

Boeing Australia pilot achieves 8,000 helicopter flying hours

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Boeing Defence Australia (BDA) pilot David Allsop has celebrated a rare aviation feat – 8000 helicopter flying hours.

Allsop, an instructor pilot on BDA's Helicopter Aircrew Training System (HATS) at HMAS Albatross in Nowra, reached the prestigious milestone after a 41-year international flying career including 17 years with the UK Royal Air Force.

He joined Boeing in 2010 as a Kiowa instructor pilot on the former Army Aviation Training & Training Support program at Oakey. In 2015, he transitioned to HATS to train Australian Army and Royal Australian Navy helicopter pilots on the EC-135.

Allsop was conducting a navigation training flight in an EC-135 over Nowra when he clocked his 8000th hour.

"I knew from a very young age that I wanted to be a pilot and everything from that point on was focused on achieving that goal," Allsop said.

"I'm very fortunate to have had a diverse and interesting flying career, including operations in the United Kingdom, Europe and Canada, and flying as a civilian instructor for the Royal Brunei Air Force.

"To now have the opportunity to keep flying challenging sorties at this stage of my career is a privilege. On HATS, we fly day and night, overland and overwater, and onto the back of ships, which most civilian pilots and instructors rarely get to do. Not only does it challenge our trainees, it still challenges me as a pilot and an instructor. This is what makes the job so rewarding and worthwhile."

BDA's HATS program manager Ian Gibney paid tribute to Allsop's extraordinary flying career and his commitment to sharing his extensive flying knowledge with the next generation of military pilots.

"David is an exceptional pilot who has given his career to military service and we're incredibly proud of what he's achieved," Gibney said. "Reaching 8000 hours is an awe-inspiring milestone, especially when you consider that most military pilots retire from long-term service with only half those hours.

"David brings unparalleled expertise and knowledge to his job, and he is an inspiration to his students, peers and colleagues. We're privileged to have someone of his caliber training the next generation of Australian Defence Force helicopter pilots."