A PIONEER OF MODERN HELICOPTER TECHNOLOGY: THE BO105 CELEBRATES ITS 50TH BIRTHDAY

News / Business aviation, Manufacturer

This month marks 50 years since the BO105 embarked on its maiden flight, on 16 February 1967, in Ottobrunn near Munich. Conceived as a two-tonne-class light multi-purpose helicopter, cutting-edge technologies and materials led to the BO105 being the first helicopter to feature a rigid, hingeless rotor head made of titanium and glass-fibre-reinforced rotor blades.

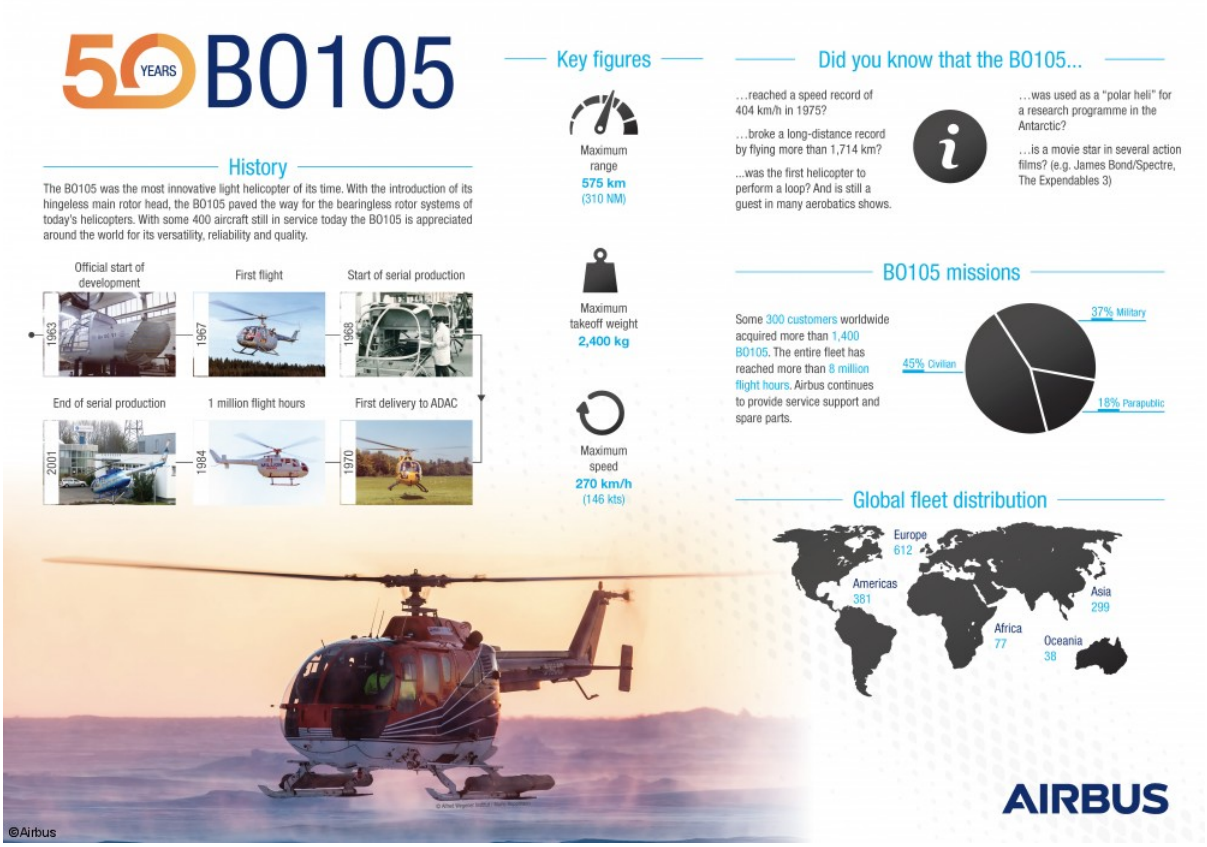
“The BO105 has made a name for itself above all for its versatility, robustness and reliability. The fact that it is still being used 50 years after its maiden flight speaks volumes for the high quality of this helicopter. As a pioneer of modern helicopter technology, the BO105 continues to influence our product range today,” said Wolfgang Schoder, CEO of Airbus Helicopters in Germany. What became known as the Bölkow rotor significantly reduced maintenance costs when compared to traditional rotor heads with flapping and lead-lag hinges, as fewer moving parts were required. Furthermore, the BO105’s special rotor system enabled it to perform with a higher degree of agility and manoeuvrability –

capabilities for which it is still renowned today.

Since the helicopter's first delivery in 1970, more than 300 customers around the world have purchased a total of some 1,400 aircraft which have been operated in air rescue, as a police and military helicopter, as well as for VIP, passenger and cargo transportation. The largest customer was the German Armed Forces with more than 200 orders. Some of these aircraft remained in service until December 2016.

Some 400 aircraft – around a third of the total number of helicopters manufactured – are still in service today. The longest-serving BO105 carries out aerial work on the Falkland Islands. In total, the BO105 fleet has clocked up more than 8 million flight hours around the world. Airbus Helicopters continues to offer comprehensive service for the light helicopter and guarantees the delivery of spare parts in the long term.

In particular the H135 and H145 light helicopters went on to profit from the BO105's technological achievements. The current successor model to Airbus' BO105 is the H135. With its hingeless and bearingless rotor head, it has an advanced rotor system with a high carbon-fibre content to extend its service life. In addition, the H135 boasts further innovative features, such as a glass cockpit, an autopilot system and the shrouded Fenestron tail rotor system to further improve the safety and sound levels of the helicopter. In its role as a pioneer of technological progress, Airbus is working on future-focused programmes also today: among them are the X6 helicopter for the heavy segment, which is set to enter service during the next decade, or the City Airbus project, an air taxi for major urban areas.



You can find more information, photos and a video about the BO105 and its history on the following website: http://www.airbushelicopters.com/website/en/ref/50-years-BO105_418.html

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