Record Performances

US Coast Guard Dauphin

The HH65 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.

© USCG

The cooperation between Eurocopter and the USCG has been enhanced by a new contract for the installation of re-engining kits on 11 HH65 Dauphins. The work on four aircraft is also being performed in parallel at the American Eurocopter site in Mississippi.

In November 2005, the USCG fleet of HH65 Dauphins reached the record level of 900,000 flight hours. On average, the 96 helicopters have been in service for 18 years. At the end of November, the fleet leader had flown 11,546 hours, and 35 helicopters had clocked up more than 10,000 flight hours. The average yearly flight rate for the aircraft, calculated since the HH65 fleet entered service in the United States, is approximately 550 hours/aircraft. However, over the last few years, this rate has significantly increased to 660 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 three years.

This explains the approximately 20% increase in flight rates, which has only been possible thanks to the exceptional serviceability[1] of the fleet. In the last few months, the availability rate has largely exceeded 80%: ten percent more than the target usually set by the US Coast Guard. "This performance is highly significant," explains Marc Chaffanet, the Eurocopter sales engineer[2], "because it stems from the HH65 Dauphin's intrinsic, well-known qualities such as reliability and maintainability, and also the overall logistic performance, which includes the effectiveness of the US Coast Guard technicians, the quality of our on site technical support[3], and the availability of spare parts. This result is even more noteworthy as the HH65 fleet, in terms of availability, is far ahead of the other aircraft operated by the USCG, including the fixed wings!"

The use of the HH65 Dauphin fleet should increase over the years ahead, under the joint effect of the growing number of missions entrusted to the US Coast Guard and the extended capabilities of the HH65 re-engined with the Arriel 2C2. During the rescue operations in Mississippi 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 intensely, a certain sign that the fleet will be increased in the coming years. ■

Christian Da Silva

[1] portion of time that the aircraft is flightworthy
[2] Customer Support, assigned to Washington DC, responsible for communications with the USCG
[3] Manager of American Eurocopter provides technical support to the USCG at the maintenance center in Elizabeth City, North Carolina

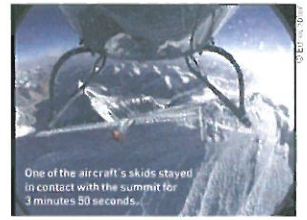
The Unbeatable Record

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 Didier Delsalle landed atop the summit of Everest (Nepal) at an altitude of 8,850 meters, in the process beating the world record[1] for the highest landing and takeoff. Unassailable, this record has a permanent place in the annals of helicopter history. Eurocopter thus remained true to its tradition of recordbreaking, 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. ■

Monique Colonges

[1] Pending ratification by the Fédération Aéronautique Internationale



One of the aircraft's skids stayed in contact with the summit for 3 minutes 30 seconds.

THE WORLD RECORDS STILL HELD BY EUROCOPTER

- **13 May 1971:** Denis Prost broke three records on the same day with an SA341 A Gazelle: speed over a straight three km course, speed over 15-25 km, and speed over a closed circuit of 100 km.
- **21 June 1972:** Jean Boulet broke the altitude record with an SA315 Lama, climbing to 12,442 meters.
- **8 February 1980:** Bernard Pasquet and Max Jot set the speed record over a specified route: Paris-London, with passengers, in an AS365 N Dauphin, at an average speed of 321.91 km/h.
- **19 November 1991:** Guy Dabadie, at the controls of an AS365 N Dauphin, broke the speed record over a straight 3 km course at an average of 372 km/h.
- **14 April 2005:** Didier Delsalle piloting a production AS350 B3 Ecureuil broke the world climb records to 3,000, 6,000 and 9,000 meters in respectively 2 min 21 s, 5 min 6 s, and 9 min 26 s.

This event showed that the AS350 B3, at almost 9,000 meters, and with winds of 65 knots, was capable of operating within acceptable safety conditions.

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A LOOK BACK AT 2005

31 March

The New Zealand Defense Ministry chooses the NH90 to equip its armed forces.

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[1] version is delivered to the German Army.

[1] Unterstützungshubschrauber Tiger

7 April

Nine years after first entering service, the 400th EC135 is delivered to the company Transportes Aéreos Pegaso.