

HMAS Albatross helicopters on show at Avalon Airshow



A host of helicopters from HMAS Albatross have been in Avalon, Victoria for the 2019 Australian International Airshow (AIA19).

With more than 200,000 people expected to attend the airshow, navy is showcasing its leading capabilities – the MH-60R Seahawk ‘Romeo’, the Bell 429 Global Ranger and EC135 helicopters plus the ScanEagle and Schiebel Camcopter S-100 unmanned aircraft systems.

Lieutenant Commander James Scott, a MH-60R Seahawk ‘Romeo’ pilot, will be providing daily flying demonstrations during the airshow.

“We just call them Romeos, but they are a multi-role Maritime Combat Helicopter,” LCDR Scott said.

“The Romeo provides a ship or task group with an enhanced anti-submarine and anti-surface warfare capability that is networked with other Australian Defence Force units and our allies.

“Navy now has an even greater capacity to deploy our air capabilities to sea, in a variety of ships including our Anzac Class frigates, Landing Helicopter Docks (LHDs) and the new Air Warfare Destroyers.”

Also on display are navy’s training helicopters, the Bell 429 and the Airbus EC135 T2+.

All navy and army aircrew undertake initial helicopter conversion training in the Bell 429 and EC135 T2+ helicopters.

The navy showcase at Avalon is rounded out by two unmanned aerial systems, the fixed wing Insitu ScanEagle and a Schiebel Camcopter S-100.

Able Seaman Avionics Technician Aircraft Darryl Malone is a Camcopter S-100 operator and on the ground at Avalon to answer any questions about the unique looking unmanned aerial system.

“The S-100 may look like a model helicopter but it provides a persistent intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance capability for the navy,” AB Malone said.

“It is capable of operating straight off the ship’s flight deck without specific launch and recovery equipment.

“The S-100 provides real-time full motion video, by day or night, well beyond the range of the warship’s sensors.

“I think this is the best job in the navy and I’ve been operating the S-100 for four years,” he said.

The Australian International Airshow is held at Avalon from February 26 to March 3.