Record Performances

US Coast Guard Dauphin

The HH-65 Dauphin fleet operated by the US Coast Guard (USCG) has been setting new records for flight hours, performances, availability, and mission diversity for more than 20 years.

In November 2005, the USCG fleet of HH-65 Dauphins reached the record level of 130,000 flight hours. On average, the 74 helicopters have been in service for 18 years. At the end of November, the fleet leader had flown 11,500 hours, and 75 helicopters had clocked up more than 10,000 flight hours. The average yearly flight rate for the aircraft, calculated since the HH-65 fleet entered service in the United States, is approximately 500 hours/aircraft. However, over the last five years, this rate has significantly increased to 650 flight hours per helicopter. As part of its Homeland Security role, air space surveillance has been added to the increasing number of Search and Rescue missions over the last five years. This explains the approximately 20% increase in flight rate, which has only been possible thanks to the exceptional maintainability of the fleet. In the last few months, the availability rate has largely exceeded 80% ten times more than the target usually set by the US Coast Guard.

This performance is highly significant, explains Marc Charbonnier, the Eurocopter sales engineer, because it stems from the HH-65 Dauphin’s intrinsic, well-known qualities such as reliability and maintainability, and also its overall logistic performance, which includes the effectiveness of the US Coast Guard technicians, the quality of our on-site technical support, and the availability of spare parts. This is mainly due to the enhanced availability, in terms of availability, of the HH-65 fleet, and of the other aircraft operated by the USCG, including the fixed wings. The use of the HH-65 Dauphin fleet should increase over the years ahead, under the joint effort of the growing number of missions entrusted to the US Coast Guard and the extended capabilities of the HH-65 re-engined with the Arriel 2C1. During the rescue operations in Mississippi Gulf in the wake of Hurricane Katrina, this re-engined helicopter — the Charly version — showed an amazing effectiveness and reliability. Such results will naturally lead the US Coast Guard to use this aircraft even more intensively, a certain sign that the fleet will be increased in the coming years.

The Unbeatable Record

Eurocopter on the Roof of the World

For Eurocopter, 2005 will be the year of the unbeatable record. On 14 May 2005, a production AS350 B3 Ecureuil, piloted by Eurocopter Experimental Test Pilot Olivier Delaunay and at the summit of Everest (8,850 meters), in the process beating the world record for the highest landing and takeoff. Unbeatable, this record has a permanent place in the annals of helicopter history. Eurocopter thus remained true to its tradition of record breaking, which has instilled the company for many decades now, and several of these records still stand today (see inset). These performances testify to the excellence of Eurocopter’s aircraft, and the know-how of the men and women who work daily to improve and enhance the satisfaction of their customers.

The World Records Still Held by Eurocopter

- 13 May 2005: Dennis Prost broke three records on the same day with an SA341 Gazelle: spent 3 hours 40 minutes on a route from Digoin to Paris, overflying the Pyrenees, and French Alps, covering 1,422 kilometers at an average speed of 431 kilometers per hour.
- 2 June 1973: Jean Boulet broke the altitude record with an SA315 Lama, climbing to 12,452 meters.
- 16 February 1980: Bernard Pasquet and Max Jalent set this speed record over a specific route: Paris-Orly, with a distance of 1,766 kilometers, at an average speed of 321 kilometers per hour.
- 19 November 1991: Guy Dabadie, at the controls of an AS350 B3 Dauphin, broke the speed record over a straight 3,000-kilometer course, with an average of 372 kilometers.
- 16 April 2005: Etienne Desailly piloting a production AS350 B3 Ecureuil broke the world climb record: 2,000, 4,000, and 9,000 meters in respectively 2 minutes 21.5 seconds, 5 minutes 6.5 seconds, and 9 minutes 26.6 seconds.

A Look Back At 2005

- 24 March: The New Zealand Defense Ministry chooses the NH90 to equip its armed forces.
- 4 April: The Eurocopter fleet — with more than 9,300 helicopters in service — reaches the 60 million flight hour mark.
- 6 April: The first Tiger in the UHT version is delivered to the German Army.
- 7 April: Nine years after first entering service, the 400th EC135 is delivered to the company Transporter Aerocopter.