

Leonardo reveals the first members of Team AW149 UK - the onshore supply chain behind the AW149

- Leonardo is putting forward its latest-generation military AW149 helicopter for the UK's New Medium Helicopter requirement
- At DSEI 2021, Leonardo is highlighting nine suppliers from towns and cities across the North-West, North-East and other regions which will help deliver a British-made AW149 should it be chosen by the UK Ministry of Defence
- The UK AW149 would be built in Yeovil, Somerset and draw on a UK-wide supply chain of more than 70 organisations. The companies revealed today as Team AW149 UK members are Abaco Systems, Aerco, Chelton, Ford Aerospace, Forged Solutions, Incora, LFD, RDDS Avionics and Techtest Limited

Rome, 14 September 2021 – Leonardo has announced the launch of **Team AW149 UK**, its onshore supply chain for the AW149 helicopter. Featuring more than 70 companies from England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, Leonardo's AW149 supply chain represents a cross-section of the best in British engineering and manufacturing.

At the DSEI 2021 exhibition in London taking place this week, Leonardo has spotlighted nine of these companies, all of which are supporting the AW149 as 'the UK choice' for the Ministry of Defence's New Medium Helicopter requirement. Representing towns and cities from across the UK, from South Shields to Gosport, each company provides a vital component to the AW149 military helicopter, from lights to avionics systems and other hardware and software components.

The companies revealed today as Team AW149 UK members are **Abaco Systems, Aerco, Chelton, Ford Aerospace, Forged Solutions, Incora, LFD, RDDS Avionics and Techtest Limited**.

Nick Whitney, Managing Director of Leonardo Helicopters (UK), said "I am delighted to have the opportunity today to introduce Team AW149 UK and highlight some of the leading small and medium-sized British companies who will be involved in delivering the AW149 for the UK Armed Forces should we be selected. The companies we're spotlighting today are diverse in what they do and where they're located but they and we at Leonardo have one important thing in common, which is a commitment to providing the UK Armed Forces with the most modern, capable and cost-effective medium helicopter to meet their operational needs."

The announcement comes as Leonardo puts forward its medium multi-role AW149 helicopter for the UK's New Medium Helicopter requirement, which will see the UK Armed Forces replacing four

helicopter types including the Puma HC2 by mid-2025. The AW149 is a safe, agile and robust platform, which can be reconfigured for a wide range of demanding missions in the most severe operational environments. Should the UK choose the Leonardo AW149, the company has pledged to build the new fleet on a cutting-edge production line in Yeovil, Somerset, with between 60-70% of the platform's content and through-life support being carried out onshore in the UK at Leonardo and through UK suppliers. This would represent an investment in UK skills, design and manufacturing, supporting thousands of jobs, creating jobs across the country and helping reverse the damage to the economy caused by Covid-19.

Leonardo also estimates a large and accessible export market for a British-made medium helicopter of over 500 aircraft. By choosing the AW149, the world-renowned UK Armed Forces would become a reference customer for the product, making the AW149 a desirable choice for global allies. This could help deliver billions of pounds worth of export sales for Leonardo with beneficial knock-on effects for its supply chain and the wider UK economy.

The Team AW149 UK members play a vital role in the latest-generation AW149. These companies form part of a network of more than 70 UK-based businesses that contribute to the existing AW149 platform. Leonardo continues to work across industry to grow its UK supply chain to meet the potential needs of the nation's New Medium Helicopter requirement.

AW149 Team UK (alphabetically):

“Abaco Systems has a long-established presence in the UK and over 300 employees in manufacturing, R&D, sales and customer support between our Edinburgh office and our UK Towcester List X site. Our relationship with Leonardo resulted in its use of our technology for the Obstacle Proximity LIDAR System (OPLS) and the development of a mission display computer. Combinations of these systems are deployed on many of Leonardo's helicopter series. We're honoured to continue the relationship with the AW149 and future programmes,” John Muller, Chief Growth Officer at **Abaco**. In the UK, Abaco is based in **Edinburgh, Lothian and Towcester, Northamptonshire**.

“Aerco is delighted to be part of the Leonardo AW149 Team which is focussed on the delivery of yet another great helicopter series designed and manufactured by the UK's aviation industry,” Rob Laughton, Managing Director of **Aerco**, based in **Horsham, West Sussex**.

“Being a British company, **Chelton** is immensely proud to supply our highly engineered advanced avionic systems to a platform built here in the UK. Partners such as Leonardo secure hundreds of jobs across our three UK locations,” Luca Pelazzo, Antennas Business Unit Manager at **Chelton**, based in **Marlow, Buckinghamshire**.

“From South Shields to Yeovil, **Ford Aerospace Ltd** provides Leonardo Helicopters with a top class manufacturing service for all small precision machined, pressed, and laminate components. As a trusted UK partner of Leonardo we are delighted to be involved in the AW149 team and be able to represent the best of UK manufacturing,” Chris Ford, Managing Director of **Ford Aerospace Ltd**, based in **South Shields, Tyne and Wear**.

“Forged Solutions Group manufactures shafts, rings, discs, asymmetric forgings and extruded cylinders in a range of titanium, nickel, and steel alloys. We have a global blue-chip customer base for whom we are a trusted, high-quality turnkey supplier known for our unique forging capability and ingenuity. We have particular expertise and a long history of supplying components

to the aerospace sector including multiple helicopter platforms such as the Leonardo AW149,” said Ben McIvor, President of **Forged Solutions Group**, based in **Sheffield, South Yorkshire**.

“**Incora** is proud to have been supply partner to Leonardo for many years in the UK providing lineside chemical management services and hardware to its Yeovil and Edinburgh locations. We are delighted to support the exciting AW149 campaign with our full range of hardware, chemical and electrical products and JIT lineside and kitting services,” Mike Cox General Manager – UK at **Incora**, based in **Mirfield, West Yorkshire**.

“**LFD** has been fortunate to work in a close and successful relationship with Leonardo Helicopters. Leonardo has generously given its support to help LFD in designing and developing world beating aircraft lighting systems. LFD supplies lighting kits for most Leonardo platforms including the AW149, AW159, and AW101. As a small team of 15 staff we are proud and appreciative of our relationship with Leonardo and its support to the UK aerospace industry,” **LFD’s** Managing Director, Len Fleck, based in **Gosport, Hampshire**.

“Here at **RDDS** we have been supplying rugged, mission-ready electronics to Leonardo for over ten years and we are incredibly proud to be continuing our long standing relationship into the future with the AW149 Team. Video management hardware and control panels have been a core pillar of our business for over 25 years and we look forward to strengthening and innovating even further with Leonardo and the flight teams across the world who rely on our equipment to support their missions,” Marcus Harland, **RDDS** Business Development, based in **Margate, Kent**.

“For over a decade now, **Techtest Limited** has supplied crash position indicators and a range of antennas to Leonardo, with installations on all major platforms. The installation of the crash position indicator on the AW149 [potentially] for the UK MoD is the next step in our long-standing relationship,” Jake Ford, Global Sales Manager for **Techtest Limited**, part of the HR Smith Group, based in **Leominster, Herefordshire**.