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HAI Announces Winners of ROTOR Magazine 2024 Photo Contest

Alexandria, Virginia (Feb. 02, 2024) – Helicopter Association International (HAI) is pleased to announce the seven winners of the 2024 ROTOR Magazine Photo Contest. This annual contest is open to professional and amateur photographers around the world who focus their lenses on the vertical aviation industry.

In addition to cash prizes for the photographers, winning images will appear in the March 2024 edition of ROTOR magazine, HAI’s flagship publication. The photos will also be displayed at HAI HELI-EXPO in Anaheim, California, Feb. 26–29 (exhibits open Feb. 27–29).

“This year, we received many stunning photos that reinforce just how unique the vertical aviation industry is and the great work we do,” says Jaasmin Foote, HAI social media manager and photo contest coordinator. “Whether you submitted a photo of your squadron completing tactical training, your aircraft sitting in front of a colorful sunset, your team rescuing a snowboarder in peril or transporting medication to children in a remote village, your crew turning wrenches, and everything in between, we sincerely thank all of you for your great submissions!”

This year’s contest again featured broad international participation. “We had photographers send us photos they took from all over the world, including the United States, Antarctica, Canada, the United Kingdom, Italy, Germany, France, South Africa, Australia, Saudi Arabia, and Russia,” notes Foote.

The 2024 ROTOR Magazine Photo Contest winners are:

2024 ROTOR Magazine Photo Contest

Grand Prize Winner

Nicholas Avis

Yorktown, Virginia, USA



In this photo, taken on Jan. 29, 2023, an MH-60S Seahawk helicopter with Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron 5 delivers cargo to aircraft carrier USS *George H.W. Bush* during a vertical replenishment with oil tanker USNS *Kanawha*. The image was taken during the 2022–23 deployment of USS *George H.W. Bush* in the Mediterranean Sea.

“Our judges appreciated the low angle, textures, and reflections in this image, along with the ‘pops’ of color against the otherwise neutral colors of the sky and flight deck,” says Foote. “Plus, it’s a nice example of a helicopter doing what only a helicopter can do: hover to pick up loads.”

2024 ROTOR Magazine Photo Contest
Category Winner: Helicopters/Drones at Work

Raphael Grinevald
Salon De Provence, France



On a cold evening, photographer Raphael Grinevald unexpectedly encountered a helicopter in the middle of a rescue on the north face of Mont Ventoux in France.

Taking off from the narrow road that climbs to the summit, the Airbus EC135 kicked up a cloud of snow, lit by the aircraft’s landing lights. “Our judges noted that it is typically very difficult to get clear, sharp photographs in conditions like these,” says Foote. “There is low light, and the aircraft is being whipped by the snow raised by the rotorwash.”

Adds Grinevald, “Looking more carefully at the image on my reflex [camera], a detail appeared to me: inside the nozzle, I can see the glowing light of the combustion chamber behind the turbines.”

2024 ROTOR Magazine Photo Contest

Category Winner: Helicopters/Drones in the Military

Ryan Riley

Enumclaw, Washington, USA



This photo shows sailors from aircraft carrier USS *George H.W. Bush* attaching a cargo hook to an MH-60R Seahawk helicopter during a replenishment-at-sea in the Mediterranean Sea on Feb. 17, 2023. The aircraft belongs to Helicopter Maritime Strike Squadron 46.

“The judges talked about the lines in this image: the rotor blades and the helicopter line up with the clouds and the deck crew,” notes Foote.

2024 ROTOR Magazine Photo Contest

Category Winner: People and Their Helicopters/Drones

Nicolas Bilodeau

Alberta, Canada



In this photo, an AStar FX2 operated by Airborne Energy Solutions lands on the helipad at the Ram Mountain fire lookout in Alberta, Canada. The crew was performing telecommunication services.

“We could feel the cold through this image,” says Foote. “Several of the judges noted that the helicopter was parked properly, into the wind, as evidenced by the direction of the snow drifts. It’s interesting how different people notice different elements of an image.”

2024 ROTOR Magazine Photo Contest

Category Winners: Helicopter/Drone Digitally Enhanced Photos

Shauni Hurley

Vernal, Utah, USA



Photographer Shauni Hurley took this photo after noticing that a beautiful Kaman K-Max had been sitting stationed at Vernal Regional Airport (KVLE) for a week while she and her team were on fire watch in the area.

Hurley and her team were thrilled when the aircraft’s pilot and maintenance crew told them all about the “awesomeness” of helicopters and let the group look around and “drool a little (or a lot)” over the K-Max.

“I have always loved aviation, and as a photographer, I love capturing the amazing details and different angles of all aircraft,” says Hurley.

“Our judges appreciated the reflections of the sky and light on the sides of the aircraft and the photographer’s positioning of the rotor blades in the break in the clouds,” says Foote. “It was also noted that while the photo is digitally enhanced, it is not immediately obvious what was manipulated.”

2024 ROTOR Magazine Photo Contest

Category Winner: Wrench Turners

Katie L. Brown

Lawrence, Kansas, USA



In this image, a EuroTec Vertical Flight Solutions avionics technician works on an Airbus H125 for Teton County Search and Rescue in Jackson, Wyoming. The aircraft was completed at EuroTec's headquarters in Eudora, Kansas.

“Maintenance crews simply do not get enough credit for the work they do to keep helicopters flying,” say Foote. “Our judges felt this image put us in the cockpit with the mechanic, who continues to work intently while the photo is being shot.”

2024 ROTOR Magazine Photo Contest

Category Winner: How We Serve

Tim Watkins

Austin, Texas, USA



In this photo, the Travis County STAR Flight team completes its last water drop of the day from a Leonardo AW169. The multimission public safety program provides air ambulance services, hoist rescue, firefighting, and law enforcement assistance in Central Texas.

“Sometimes, we just have to appreciate a great sunset and silhouette,” says Foote. “It also helps that the photo shows the versatility of helicopters that fight fire.”

To view all of the 2024 Photo Contest entries, as well as the winners of past contests, visit photo.rotor.org.

The 2025 ROTOR Magazine Photo Contest will open in August 2024, with entries accepted through the end of the year.

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HAI is the professional trade association for the global helicopter industry and represents more than 1,100 companies and over 16,000 industry professionals in more than 65 countries. Each year, HAI members safely operate more than 3,700 helicopters and remotely piloted aircraft approximately 2.9 million hours. HAI is dedicated to the promotion of the helicopter as a safe, effective business tool that provides unique advantages to society and to the advancement of the international vertical aviation community.