



AIRBORNE

September 2023

FOLLOW US!

 @RegisterAnAcft

 @Register_An_Aircraft

Production and deliveries - a strong H1 across the board

New aircraft deliveries and overall billing have increased across all sectors of business and general aviation, according to the latest edition of The General Aviation Aircraft Shipment & Billing Report covering the first six months of 2023. The report, compiled by the General Aviation Manufacturer's Association (GAMA), found that OEMs delivered 1,299 fixed wing aircraft in the first half of 2023, against 1,176 in the same period last year – an uplift of 10.5%. The increase in overall aircraft billing was more modest at 1.4% – USD9.2 billion up to the end of June 2023, compared to USD9.1 billion in the same period last year.

Among the overall positivity, there were also some standout successes in respect of particular sectors. While bizjet deliveries rose by just 2.4% over the six months, from 289 to 296, turboprop deliveries increased by 17.4%, from 247 to 290. Piston aircraft also recorded gains of 11.4% with 713 deliveries in H1 2023 against 640 in the same period last year. Helicopters took the star spot in both deliveries and the value of overall billing. Deliveries of both piston and turbine models were up 30% with 451 deliveries made in H1 2023, against 347 in H1 2022. Helicopter billing also rose by 29.9%, from USD1.4 billion to USD1.9 billion.

Gulfstream will miss NBAA

As the bizav industry gears up for the NBAA Business Aviation Convention & Exhibition 2023 in Las Vegas from 17 to 19 October, there will be one very notable absentee. Savannah-based Gulfstream Aerospace announced that it won't be taking either a chalet or space in the aircraft static park this year. This decision was made despite Gulfstream's participation at EBACE in May and the Paris Air Show in June, and despite its forthcoming participation in the Dubai Airshow in November. The OEM said it had taken the decision to skip NBAA-BACE after a regular review of its marketing investments and after developing a number of private client events.

World helicopter market set for steady growth

The global helicopter market looks set to grow in value from the current USD31.9 billion to USD41.2 billion by 2027, according to a new report produced by specialist research consultants MarketsandMarkets. The report predicts an annual growth rate of 6.1% for the years between 2022 and 2027, citing a variety of reasons. These include new technical developments, such as the tilt rotor and unmanned helicopters, along with an increased demand for military helicopters as national defence budgets are boosted.

Vista Global growth surges

Programme specialist VistaJet has recorded stellar results for the first half of 2023. The Malta-based operator, part of the Dubai-based Vista Global group, has seen its worldwide fleet expand to more than 200 units, with 94 aircraft under Maltese registration. During the first six months of this year, programme memberships grew by 40% as it posted record number of new members, while the number of programme hours sold jumped by 20%. Flight hours across the group increased by 30%, with the European operation accounting for some 34% of the global tally. In terms of other markets, flight hours increased by 80% in Asia, 62% in the Middle East and 15% in the US.

North American bizav traffic recedes from post-Covid highs

The reduction of bizav traffic in North America since the initial 'bounce' after the lifting of Covid pandemic restrictions is confirmed by data in the latest TraqPak report issued by Argus International. The pre-Covid peak in North America saw an average of 260,000 flights per month; the figure jumped to 306,000 at the post-Covid peak. The average during the past 12 months has been 292,000. "The industry still looks good, but we are off from the post-Covid highs," Argus reported. August bizav flight activity in North America dropped 3.8% YOY, steeper than the 0.1% decline forecast by Argus, due largely to a fall-off in Part 135 charter traffic.

Schiphol reduces planned flight cuts

The Dutch electorate goes to the polls in a general election on 22 November following the resignation of Prime Minister Mark Rutte in July. Industry groups, airlines and operators have called on the caretaker government to postpone any plans to reduce the annual number of flights at Amsterdam Schiphol until a new government takes power. The original plan, part of the airport's strategy to reduce emissions and noise, involved a reduction in the annual flight tally from 500,000 to 440,000 and a complete ban on bizav and night flights. The interim administration has instead proposed a reduction to 452,000 by November 2024. It remains unclear whether the bizav ban is to be implemented.

AVIATION SERVICES HUB: Aviation consultancy

Accurate, up-to-date and comprehensive information is a key requirement for making the right decisions in respect of sourcing, owning, registering and operating an aircraft. RANA's specialist aviation consultancy service can draw upon a considerable breadth of knowledge across both the corporate and commercial aviation markets, which is coupled to our established links with authorities, manufacturers, and operators.

The spectrum of our expertise encompasses: technical and performance specifications of competing aircraft models – from small pistons and turboprops through the whole range of corporate jets to commercial airliners; research and detailed reporting on the operational history of individual airframes and operators both private and commercial; the registration and ownership requirements of registries worldwide; and the most suitable and efficient corporate structures for holding aviation assets. In a nutshell, we can add real value to the decision-making process and provide peace of mind built on a solid foundation.

Global Jet Capital confirms a stabilising bizjet market

The bizjet market is stabilising after the highs of post-Covid 2022, according to the latest market brief from Global Jet Capital (GJC), which confirms industry predictions. OEM performance has slowed for a number of reasons, not least the much-vaunted manufacturing supply chain issues. The overall number of transactions – both new and preowned – fell in H1 2023. This was due to both delivery delays and a fundamental realignment of the resale market as inventory has replenished after the frenzied demand and resultant shortage of supply in 2021 and 2022. GJC forecasts continued inventory growth as many older aircraft purchased during the pandemic return to market. OEM backlogs in Q2 this year increased by 8.6% YOY to USD50.8 billion.

Embraer excluded from Prigozhin crash investigation

The crash of a Russian-registered Embraer Legacy 600 (RA-02795) on 23 August carrying Yevgeny Prigozhin, leader of the Wagner mercenary group, and nine others is not being investigated under Annex 13 to the Convention on International Civil Aviation – better known as the 1944 Chicago Convention – which provides for international cooperation. Air accidents in Russia are typically investigated by the independent Interstate Aviation Committee (IAC) with the co-operation of the OEM and the national regulator of the manufacturing state. However, Brazil's Aeronautical Accidents Investigation and Prevention Centre (CENIPA) reported on 29 August that the Russian authorities would not open the investigation under Annex 13 for the time being.

Wheels Up - Delta Air Lines flies to the rescue

US private flight provider Wheels Up recorded 70,258 flying hours in the first half of 2023, down from 82,483 in the same period last year. Whilst retaining its top position among Part 135 operators, Wheels Up reported a Q2 loss of USD161 million against revenues of USD335 million. In a rescue deal announced on 15 August, Delta Air Lines, together with investors Certares Management and Knighthood Capital Management, entered into a non-binding agreement with Wheels Up giving the company a USD400 million term loan and a USD100 million 'liquidity facility' in exchange for 95% of Wheels Up shares. Delta CFO Dan Janki will become chair. On 21 August, Wheels Up also said it was adding up to USD30 million to the USD15 million short-term financing it received from Delta in the form of a secured promissory note signed on 8 August.

Corporate aircraft news

On 22 August, French OEM Dassault Aviation confirmed that the large cabin twinjet Falcon 6X had received approval from both European regulator EASA and the US FAA. The 6X was unveiled in February 2018. The 6X replaced the stalled 5X project, which had been launched in 2013. The 6X flight test programme saw three aircraft undertake more than 1,500 flight hours. The aircraft provides accommodation for up to 16 passengers and offers a range of up to 9,600km.

Following its flight test programme, Savannah-based Gulfstream Aerospace announced that its flagship Gulfstream G700 twin will have more range and speed, coupled with a lower cabin altitude, against original forecasts. The G700's range has increased to 7,750nm/14,353km at Mach 0.85 or 6,650nm/12,316km at Mach 0.90. The G700's maximum operating speed has also increased to Mach 0.935 from Mach 0.925, giving it the highest speed in the Gulfstream fleet. The cabin altitude has been further reduced to 2,840ft/866m while flying at 41,000ft/12,497m, providing even more comfort for passengers. Certification of the G700 is expected during Q4 this year after a flight test programme that has amassed over 4,100 hours.

In a further step towards type certification for both the Gulfstream G700 and G800, the Rolls-Royce engine due to power both models has now received FAA certification. The BR700-730B2-14 – commercially branded as the Pearl 700 – had previously received approval from EASA in September 2022.



AIRCRAFT FACT FILE \\\

Agusta Westland AW189



CATEGORY

Helicopter

MANUFACTURER

Agusta Westland, UK, later Leonardo S.p.A., Italy

ENGINE

2 x General Electric CT7-2E1 turboshaft

LENGTH

17.60 m

ROTOR DIAMETER

14.60 m

RANGE

907 km

MAX. SPEED

313 kmh

SEATING CAPACITY

19

NO. OF CREW

1

MAXIMUM TAKE-OFF WEIGHT (MTOW)

8,300 kg

DESCRIPTION

The AW189 is a familiar sight in many coastal areas of the UK because the model is operated extensively by Bristow Helicopters on behalf of HM Coast Guard. The AW189 serves this role well and has filled the dedicated search and rescue (SAR) role across the globe. The super medium-lift helicopter was also designed to provide offshore transport for the energy industry and to operate in the commercial passenger role.

First unveiled at the Paris Airshow in June 2011, the AW189 is the civilian version of the military AW149 and shares similar flight performance characteristics and safety features with the AW139 and Aw169. The prototype made its first flight from Cascina Costa, Italy, just over seven months later. The model entered full scale production in June 2013 following development of mission kits and configuration modes for both SAR and offshore operations as required. EASA certification was granted in February 2014, with US FAA approval following 13 months later.