



## Russia's Mi-28NM 'Night Superhunter' Attack Helicopter

**OE Watch Commentary:** The Russian Federation currently fields two sole-purpose attack helicopters, the Ka-52 "Alligator" and the Mi-28N "Nochnoy Okhotnik (Night Hunter)," which are slated for modernization to the Ka-52M/Mi-28NM standards respectively. As the excerpted article from the 7 May edition of *Izvestia* explains, although both are primary sole-purpose attack helicopters in the Russian inventory, they fill slightly different niches. Generally, the Ka-52s are more maneuverable and better suited for air-to-air combat than the more heavily armored Mi-28s. *Izvestia* reports that despite different manufacturers, the radios, on-board defense systems, and weapons of the Ka-52M and the Mi-28NM will be standardized as much as possible to simplify maintenance and lower costs.

The accompanying excerpted article from the 12 May edition of *Izvestia* explains how the Mi-28NM "Nochnoy Superokhotnik (Night Superhunter)" is entering serial production and will be capable of employing Hermes-A [Гермес-А] air-to-surface missiles and Khrizantema-VM [Хризантема-ВМ] anti-tank guided missiles. The accompanying excerpted article from the 10 February edition of *Izvestia* discusses how the Mi-28NM strike helicopter will become a formidable air-to-air combatant, due to the capability to fire R-74M air-to-air missiles. As stated by *Izvestia*, The R-74M can target enemy aircraft, UAVs, and cruise missiles, and even fifth-generation aircraft. **End OE Watch Commentary (Bartles)**



Mi-28.

Source: Vitaly Kuzmin, <https://www.vitalykuzmin.net/Military/MAKS-2007/i-sWd9Phd/A>, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

***“The R-74M has a much higher range, sensitivity, and resistance to interferences. It packs more explosives, leaving no chances to any aerial target. That is why the Mi-28NM will easily shoot down an American AH-64 Apache, which will not even see it coming.”***

**Source:** Anton Lavrov and Roman Kretsul reporting development and production cycle of newest Russian attack helicopters: “Крадущийся «Аллигатор»: испытания Ка-52М завершатся через два года (The Stealthy ‘Alligator’: Testing of the Ka-52M and Mi-28NM Will End in Two Years),” *Izvestia* Online, 7 May 2020. <https://iz.ru/1008123/anton-lavrov-roman-kretsul/kradushchiisia-alligator-ispytaniia-ka-52m-zavershatsia-cherez-dva-goda>

*State testing of the newest Ka-52M strike helicopter will be completed at the end of 2022. At the present time the efforts of the military and the engineers are concentrated on accelerating the launch of its competitor, the Mi-28NM “Night Hunter” into series production...According to sources at the publication, for the time being the decision has been made to concentrate primary efforts on the Mi-28NM project. The development program for this craft will be finished sooner...The engineers’ plans also call for the automatic interfacing of the craft with the “Strelets” command, control and intelligence complex. Ground troops, spetsnaz and airborne troops will be able to exchange battlefield situation information in the automatic mode...*

*Army aviation operates at relatively low altitudes and is to a large degree subjected to the danger of shelling from the ground. Therefore, recently an attempt has been made to adapt all helicopters for use during the night. It is simpler and faster to do this with the Mi-28NM, noted Distinguished Test Pilot Colonel Igor Malikov, the former deputy head of the State Flight Test Center. “It happens that under conditions of limited resources priority is initially given to craft that are at a greater degree of readiness and require less time and effort for upgrading,” the expert related to “Izvestiya.” “In another situation the Mi28NM and the Ka-52M would be developed in parallel. But in any event both craft will be completed and delivered to the troops.”*

*As “Izvestiya” reported previously, following the modernization, the communications gear, on-board defense systems and weapons of the Ka-52M and the Mi-28NM will be standardized to the maximum extent. This is necessary to simplify and lower the cost of joint operations and technical maintenance of the two different types of helicopters...Everything depends on the mission that is assigned. One can send the more protected Mi-28 to complete the mission, or the more maneuverable Ka-52.”*

*...Competition between the combat helicopters of the Mil and Kamov design bureaus has not abated since the initial design of the Ka-50 and the Mi-28 in the 1980s. Initially the Ministry of Defense wanted to use a competitive procurement to select one of the projects for series production. But the decision was finally made to purchase both types of helicopters for Russian aviation.*



## Continued: Russia's Mi-28NM 'Night Superhunter' Attack Helicopter

**Source:** “Сезон «охотника»: Ми-28НМ готовят к серийному производству (Season of the ‘Hunter’: The Mi-28NM is in Serial Production),” *Izvestia Online*, 12 May 2020. <https://iz.ru/1009896/anton-lavrov-roman-kretcul/sezon-okhotnika-mi-28nm-gotoviat-k-seriinomu-proizvodstvu>

*The development of the Night Hunter has reached the finish line. By the end of the year, the Russian Mi-28NM strike helicopter will undergo state tests. The vehicle will have to confirm its flight and technical specifications and also conduct fire from the entire set of aviation weapons: from cannon systems and missiles to aerial bombs. This is the last phase before the end of the experimental design works and the delivery of new equipment in the inventory. The contract for the purchase of a large batch of upgraded vehicles was signed even before the official completion of all these phases. According to experts, this is a normal practice in the development of modern aircraft, so that they are not obsolete by the time they arrive in the units...*

*The helicopter will be equipped with several new types of missiles. Last year it was reported that the “Superhunter” will receive the Hermes-A [Гермес-А] air-to-surface missile. The range of such munitions will allow the Mi-28NM to attack targets at a distance of 15-20 km. Also, it will be possible to employ the Khrizantema-VM [Хризантема-вм] anti-tank guided missiles...In addition to the new weapons, the “Superhunter” has received many other design changes. The N025 mast-mounted radar station is the most notable of those. It allows the helicopter to detect targets beyond the visual range.*

*The military consider the dual command and control system to be the other important innovation. It makes it possible to steer the helicopter from any of the two seats. This will allow to use conventional vehicles for training the pilots. The basic Mi-28N did not have that capability, which made it necessary to develop a separate training version of the Mi-28UB ...The Mi-28NM will be fitted with VK-2500P engines, which are fully manufactured in Russia, as part of the import substitution program. Together with the improved all-composite rotor blades, this will increase the helicopter's cruising speed by 10 to 13 percent. Mi-28N that are currently in service with the troops will be gradually upgraded in order to approach the combat capability and the weapons inventory levels of the Mi-28NM. It is planned that the first prototype of such a modified helicopter will take to the skies this year.*



Mi-28N.

Source: Vitaly Kuzmin, <https://www.vitalykuzmin.net/Military/VDay-Training-flights-at-Kubinka-4May2017/i-5nvkQWN/A>, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0





## Continued: Russia's Mi-28NM 'Night Superhunter' Attack Helicopter



Mi-28N.

Source: Vitaly Kuzmin, <https://www.vitalykuzmin.net/Military/VDay-Training-flights-at-Kubinka-4May2017/i-3N5qgXR>, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

**Source:** Anton Lavrov Roman Kretsul, “Пятое поколение выбивают: вертолеты Ми-28НМ превратят в истребители (The Fifth Generation will be Knocked Out: Mi-28NM Helicopters will be Turned into Fighters),” *Izvestia* Online, 10 February 2020. <https://iz.ru/970000/anton-lavrov-roman-kretcul/piatoe-pokolenie-vybivaiut-vertolety-mi-28nm-prevratiat-v-istrebiteli>

*As Izvestiya was told by sources in the Defense Ministry, a fundamental decision was made regarding equipping the Mi-28NM with R-74M air-to-air aircraft missiles. They will drastically increase the helicopter's capabilities...*

*The installation of the most modern ammunition on the rotary-wing vehicle will enable it to effectively combat aircraft, helicopters, cruise missiles, and even unmanned aerial vehicles. Also known as the RVV-MD, the R-74M belongs to the class of short-range missiles. It is capable of hitting targets at a distance of up to 40 km. The munition easily destroys targets during the day and at night under any weather conditions. The R-74M was initially developed with consideration of the possibility of striking the fifth-generation F-35 and F-22 fighters. Neither an attempt to escape on the afterburners, nor intensive maneuvering will help against this missile. The homing head is immune to enemy electronic jamming and heat flares.*

*Military expert Vladislav Shurygin believes that with such powerful ammunition, the Mi-28NM will actually become a helicopter killer. “Foreign attack helicopters are currently being equipped with conventional man-portable air-defense system (MANPADS). It is the Stinger in the West, while we have the Igla or Verba,” the specialist noted. “But MANPADS pale in comparison with a full-fledged aviation missile. The R-74M has a much higher range, sensitivity, and resistance to interferences. It packs more explosives, leaving no chances to any aerial target. That is why the Mi-28NM will easily shoot down an American AH-64 Apache, which will not even see it coming.*

*A helicopter is a complex target for a modern fighter. Operating at extremely low altitudes and in the terrain folds, it is poorly noticeable for the aircraft radar. Buildings and industrial facilities provide many false reflections. The land surface camouflages its thermal wake and makes it difficult for the aircraft munitions to lock on the rotary-wing vehicle using an infrared homing head.*

*After the emergence of such missiles on helicopters, the hypothetical enemy pilots will feel less secure, the distinguished test pilot, Hero of Russia, Colonel Igor Malikov believes. “The helicopter can be invisible to radars because of the terrain,” he told Izvestiya. “You pass over it, without noticing, and then a missile chases you from behind. And you have to eject. A friend of mine recalled how such munitions were tested on a fighter: once launched, the missile went down. The pilot was already upset, thinking that it was a misfire, when suddenly it struck the training target from below -- a MiG-21 -- and literally tore it in half.*

*A helicopter, armed with a pair of R-74M will be able to employ outboard target designation from ambushes. At the same time, the latest munition's capabilities support firing without establishing visual contact with the aircraft, as they say, “from around the corner.” The homing head is capable of capturing the target after launch. In such a scenario, even the latest stealth-fighters can be vulnerable against the rotary-wing vehicles.*