

VFS Announces 2026 Group Recipients of its Prestigious Awards

Eleven teams honored for outstanding achievements in vertical flight

FAIRFAX, VA, UNITED STATES, April 6, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Vertical Flight Society announced the 2026 recipients of its prestigious group awards, recognizing eleven teams for outstanding achievements in vertical flight. The honorees will be celebrated at the Grand Awards Dinner on May 6, 2026, during the 82nd Annual Forum and Technology Display in West Palm Beach, Florida.



“For more than 75 years, VFS has recognized the most impactful achievements in vertical flight,” said Angelo Collins. “This year’s recipients showcase the remarkable capabilities of vertical flight aircraft and the dedicated teams behind their design, maintenance, and operation.”

The Captain William J. Kossler Award honors the 207th Aviation Battalion, Alaska Army National Guard, for a historic humanitarian response during Typhoon Halong, evacuating 501 civilians in the largest such mission in National Guard history.

The Grover Bell Award recognizes two teams: the National Research Council of Canada’s AASCEND team, which demonstrated autonomous rotorcraft operations in a live military exercise, and the U.S. Army DEVCOM ARCTIC team, which advanced high-fidelity autonomy testing in complex simulated environments.

The Supplier Excellence Award goes to Advanced Rotorcraft Technology, Inc. for its widely used modeling and simulation tools that enable high-fidelity analysis and accelerate rotorcraft innovation worldwide.

The Robert L. Pinckney Award recognizes Airbus Helicopters’ Rotor Blade Team for industrializing a breakthrough manufacturing process for the H145 five-bladed rotor system, improving scalability and production efficiency.

The Harry T. Jensen Award honors the Chinook Airframe MSG-3 Team for pioneering data-driven maintenance optimization, significantly improving reliability and reducing sustainment burden.

The Frederick L. Feinberg Award recognizes John Rucci of Sikorsky for advancing autonomous and optionally piloted rotorcraft through groundbreaking flight demonstrations.

The Leonardo International Fellowship Award honors the H-47 UK Extended Range Certification Team for establishing a unified multinational airworthiness framework.

The Howard Hughes Award recognizes Bell's High-Speed VTOL Track Test Team for a first-of-its-kind "stop-fold" rotor demonstration enabling transition to high-speed jet flight.

Two sites were also designated as Vertical Flight Heritage Sites: the Sikorsky Aircraft Stratford Facility and Bell Textron Canada Mirabel facility, recognized for their lasting contributions to helicopter innovation and manufacturing.

The Vertical Flight Society
2700 Prosperity Ave, Suite 275, Fairfax, VA 22031 USA
+1-703-684-6777 | staff@vtol.org | www.vtol.org

Valerie Sheehan
Vertical Flight Society
+ +1 703-684-6777
[email us here](#)

Visit us on social media:

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