



# Sikorsky S70A-9 Black Hawk Helicopter

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Named after the Native American war leader Black Hawk, the Sikorsky S70A-9 Black Hawk is renowned as being one of the world's most-proven battlefield helicopters.

The Sikorsky S70A-9 Black Hawk is a four-bladed, twin-engine, medium-lift utility helicopter variant of the Sikorsky UH-60A. The four-crew, multi-role battlefield transport helicopter's primary mission is to provide air mobility for troops and equipment in a battle zone.

Black Hawks can also carry out aerial reconnaissance, observation, direction of artillery fire, casualty evacuation and aerial fire support. When required, the aircraft plays a vital role in community support tasks such as search and rescue and the provision of humanitarian and natural disaster relief.

The search for a Bell UH-1 Iroquois utility helicopter replacement, the New Utility Helicopter (NUH) project, commenced in the early 1980s.

The Australian Government's preference for the Black Hawk was due to its superior battlefield protection and robustness.

The Australian Government ordered 14 Black Hawks on 29 May, 1986. That same year, control of the battlefield helicopters was passed from the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) to the Australian Army.

## TECHNICAL DATA: HDH Sikorsky S70A-9 Black Hawk Helicopter

Power plant	Two General Electric T700-GE-701C/D turboshaft engines, 1,890 shp (1,410 kW) each
Main rotor diameter	16.36m (53 feet 8 inches)
Length	19.76m (64 feet 10 inches)
Height	5.13m (16 ft 10 inches)
Empty weight	5,675kg (12,511 pounds)
Loaded weight	9,979kg (22,000 pounds)
Maximum speed	294kph (183 mph)
Range	590km (370 miles)
Service ceiling	5,800m (19,000 feet)
Armament	Two M240 machine guns; two M134 minigun or two GAU-19 gatling guns. Hardpoints: Four, two per ESSS stub wings, with provisions to carry combinations of rockets, missiles, M230 gun pods and bombs

The first Australian Black Hawk flew at Sikorsky's Statford, Connecticut, plant on 11 September 1987. After being handed over to the RAAF on 31 December, it was flown to RAAF Base Amberley by C-130 and delivered to No. 9 Squadron on 27 February 1988. By then, some 900 Black Hawks had been delivered to the US Army.

Meanwhile, licensed Black Hawk assembly in Australia had begun with Boeing heritage company Hawker de Havilland (HdH) at Bankstown as prime contractor. In December 1988, No. 9 Squadron relocated to RAAF Base Townsville and was disbanded on 15 February. All Black Hawks from the HdH production line were subsequently delivered to A Squadron of the Army's 5th Aviation Regiment.

In May 1987, an additional 25 Black Hawks were ordered, with the last of 38 locally-assembled Black Hawk aircraft delivered to the Army on 30 January 1991.

In 2007, under the Army Aviation Training and Training Support contract (AATTS), Boeing Defence Australia (BDA) took over the maintenance of a fleet of six Black Hawks used for training activities by the School of Army Aviation at Oakey, until the decision was made to replace them with the MRH90 helicopter. BDA will continue to support the maintenance and management of the stored Black Hawks until September 2022.

From 2016-18, BDA also stood up a detachment of aircrew and maintenance staff to run a small fleet of Black Hawks to provide crash-response support at Oakey.

Today, the remaining Black Hawks are flown operationally by 6th Aviation Regiment at Sydney in support of special operations.



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