



Press Release

Vertical Flight Leaders Head to Virginia Beach for 81st VFS Annual Forum & Technology Display

*Latest technologies featured at the world's oldest and largest vertical flight
technical event with more than 300 speakers*

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Fairfax, Virginia, May 15, 2025 — The Vertical Flight Technical Society is holding its 81st Annual Forum & Technology Display on May 20-22, 2025 at the Virginia Beach Convention Center, Virginia focused on the theme “The Future of Vertical Flight.” For details, see www.vtol.org/forum.

This is the world’s largest and longest running technical event dedicated to advancing vertical flight, including helicopters, advanced rotorcraft, vertical takeoff and landing (VTOL) uncrewed aircraft systems (UAS or drones), electric VTOL aircraft, advanced air mobility (AAM) platforms, and other types of VTOL aircraft.

Some 1,000 attendees are expected, with more than 260 technical paper presentations from industry, academia and government agencies around the world. The Forum also includes 62 exhibitors and more than 40 invited VIP speakers from industry and government.

“The vertical flight industry is at a tipping point where new generation helicopters, tiltrotor, advanced VTOL and electric VTOL aircraft in development today are going to transform future passenger, cargo, aeromedical and military missions,” said VFS executive director Angelo Collins.

“While the industry still faces complex challenges — economic headwinds, work-force shortages, and global instability — the past year has also demonstrated impressive resilience and progress. From the modernization of military rotorcraft fleets to the accelerating development of electric and hybrid-electric VTOL aircraft, our community continues to drive transformational change in aerospace,” said Harry Nahatis, Chair of the Board of Directors, VFS and vice president of GE Aerospace.

The Forum 81 opening general session is being held on Tuesday, May 20. The keynote discussion will be delivered by Col Robert Hurst, USMC, Program Manager, PMA-275, V-22 Joint Program Office, Dept. of Navy and Maj Gen Robert L. Barrie, Jr., US Army, Deputy, Acquisition & Systems Management, ASA (ALT).

Senior executives from the top six largest western helicopter manufacturers — Airbus, Bell, Boeing, Leonardo, Robinson and Sikorsky — are part of a special panel, “Straight Talk from the Top.”

Nine special sessions with invited speakers are focused on the NATO Next Generation Rotorcraft Capabilities (NGRC) program; Government VTOL Research; US Army Aviation VTOL Programs; Designing for Modularity; Uncrewed VTOL; VTOL Challenges; Developments in eVTOL Propulsion; and Progress in eVTOL Aircraft Developments.

In addition, the 45th Annual Alexander A. Nikolsky lecture will be presented by Dr. Peter Lorber and titled “The Complementary Roles of Experiment and Analysis in Developing Rotorcraft Aerodynamics.” Lorber has had a distinguished 40-year career at Sikorsky, a Lockheed Martin Co., and the United Technologies Research Center. In 2014, he became a Sikorsky Technical Fellow, and then a Lockheed Martin Fellow in 2015.

“The pioneers of the US helicopter held the Forum in 1944 to stimulate industry-wide collaboration in one of the challenging fields of aircraft development – vertical flight,” said Collins. “Anyone engaged in vertical flight technology — whether a new student or a world expert — will benefit from attending Forum 81.”

The Technology Display, running concurrent with the Forum, is the most extensive exposition of cutting-edge vertical flight technologies in the world, and also includes other technologies more broadly applicable to aerospace in general. Leading manufacturers, service providers, defense agencies, universities, and research and development organizations are exhibiting.

The US Marine Corps will have a V-22 Osprey tiltrotor on static display with the pilots participating in a special Forum 81 panel on “The Future of V-22.”

The prestigious 81st Annual Grand Awards Breakfast sponsored by Unither Bioelectronics will recognize the extraordinary achievements and contributions of the very best of the technical and operating communities on the morning of Thursday, May 22.

More than 20 individual and 10 group awards will be presented, as well as 33 scholarship awards totalling \$126,000 to talented engineering students interested in vertical flight.

Founded as the American Helicopter Society in 1943, the Vertical Flight Society is the global non-profit society for engineers, scientists and others working on vertical flight technology. For more than 80 years, the Society has led technical, safety, advocacy, and other important initiatives, and has been the primary forum for interchange of information on vertical flight technology.

The Vertical Flight Society

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