

One year with AW101: The mobile finder is a life-saving tool in the new helicopters



AW101 Sar Queen was put into operation on Ørland in May this year. (Ole Andreas Vekve / The Armed Forces)



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Surveyor backpack conjures up "digital twin" for new signaling system on Flåmsbanen



The Sun: It has been a year since 330 Squadron was finally able to use its new rescue helicopters of the type AW101 Sar Queen.

The only thing missing was that the helicopter that took over 47 years after Sea King became operational contributed with some technological advances.

It's not just about increased range and lifting capacity: When the squadron itself is to highlight one thing that has contributed positively to the search and rescue work, there

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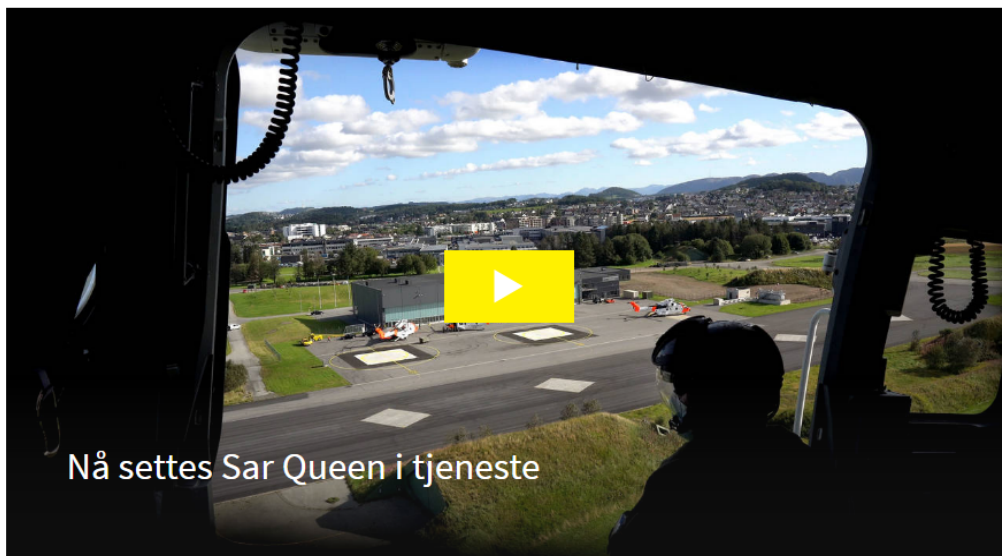
MPDLS

- In my opinion, this is one of the most important new sensors we have on board. It is a "game changer", said Major Pål Kullerud, who flies AW101 for 330 Squadron on Sola, at the Sola Conference. He was invited to talk about some of the experiences after a year of operations with the new helicopter.

The Norwegian rescue helicopters are the first to have the system installed, called the Redstreak Mobile Phone Detection and Location System (MPDLS), and were developed by Leonardo and Smith Myers.

Teknisk Ukeblad [mentioned the system](#) when it was being integrated into the helicopters' avionics at the Leonardo factory five years ago. MPDLS tracks and locates cell phones that are out of range, typically in the mountains or at sea. Here, the helicopter will act as a flying base station and either call or text the phone, or triangulate the position.

At the conference, it was revealed that it is now being further developed, so that the position with 0.5 meter precision can be forwarded to hand-held equipment that rescuers on the ground use, which can provide great progress, for example after avalanches. Kullerud and his colleagues hope this will be in place soon.



This is from when AW101 took over the emergency preparedness at Sola a little over a year ago.

More Leonardo people in Norway

With regard to the phasing in of the new rescue helicopters, the statistics after the first year of operation indicate that it has been successful and that the AW101 has met the high expectations.

Kullerud presented figures for 1 September 2020 to 1 September 2021 which show that emergency preparedness has increased to 99.5 per cent on Sola, and is at the forefront of the squadron's bases.

During the first year after Sar Queen went on standby at the Sola base, 234 missions were flown with an average response time of 12 minutes and 6 seconds. That is, the time it takes from the alarm goes ("scramble") until the helicopter is in the air, at any

time of the day.

With regard to support for the AW101 system, it is the supplier Leonardo who, through a PBL agreement, guarantees a contracted fleet availability. A key organization in this context is the Joint Aircraft Availability Maintenance Office (JAAMO), which is located near the 330 management at Sola.

AW101 SAR Queen

Length: 22.83 m

Height: 6.66 m

Rotor diameter: 18.60 m

Motors: (3) [Klikk for å se mer](#)

According to key account manager Thor Gunnar Johansen, JAAMO currently has 22 employees in Norway and is in the process of increasing to 35, in parallel with the fact that they are working to increase the footprint in this country to be able to perform a larger proportion of repairs here, instead for the factory in Yeovil.

Soon three AW101 bases

After Sola, it was Ørland that in May this year was the second base to be set up with AW101. It takes 6-7 months per base to train crews and technicians.

Banak will follow later this year. Thus, large parts of the country can be covered by a rescue helicopter with greater range and speed, as well as a better ability to fly in bad weather than its predecessor.

This helps the rescue helicopters to fly more directly, whether it is to the scene of an accident or to a hospital. On the AW101 there is full ice protection on rotor blades, motors and lifts - in addition to the cruising speed being about 30 percent higher than on the Sea King.

The AW101 will be operational at all 330 squadron's six bases in the summer of 2023, but to ensure preparedness against any delays on the tampon, it has been ensured that there are three to four Sea King helicopters with enough flight hours left to be able to fly into 2024.