, a Robinson dealer in Santiago, Chile.

President Piñera appreciated the opportunity to fly with an instructor of Tim's experience who could address the safety challenges pilots encounter in Chile's mountainous and desert environments. The lesson focused on the Vuichard Recovery from the vortex ring state, techniques for maneuvering the helicopter in autorotation, slope operations, takeoffs, and approaches. Tim was delighted to fly with the President whom he found to be a very competent pilot. Tim advised the President that he, as with most private pilots, should focus on recurrent training, certainly a challenge while also governing a country. Following the flight the President and First Lady, Cecilia Morel, hosted a lunch at their summer residence.

As part of the safety course, Daniel Huesca, a Robinson technical representative, was on hand to present a section on preflight inspections to pilots and maintenance to mechanics similar to the one taught at the Robinson Pilot Safety Course. Sergio Nuño invited, free of charge, all Robinson mechanics/engineers in Chile to the maintenance presentation.

## Robinson To Pay Homage to R22 at Heli-Expo

Robinson's R22 officially turns 40-years-old in March. In celebration, the company will display at this year's HAI Heli-Expo convention in Atlanta, March 5-7, R22 serial number 4797 painted in the same scheme and colors as serial number 0001.

While the exterior will pay tribute to the R22's origins, the interior will showcase modern avionics including Robinson's latest option, the Avidyne IFD 440 GPS/COM with built-in WiFi and Synthetic Vision. The aircraft is also equipped with a pilot-side accessory bar designed to support personal devices, e.g., iPhone or iPad.



## Robinson Adds Avidyne IFDs

Robinson added Avidyne's IFD 400 series touchscreen GPS navigators to its R22, R44, and R66 avionics options. The 400 series installs in the helicopter's lower center console and may be operated by either touchscreen or buttons and knobs. WiFi, for interfacing with an iPad, and Synthetic Vision are built-in.

When used in conjunction with Avidyne's IFD100 app, an iPad may mirror the IFD display or may serve as an independent display capable of controlling the IFD. The IFD100 app is free and available on the Apple App Store.



*Avidyne IFD 440 installed in center console and wirelessly connected to iPad on accessory bar.*



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