

# PRODUCT SUPPORT SURVEY 2015

## SPECIAL REPORT

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### Part 1: AIRCRAFT

In addition to designing and manufacturing safe and efficient aircraft, there is probably no function more important to aircraft manufacturers than after-sale support. Once again, AIN's annual Product Support Survey captures reader input to evaluate the level of support provided by these companies, and this year there are some surprises among the aircraft OEMs.

Next month, Avionics. In the October issue, Engines.

## Gulfstream takes top spot for jets, Mitsubishi leads turboprop pack

AIN readers selected Gulfstream as the top provider of product support services for its large-cabin jets in the combined overall average category in the 2015 AIN Product Support Survey, hoisting the company to a solo first-place finish after last year's tie with Embraer. The Savannah, Ga., airframer's large jets captured a combined overall average rating of 8.3 this year, up from last year's 8.1. Embraer retained its 8.1 rating, which moves the Brazilian manufacturer to second place after a tie for first last year, and this year tied with Dassault Falcon, which retained its second-place slot from last year.

In third place this year is Bombardier's Challenger series, climbing 0.2 to an 8.0 rating and besting its siblings, the Global and Learjet models both with a 7.7 rating (Globals down 0.1 and Learjets up 0.2 from last year). Bombardier's Globals and Learjets tied for fourth place with Gulfstream's midsize models (the same 7.7

as last year) and Textron Aviation's Citations (at 7.7 up 0.3 from last year).

The most significant move this year saw Textron's Hawker, Premier and Beechjet series up 0.8 to 7.2, likely an indication that the company's consolidation efforts are paying off.

There are no big surprises in the turboprop segment, with Mitsubishi's MU-2 still in the top spot, although down slightly to an overall average of 9.1 (which remains the highest of any manufacturer). Pilatus's PC-12s again took second place, this year with a rating of 7.6, down from 7.9 last year. Textron Aviation's Beechcraft King Airs saw a jump this year, up 0.4 to 7.4.

In the rotorcraft arena, Bell retained its first-place finish with a strong jump to 7.9 (up 0.7). In a major change, Airbus Helicopters moved from last place to snag the second-place spot, with the largest rating change of any manufacturer, up 1.9 to 7.5. AgustaWestland saw a drop of 0.3 to 6.8, moving from second



GULFSTREAM G650

to third place this year, followed by Sikorsky, down 0.7 to 6.3.

### Newer Jets

In the newer jets category, Gulfstream's large-cabin models secured the top spot again, climbing 0.1 to the highest overall average of 8.3. Significant contributors to Gulfstream's overall average include top ratings for parts availability (8.5), AOG response (8.7) and warranty fulfillment (9.0).

Dassault's Falcons moved up 0.4 to gain second place in this category with an overall average of 8.2 and up from third place last year. Authorized service centers (8.6) and technical reps (8.9) contributed to Dassault's overall average.

In second place last year, Embraer this year scored the same 8.1 overall average, now sharing third place with Gulfstream's midsize jets. Embraer's top categories included an 8.5 for its technical manuals.

Gulfstream midsize jets saw a 0.3 jump to 8.1, retaining last year's third-place finish. Cost of parts (7.4) was the highest category rating for these jets.

On the Bombardier front, both the Challenger and Learjet

models' overall averages climbed this year to 8.0 (0.2 and 0.3, respectively), putting them in fourth place, followed by the Global models with the same 7.8 rating as last year. The Challengers scored highest in overall aircraft reliability at 9.1. Learjet's highest rating was 7.8 for factory-owned service centers.

In the newer jets category, Textron again received high marks from AIN readers, with a climb in ratings compared to last year. The Citations jumped half a point to 7.8, for a tie with Bombardier's Globals. Hawker jets climbed 0.4 to 7.0 and the Premier and Hawker 400 are up nearly a point, also to 7.0, aided by highest ratings for technical reps (8.9) and maintenance tracking programs (9.0).

### Older Jets

Gulfstream large-cabins took the top spot in this category, with a boost of 0.5 to an overall average of 8.3, pushing Bombardier's Challengers to second place at 8.0 (same rating as last year). For Gulfstream, factory-owned service centers (7.7), AOG response (8.6), warranty fulfillment (9.1), technical reps (8.6), maintenance tracking

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programs (9.0) and overall aircraft reliability (9.1) contributed to its top overall average.

Dassault's Falcons tied with Bombardier's Challengers for second place at 8.0, with a 0.2 bump for Dassault from last year's rating. The Challenger top categories included cost of parts (7.1) and technical manuals (8.7). The Falcon top categories were authorized service centers (8.2), parts availability (8.5) and AOG response (tied with Gulfstream at 8.6).

All of the Textron Aviation models in the older jets category climbed compared with last year's ratings, with the Citations in third place, up from last year's fourth place.

Hawkers had the biggest rating increase of both the newer and older jets, at 1.3, moving into fourth place to tie with Bombardier's Learjets at 7.5. The Premier and Beechjet models also climbed, up a significant 0.7, to 7.4. Premier and Beechjet models reflect high ratings for factory-owned service centers (7.7, tied with Gulfstream large-cabins) and 8.2 for authorized service centers (tied with Dassault).

## Newer Turboprops

Pilatus is the top provider of product support for newer turboprops, according to AIN readers, with a 7.7 overall average, down 0.4 from last year.

The company's highest ratings came in the categories of authorized service centers (7.0), warranty fulfillment (7.9), technical manuals (8.5), technical reps (8.1) and maintenance tracking programs (8.3).

Textron Aviation's Beechcraft King Airs are catching up, having climbed 0.5 to 7.5 this year, aided by top ratings for factory-owned service centers (7.0), parts availability (7.8), cost of parts (7.1), AOG response (7.8) and overall aircraft reliability (8.9).

## Older Turboprops

No surprises here: Mitsubishi's MU-2 is still the marque with the highest rating at 9.1

(down slightly 0.1 from last year). In this section, the MU-2s scored highest in all 10 categories, with the highest scores a 9.8 for overall aircraft reliability and 9.7 for technical reps.

Older King Airs are advancing, having climbed 0.3 to 7.3 this year.

## Rotorcraft

Bell's first-place rating is supported by high scores in nine out of 10 categories, having been bested by the 8.4 rating that Airbus Helicopters received for overall aircraft reliability.

AgustaWestland's top score was a 7.5 for maintenance tracking programs, matching the rating that Bell received in this category.

## Most Improved

There were some interesting changes in the category ratings, some showing significant improvements over last year, although not all categories reflected upward moves.

Some of the biggest improvements included, in the newer jets: Dassault Falcon with 8.6 for authorized service centers, up from 7.7 last year; cost of parts, to 7.4 from 5.8 for Gulfstream midsize jets; warranty fulfillment for large-cabin Gulfstreams, to 9.0 from 8.5 last year; technical reps 8.9 for Falcon, compared to 8.4 last year; a climb to 9.0 for Textron Aviation's Premier and Hawker 400 in the maintenance tracking programs category and 8.9 for technical reps (up 2.0 and 1.7, respectively); and a rating of 9.1 for overall aircraft reliability for Bombardier's Challengers, up from 8.8 last year.

The avionics product support results will appear in the September issue, with engine results to follow in October. □

Combined Overall Average Ratings of Newer and Older Aircraft	Overall Average 2015	Overall Average 2014	Rating Change from 2014-2015
<b>Jets</b>			
Gulfstream (GII-GV, G330-G650)	<b>8.3</b>	<b>8.1</b>	0.2
Dassault (Falcon)	8.1	7.8	0.3
Embraer (Phenom, Legacy, Lineage)	8.1	<b>8.1</b>	0.0
Bombardier (Challenger)	8.0	7.8	0.2
Bombardier (Global)	7.7	7.8	-0.1
Bombardier (Learjet)	7.7	7.5	0.2
Gulfstream (G100-G280)	7.7	7.7	0.0
Textron Aviation (Citation)	7.7	7.4	0.3
Textron Aviation (Hawker)	7.2	6.4	0.8
Textron Aviation (Premier, Beechjet 400/400A, Hawker 400XP)	7.2	6.4	0.8
<b>Turboprops</b>			
Mitsubishi (MU-2, Solitaire, Marquise)	<b>9.1</b>	<b>9.2</b>	-0.1
Pilatus (PC-12)	7.6	7.9	-0.3
Beechcraft (King Air)	7.4	7.0	0.4
<b>Rotorcraft</b>			
Bell	<b>7.9</b>	<b>7.2</b>	0.7
Airbus Helicopters	7.5	5.6	1.9
AgustaWestland	6.8	7.1	-0.3
Sikorsky	6.3	7.0	-0.7

\*Listed in order of the 2015 overall average; ties are listed alphabetically; bold indicates highest number in each category

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2015 Category Ratings by Newer and Older Aircraft	Overall Average 2015	Overall Average 2014	Rating Change from 2014-2015	Factory Owned Service Centers	Authorized Service Centers	Parts Availability	Cost of Parts	AOG Response	Warranty Fulfillment	Technical Manuals	Technical Reps	Maintenance Tracking Programs	Overall Aircraft Reliability
<b>Newer Business Jets</b>													
Gulfstream (G300-G650)	<b>8.3</b>	<b>8.2</b>	0.1	7.6	7.5	<b>8.5</b>	6.6	<b>8.7</b>	<b>9.0</b>	8.3	8.7	8.6	8.9
Dassault (Falcon)	8.2	7.8	0.4	7.5	<b>8.6</b>	8.2	6.7	8.2	8.5	8.1	<b>8.9</b>	8.6	8.8
Embraer (Phenom, Legacy, Lineage)	8.1	8.1	0.0	7.7	7.5	8.1	7.0	8.1	8.6	<b>8.5</b>	8.7	8.6	8.6
Gulfstream (G100-G280)	8.1	7.8	0.3	7.7	8.5	8.0	<b>7.4</b>	8.6	8.4	8.2	8.1	7.9	8.3
Bombardier (Challenger)	8.0	7.8	0.2	7.1	8.0	7.8	6.3	8.1	8.5	8.1	8.6	8.6	<b>9.1</b>
Bombardier (Learjet)	8.0	7.7	0.3	<b>7.8</b>	7.8	8.0	6.9	8.1	8.5	8.0	8.8	8.4	8.0
Bombardier (Global)	7.8	7.8	0.0	7.4	7.9	7.3	6.3	8.0	8.0	8.2	8.6	7.9	8.3
Textron Aviation (Citation)	7.8	7.3	0.5	7.4	7.6	7.7	6.2	7.8	8.1	7.9	8.3	8.5	8.4
Textron Aviation (Hawker)	7.0	6.6	0.4	6.7	7.5	6.2	5.1	7.6	6.4	7.0	7.9	8.0	7.9
Textron Aviation (Premier, Hawker 400XP)	7.0	6.1	0.9	6.9	7.7	5.9	5.1	6.8	4.4	7.7	<b>8.9</b>	<b>9.0</b>	8.3
<b>Older Business Jets</b>													
Gulfstream (GII-GV, G300-G550)	<b>8.3</b>	7.8	0.5	<b>7.7</b>	7.6	8.2	6.5	<b>8.6</b>	<b>9.1</b>	8.3	<b>8.6</b>	<b>9.0</b>	<b>9.1</b>
Bombardier (Challenger)	8.0	<b>8.0</b>	0.0	6.4	7.7	8.0	<b>7.1</b>	8.2	8.0	<b>8.7</b>	8.5	8.4	8.9
Dassault (Falcon)	8.0	7.8	0.2	7.3	<b>8.2</b>	<b>8.5</b>	5.9	<b>8.6</b>	8.1	7.7	8.5	8.7	9.0
Textron Aviation (Citation)	7.7	7.3	0.4	6.7	7.1	7.8	6.5	7.8	8.2	7.7	8.2	8.2	8.6
Bombardier (Learjet)	7.5	7.4	0.1	6.9	7.8	7.5	6.0	7.4	7.3	7.9	8.3	8.0	7.6
Textron Aviation (Hawker)	7.5	6.2	1.3	6.9	7.7	7.0	6.1	7.8	7.1	7.5	7.9	8.3	8.6
Textron Aviation (Premier, Beechjet 400/400A, Hawker 400XP)	7.4	6.7	0.7	<b>7.7</b>	<b>8.2</b>	7.2	4.9	6.6	7.5	8.6	7.8	7.9	8.4
<b>Newer Turboprops</b>													
Pilatus (PC-12)	<b>7.7</b>	8.1	-0.4	6.1	<b>7.0</b>	7.5	6.7	7.5	<b>7.9</b>	<b>8.5</b>	<b>8.1</b>	<b>8.3</b>	8.7
Beechcraft (King Air)	7.5	7.0	0.5	<b>7.0</b>	6.9	<b>7.8</b>	<b>7.1</b>	<b>7.8</b>	7.3	7.3	6.9	7.7	<b>8.9</b>
<b>Older Turboprops</b>													
Mitsubishi (MU-2, Solitaire, Marquise)	<b>9.1</b>	<b>9.2</b>	-0.1	<b>8.6</b>	<b>9.0</b>	<b>9.5</b>	<b>8.5</b>	<b>9.4</b>	<b>8.4</b>	<b>9.2</b>	<b>9.7</b>	<b>8.8</b>	<b>9.8</b>
Beechcraft (King Air)	7.3	7.0	0.3	6.1	8.2	8.0	5.1	7.1	5.3	8.2	7.9	7.2	9.2
<b>Rotorcraft (all ages)</b>													
Bell	<b>7.9</b>	<b>7.2</b>	0.7	<b>7.8</b>	<b>8.1</b>	<b>7.6</b>	<b>7.0</b>	<b>7.6</b>	<b>8.6</b>	<b>8.2</b>	<b>8.7</b>	<b>7.5</b>	8.0
Airbus Helicopters	7.5	5.6	1.9	7.2	7.5	7.0	6.3	7.5	7.6	7.7	8.5	7.3	<b>8.4</b>
AgustaWestland	6.8	7.1	-0.3	6.2	7.1	6.2	5.9	6.4	7.6	6.3	7.7	<b>7.5</b>	7.2
Sikorsky	6.3	7.0	-0.7	5.4	5.2	6.4	5.6	6.3	6.5	6.3	6.5	5.9	7.4

Listed in order of 2015 overall average; ties are listed alphabetically; bold indicates highest number in each category

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## What have you done for me lately?

Each year, AIN asks aircraft manufacturers to submit summaries of key improvements in their product support implemented during the past year, and the following reflects these submissions. Not all OEMs responded to AIN's request for information.

### Fixed-wing

#### Bombardier Business Aircraft

During the past year, Bombardier's Business Aircraft segment has opened a new regional support office (RSO) in Munich, Germany, with four field service representatives, three customer support account managers, a spare parts manager, field service administrative analyst and an RSO manager.

Both the Munich and Farnborough RSOs handle Bombardier business aircraft customers operating more than 570 aircraft in Europe. There are now 15 RSOs worldwide.

European operators can also obtain maintenance at the new Bombardier line maintenance station in Nice, France, which is affiliated with the company's factory-owned service center in Amsterdam.

To support Challenger 605s in Saudi Arabia, Bombardier added Arabasco as an authorized service facility (ASF). Maintenance will be done at Arabasco's Jeddah facility. More than 100 Bombardier business jets are based in the Middle



East, and Arabasco is one of more than 50 ASFs worldwide.

Bombardier appointed Indamer Aviation in Ahmedabad, India, an ASF for all Globals. The company has been servicing business aircraft for more than 67 years and is housed in a 34,660-sq-ft facility.

In the U.S., Bombardier has added six customer response team trucks, bringing the total to 13, all connected to the 24/7 customer response center and the service center network.

#### Dassault Falcon

Additions to Dassault Aviation's service network include ExecuJet Aviation Nigeria, based in Lagos, now an ASC for line maintenance and inspections on the Falcon 7X, 900 and 2000. The ExecuJet ASC will support a Falcon GoTeam to help customers with AOG issues in West Africa as well as \$1 million worth of spares. This is Dassault's third ASC in Africa and the second ExecuJet ASC.

Ligare Aviation Engineering of Delhi, India, was appointed an ASC for AOG service level maintenance on 7Xs based in India and transient aircraft.

In April, Dassault Aviation signed an ASC agreement naming Deer Jet of Beijing to provide line and unscheduled maintenance for Chinese-registered 7Xs. Three technicians on the Deer Jet staff provide Falcon support 24/7. The facility also stocks spares, supplemented by a \$5 million spares inventory at Dassault's Beijing warehouse. Dassault also expanded Falcon jet spares at its Singapore depot by 50 percent.

Last November Dassault Falcon Service, the manufacturer's factory-owned service network, announced

## SURVEY RULES AND METHODOLOGY

As with AIN Publications' previous annual Product Support Surveys, the objective this year was to obtain from the users of business jets, turboprop airplanes and turbine-powered helicopters statistically valid information about the product support provided by business aircraft manufacturers over the last year and to report this information to our readers. The ultimate goal of the survey is to encourage continuous improvement in aircraft product support throughout the industry.

This survey was conducted via a dedicated website, created by AIN from the ground up to provide improved ease of use and to encourage greater reader participation.

AIN emailed qualified readers a link to the survey website and questionnaire. In total, 16,338 readers were invited to participate in the survey.

The survey website was open from May 4 to June 12. Respondents were asked to rate individual aircraft and provide the tail number, age (less than 10 years old or more than 10), primary region of service and whether they used factory-owned or authorized service centers, or both. Respondents were also asked to rate, on a scale from 1 to 10, the quality of service they received during the previous 12 months in the following categories:

- **Factory-owned Service Centers**—cost estimates versus actual, on-time performance, scheduling ease, service experience.
- **Authorized Service Centers**—same as above.
- **Parts Availability**—in stock versus back order, shipping time.
- **Cost of Parts**—value for price paid.
- **AOG Response**—speed, accuracy, cost.
- **Warranty Fulfillment**—ease of paperwork, extent of coverage.
- **Technical Manuals**—ease of use, formats available, timeliness of updating.
- **Technical Reps**—response time, knowledge, effectiveness.
- **Maintenance Tracking Programs**—cost, ease of use, accuracy, reliability.
- **Overall Product Reliability**—how the product's reliability and quality stack up against the competition.

Respondents were also asked to recognize individuals who have provided them with exceptional product support and service. The full list of these people is available online at [www.ainonline.com/above-beyond-2015](http://www.ainonline.com/above-beyond-2015).

The 2015 AIN Product Support Survey results for aircraft are published in this issue, avionics will be featured next month and engines will follow in October. ■

### By the Numbers 2015

Respondents who rated aircraft	967
Respondents who completed the survey in its entirety	850
Aircraft rated	2,412
Aircraft models receiving ratings	160
Minimum ratings required to be included in the data	20

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plans for a heavy MRO facility at Bordeaux-Mérignac in France, next to the Falcon manufacturing plant.

The facility is scheduled to open in the middle of next year and will eventually employ up to 70 specialists and technicians. There are currently three heavy MRO facilities in the service network—in Little Rock, Ark., Wilmington, Del., and Le Bourget, France—plus a major service center in Reno, Nev., and a line service center in Sorocaba, Brazil. Seven satellite stations provide troubleshooting and unscheduled maintenance worldwide.

FalconResponse was launched in May, designed to return grounded aircraft to service more quickly. FalconResponse provides guarantees for timely spares and technician dispatch for AOG repairs anywhere in the world, plus availability of alternative lift. The three Falcon command centers can send one of two Falcon 900s not only to deliver spares but also to provide the alternative lift, something that Falcon was first to implement. One of the Falcon 900s is based in Teterboro and the other one, the first placed in service, is based at Paris Le Bourget. The airborne support 900s serve North, Central and South America, Europe, Russia, the Middle East and most of Africa.

Dassault says its spares network is now filling more than 98.5 percent of orders within the requested time frame. The

Dassault Right Size program has cut prices on tens of thousands of parts.

## Embraer Executive Jets

Marking the fifth anniversary of its customer support contact center, Embraer Executive Jets opened a new contact center to improve inte-

devices, is now available on Android devices and allows operators to open a case with the contact center.

As the fleet grows, Embraer continues to add field service representatives. In Sorocaba, Brazil, Embraer opened its new factory-owned service center and FBO in March last year.



DASSAULT FALCON SPARES WAREHOUSE

gration of support personnel technical teams and to offer more comprehensive around-the-clock support.

The company's Aircraft Health Analysis and Diagnosis system has been expanded to cover the latest models: the Legacy 500, which entered service last year; and the Legacy 450, slated to enter service later this year. FlightSafety International received EASA approval for Legacy 500 maintenance training.

Embraer's customer support and services guide mobile app, first released for iOS

Other company service centers have added capabilities, such as foreign maintenance approvals at Embraer's U.S. service centers, Rolls-Royce engine maintenance approval at the São José dos Campos Embraer Executive Jet Services facility and Chinese approval as a third-party service provider for Legacy 600/650 AOG services and line checks at Beijing Capital Airport.

At Embraer's Paris Le Bourget service center, the company has added a mobile response unit, airworthiness management service and line maintenance service for Lineage

1000 operators. The Paris facility is moving into a new building that will be easier for customers to access and double the size of the existing facility. The new building will open in the second half of next year.

The Embraer USA service center in Phoenix now offers in-house Phenom main and nosewheel overhaul services. A permanent mobile rescue unit is now in place at Teterboro Airport.

Embraer has consolidated a complete spares inventory in Singapore and Australia and expanded its spares depot in Bangalore.

## Gulfstream

Gulfstream secured Part 145 repair station approvals for its service centers in Sorocaba, Brazil, and Beijing, allowing these facilities to offer maintenance services on U.S.-registered Gulfstreams. At Sorocaba, the company opened a new facility encompassing nearly 38,000 sq ft and offering seven customer offices and a 1,077-sq-ft bonded parts warehouse. The new facility is more accessible for customers.

At Gulfstream's Appleton, Wis. service center, the company added a 25,500-sq-ft hangar dedicated to maintenance for midsize Gulfstreams and able to fit up to five aircraft. Jet Aviation is now offering maintenance, repair and overhaul services for Gulfstreams at its Teterboro facility. Gulfstream's Westfield, Mass. service center is managing the Teterboro MRO, and 11 technicians are

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based there. At Brunswick, Ga., the Gulfstream service center added a 110,000-sq-ft hangar, which began operations in May and created 60 new jobs.

Last September, Gulfstream opened a new European parts distribution center near London Heathrow Airport. This facility supports Gulfstream's Luton service center and the company's Europe-based mobile repair unit.

In October, Gulfstream's new MyCMP mobile app went live, offering customers access to the MyCMP maintenance-tracking program on iOS and Android devices. According to Gulfstream, "The app presents critical aircraft information, including aircraft status, current hours and landings, next mainte-



GULFSTREAM LUTON

them located in North America, and product support for these high-performance twin turboprops remains exemplary, judging by the high ratings awarded by AIN readers. A surprising number of

take training seriously and are happy to undergo the stringent MU-2 Special FAR training process mandated by the FAA, which has dramatically lowered the accident rate in the type.

MHIA not only continues to provide parts to support the remaining MU-2s, including sourcing new vendors to build higher-quality parts when necessary, but also to offer upgrades, such as an upcoming angle-of-attack indicator system. MHIA is also exploring a stretched-acrylic window to replace aging Plexiglas cast windows, Cannon said.

Some MU-2 control wheels are deteriorating, and TAS is looking into certifying a replacement, which could be adapted from Beechjet 400 wheels. This could include a four-way trim switch mounted on the wheel. TAS is also certifying new hose kits for the MU-2, to replace original Japanese-made hoses that had relatively high prices.

At the 2014 edition of the

biennial free Pilots Review of Proficiency seminars, MHIA and TAS polled MU-2 owners to see how long they planned to keep their airplanes, and 70 percent said 15 years or more. "We're going to need to support these airplanes for a long time," Cannon said.

## One Aviation

Eclipse Aerospace merged with Kestrel Aircraft earlier this year and formed One Aviation, which manufactures the Eclipse 550 very light jet and is developing the K350 turboprop single. The startup of production of the 550 is benefiting owners of earlier 500s because many of the 550 features are available as upgrades on the 500 series.

Eclipse 500 upgrades now include the 550 avionics package by IS&S as well as auto-throttles, anti-skid brakes and glass-faced windshields. Other upgrades will reduce scheduled maintenance requirements, according to the company.

Other Eclipse developments include an extension



EMBRAER MOBILE SUPPORT

nance due and open and closed system discrepancies. Users can also create maintenance projections, update flight logs and enter maintenance discrepancies directly from the app."

## Mitsubishi Heavy Industries America

There are 285 Mitsubishi MU-2s still flying, most of

MU-2s are selling to pilots who are transitioning into the MU-2 for the first time, according to Pat Cannon, president of Turbine Aircraft Services (TAS), which contracts with Mitsubishi Heavy Industries America (MHIA) to provide product support. Many of the new buyers are younger pilots, too, and they

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of the warranties on the 550 and for replacement parts on 500s as well as price reductions on many key parts. The company has also added an Eclipse service center in Eelde, The Netherlands.

## Piaggio

Under its new identity as Piaggio Aerospace, the Italian manufacturer of the Avanti twin turboprop said it has “completely restructured its customer support and training organization.” To do so, the company added expert personnel, expanded the level of spares both in Europe and North America and improved response for technical support by adding an integrated global technical support team.

Buyers of the newest version of the Avanti, the Evo, can now add a pay-by-the-hour Parts Total Care parts coverage program. Piaggio moved the U.S. spares warehouse from West Palm Beach, Fla., to authorized service center Banyan Air Service in Fort Lauderdale, where it also

located logistic and customer support representatives.

## Pilatus

Pilatus reached a milestone during the past year when the PC-12 fleet, which now numbers more than 1,320 aircraft, exceeded five million flying hours. More than 530 of those are the latest PC-12 NG model, and they have already logged more than three quarters of a million hours.

Pilatus product-support activities last year included appointment of two more Pilatus centers (Russia’s Nest-erov Aviation and Oriens Aviation in the UK), and two satellite service centers (Aerocardal in Chile and North-east Air of Portland, Maine). At Pilatus HQ in Stans, Switzerland, the company has expanded customer support teams for both the PC-6 and PC-12.

All PC-12 owners now have the option for a free-for-life pilot’s operating handbook, and Pilatus is providing free access to electronic pilot

information manuals on its website. The company has enhanced the [MyPilatus.com](http://MyPilatus.com) portal and released improved versions of its iOS and Android customer service apps.

## Textron Aviation

Consolidation under the Textron Aviation brand and a move to offer maintenance for Beechcraft, Cessnas and Hawkers at more factory-owned service centers seems to have boosted AIN reader ratings for these aircraft in this year’s Product Support Survey. Eight of the company’s facilities now service all models, and by the end of this year all 14 North American facilities will offer maintenance for the three formerly separate brands.

The Paris center recently moved into a larger facility with improved client access and more capacity at Paris Le Bourget Airport.

The Textron Aviation mobile service fleet numbers more than 60 vehicles, and the company added another aircraft to its AOG fleet.

On the spares front, Textron Aviation is adding inventory, including more parts located at its service centers, and will introduce a new parts-ordering website later this year. The fill rate for Hawker and Beechcraft parts has climbed to 96 percent from 85 percent. ProAdvantage maintenance cost programs are now available for King Air and Hawker operators.



Textron Aviation now owns 21 service centers, and technicians are undergoing continual cross-training on Beechcraft and Cessna models. In May, for the first time the company hosted a two-day joint customer conference for operators of Beechcraft, Cessna and Hawker models.

## Rotorcraft

### Airbus Helicopters

The large improvement in AIN reader ratings of Airbus Helicopters product support seems to indicate that the company’s efforts are bearing fruit. Airbus Helicopters is focusing its product support

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improvements on three key areas—parts availability, technical publications and customer response—aided by its Keycopter web portal and new HCare support system as well as close monitoring of key customer support performance indicators.

Airbus Helicopters has 30 customer centers worldwide, and each is designed to provide MRO services locally, including spares and field representatives. A new customer support platform is being introduced to facilitate urgent requests. This 24/7/365 capability is housed in five regional service hubs in Texas, Singapore and Brazil to enhance responsiveness in the customer's time zone.

Airbus says parts availability and on-time deliveries have improved significantly during the past year, with 98 percent of planned spares orders delivered on time last year and a 50-percent reduction during the past two years of the number of parts that weren't delivered when the customer requested, according to the company.

Airbus tells operators it is now committed to 100-percent on-time delivery for planned spares orders, backed by a new spares management policy targeting optimal timing and location. The company relocated AStar parts to its Dallas-Fort Worth logistics hub (one of seven worldwide) "because the majority of the AStar fleet flies in North America."

The Keycopter portal now hosts technical publications with improved format and content, including the new eTech-Pub online viewer.

## Above and Beyond

We asked AIN Product Support participants to list their favorite support providers and what they like about the service they receive. Here are some of the companies and people respondents chose to recognize.

### OEMs

<b>Terry Rubek, Bombardier</b>	<i>I have worked with Terry as my FSR for Learjet since the late 1990s, and he has always been available, helpful, had a sincere interest in solving the problems, true to both the customer, and Bombardier, fair and balanced. A joy to work with, and a great asset for Bombardier.</i>
<b>David Cardenas and Dan Reeves Beechcraft</b>	<i>Both David and Dan are "on the spot" when we have unscheduled maintenance issues. They both have solved our problem as expeditiously as possible.</i>
<b>Mark Campbell, Citation</b>	<i>Mark always returns our calls and always has an answer for our questions and is very well recognized as a leader in Cessna Citation maintenance.</i>
<b>Bernard Delouye, Dassault</b>	<i>This gentleman is our CSM and we operate between the Middle East and Europe. He has shown dedication and attention to his customers like I have never seen; if there is a gift he deserves it.</i>
<b>Sean Peterson, Embraer</b>	<i>Sean runs a top-notch maintenance facility at Hartford. We are treated like family, and their responsiveness is unparalleled. Sean insists that we carry his personal cellphone number in addition to Embraer's Corporate 24 hr technical service number, and insists that we do not hesitate to call him 24/7.</i>
<b>Dallas Gumm, Gulfstream</b>	<i>Dallas will drop everything to take care of a customer—even to his own hurt. He always makes you feel like you're the only customer he has or cares about. He is a great representative of his company.</i>
<b>Fabian Conne, Pilatus</b>	<i>Fabian always provide instant support and does his very best to help customers and solve their problems. He is setting a fantastic example for his dedicated and committed team. Many thanks!</i>

### Authorized Service Centers

<b>Jeff Aman, Duncan Aviation</b>	<i>Jeff has gone out of his way to gain our business in the avionics sector. He checks up on us every few weeks, even if we have not had any issues with our avionics lately. We know that when we have issues, a call to Jeff is all that is needed.</i>
<b>David Ricklin, Jet Aviation Basel AG</b>	<i>David is always available for his customers, is always pushing for customer-oriented improvements and tries to make the impossible possible!</i>
<b>Mark James, Intercontinental Jet Service</b>	<i>Mark is an amazing and totally available resource for any maintenance question regardless of whether the aircraft is maintained in Tulsa or by another service provider.</i>
<b>Darin Wilson, StandardAero</b>	<i>Darin has always gone out of his way to provide any assistance that he can whenever we call with any questions regarding issues that we may be having with our aircraft. Since they did many of the retrofits on these aircraft, Darin and well as many of the others at StandardAero are a wealth of information and he has no reservations in sharing his knowledge with us.</i>
<b>Patrick Eskew and Trevor Probst Stevens Aviation</b>	<i>Absolute competence performing maintenance work on new aircraft with teething pains. It has been a long road learning these new aircraft, and they have performed flawlessly from entrance to RTS.</i>
<b>All Staff, Elliott Aviation</b>	<i>I can not say enough good things about the Elliott, Moline Authorized Service Center. They treat our aircraft and our money as though it was their own.</i>
<b>All Staff, Constant Aviation</b>	<i>Great support. On-time deliveries. On budget or acceptably close.</i>
<b>Lisa Hall, West Star Aviation</b>	<i>The Challenger team, lead by Lisa Hall, provided me with the best visit I've ever had with this aircraft.</i>

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## AgustaWestland

AgustaWestland has introduced four service plans designed to cut the cost of parts, labor and service and to reduce turnaround times.

The Italian airframer also launched the AW139 Reliability Data Sharing Group to help inform customers about issues before they cause problems. The group uses the data to develop “a more accurate evaluation of component reliability, identifying trends and allowing focus on an improved spares planning process and the monitoring of the most important product improvements implemented into the fleet—leading to improved aircraft availability,” according to the company.

Other product support initiatives include appointing approved service centers closer to operators’ locations. These include UK-based AW169 provider Specialist Aviation Services and Heliconia Industrie in Morocco, which supports the AW139.

AgustaWestland is adding a full-scale maintenance training simulator in Malaysia this summer and has raised the number of available maintenance training seats by 137 percent. New syllabi for AW139 and AW189 practical training have been certified.

## Bell Helicopter

Bell Helicopter is significantly expanding its international footprint, according

to the company’s new v-p for global sales and marketing. “The time when Bell was contacting its customers from Texas is over. We are right there with the customers and we are local,” said Patrick Moulay, who noted that more than 80 percent of Bell’s sales force is now deployed outside the U.S. Moulay assumed his new position in January after serving as Bell’s managing director and acting vice president for Europe and Russia. He is the first non-U.S. national to hold his position at Bell.

Moulay said Bell’s plans include setting up training and service centers closer to the company’s customers. “The first thing a customer asks is ‘Who is going to take care of me?’ We are expanding our footprint across the world. We are improving our capabilities in Prague, Singapore, China and Brazil. The other element is the training centers around the world, and that is something new for Bell. [The new Bell training center in] Valencia [Spain] is only the beginning; we have the same plan for the Middle East, Asia-Pacific and Latin America. And with the 525 coming along soon, we have to have the simulators close to where the operators are,” Moulay said.

Bell supports its customers with five distribution centers and more than 100 authorized service facilities in 34 countries.

At the Bell Helicopter Singapore service center, the

company’s training academy received approval for six new technical training courses and Part 147 renewal from the Civil Aviation Authority of Singapore.

“We continue to enhance our customer offerings at Bell Helicopter Prague and in Singapore to maximize our capabilities throughout Asia Pacific and Europe,” according to the company.

## Robinson Helicopter

With more than 11,000 owners of Robinson rotorcraft in more than 60 countries, Robinson Helicopter has authorized more than 450 service centers to provide support for its customers. Unique among manufacturers, Robinson has made all manuals, including pilot operating handbooks, maintenance manuals and service information online, available to anyone at no cost “to provide operators immediate access to the information they need.”

Robinson Helicopter provides live customer support, online parts ordering and shipment of most standard and AOG parts within 24 hours. According to the company, “We know our customers can’t afford to be grounded and depend on Robinson’s support to keep them flying.”

## Sikorsky

Sikorsky has reorganized its aftermarket services into two key areas: commercial and defense. On the commercial side, S-76 and S-92 customers have their own account service managers who

focus on customer service issues. “They are the advocates for the customer inside Sikorsky,” according to Ed Beyer, vice president of commercial systems and services.

To advance customer support, Sikorsky has implemented new business-to-business and inventory visibility capabilities with its SAP enterprise resource planning system. This includes implementing Servigistics to improve material forecasting and planning.

New Sikorsky customer support centers include the first Sikorsky-authorized S-92 center at Sikorsky Helitech in Australia, the first S-76 support center in southeast Asia, Mycopter Aviation Services, and a North Sea S-92 support center launched by Sikorsky and Saab. Sikorsky now has more than 20 customer support centers around the world.

At Sikorsky’s commercial headquarters in Trumbull, Conn., the company is building a new customer care center, scheduled to open later this year. □

## WINNERS

The following people were randomly selected as winners of an Apple Watch for participating in our product support survey. AIN selected five winners and not all chose to be listed.

**Scott Moore,**  
aviation department manager

**Cody Diekroeger,**  
director of aviation

**David Slivka,**  
aviation manager

**Nick Bayma,** captain