BELL SPEEDS 525 PROTOTYPE TO 200KT

News / Manufacturer

Bell Helicopter has now taken its developmental 525 super-medium twin to a speed of above 200kt (370km/h) as it prepares for the arrival of the programme's third flight-test vehicle.

The Dallas-based manufacturer says the Relentless has accumulated over 300h of flight and ground testing across its two certification prototypes.

Envelope expansion work is "nearly complete", it says, with high-speed trials taking the GE Aviation CT7-powered rotorcraft to a velocity above 200kt, well above the 155kt the airframer lists as the type's maximum cruise speed.

Other recent milestones include low-altitude trials; forward flight performance and rotor stability evaluations; cabin vibration tests; and cold weather tests.

Asset Image

Rotorcraft manufacturer type unknown

James Drew/Flightglobal

A third prototype of the 9.1t helicopter was scheduled to join the certification effort in March or

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April. Bell says FTV3 – the most heavily instrumented – will begin flying “in the coming weeks”.

Two further prototypes will arrive in the third quarter as the airframer looks to complete 1,500h of flight tests ahead of US Federal Aviation Administration certification next year.

Meanwhile, the manufacturer is inching closer to gaining Transport Canada approval for the light single-engined 505 Jet Ranger X.

Three flight-test articles have accumulated over 700h, with trials of the electrical and avionics systems, as well as structural tests, “progressing very well”.

In addition, it is conducting a “detailed evaluation” of drive-train components following a recent 100h ground-test run.

Certification and first delivery are scheduled for this year, says Bell, which declines to be more specific.

The 505 is powered by the Turbomeca Arrius 2R engine.

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