CHC HELICOPTER INVESTS IN VIRTUAL REALITY TRAINING FOR SEARCH AND RESCUE TECHNICAL CREWS

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CHC Helicopter has successfully completed a trial collaboration with Priority 1 Air Rescue to deliver ground-breaking Virtual Reality training for its Search and Rescue technical crew members. The trial involved winch operators from CHC's operations in Ireland. With the trial successfully completed, CHC will roll out Priority 1's VR training for all new Winch Operators – starting in Ireland, with a view to it being adopted in other markets worldwide. The investment demonstrates CHC's dedication to delivering industry leading safety standards.

Adopting next generation VR simulations for training enables CHC's technical crew members to prepare and practice emergency procedures for a variety of challenging SAR events in a safe, controlled and realistic environment; including procedures that couldn't be practiced in a live aircraft. This innovative method is the first of its kind to be accepted by the European Aviation Safety Agency ('EASA') and Irish Aviation Authority ('IAA'), representing a unique development in the provision of safe, effective and reliable helicopter services globally.

Guided by third party experts at Priority 1's state of the art training facility, CHC's technical crews can perform and redo winch operation procedures in mock cabins and a range of weather conditions until perfected. They can also practice for emerging sectors in a realistic way, such as supporting Offshore Wind platforms.

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Dennis Groeneveld, Director Flight Standards, CHC, commented: “Safety is at the heart of CHC’s global operations. Our mission is to keep our people and passengers safe as we travel to remote and challenging destinations. We are delighted with how the trial performed and are excited to roll the programme out more widely.

“Our technical crews must be properly prepared to perform emergency procedures and deal with challenging circumstances. This ground-breaking partnership with Priority 1 allows our crew members to repeatedly practice managing complex situations in a realistic but safe environment, ensuring they are fully equipped to act quickly and effectively in real world SAR events.”

Steve Barreau, Chief Operating Officer Priority 1 Air Rescue France, said: “Our SAR training courses have been developed and designed with industry partners to equip them with the skills and abilities to perform optimally in any circumstances. Our Advanced Aircrew Mission Simulators (AAMS) are perfect for this type of realistic Search and Rescue training, and particularly for events that can't be practised in reality. It has been fantastic to see CHC Ireland crews making full use of our facilities to further their skills and practice complex procedures.”

Implementing this new form of VR training also supports CHC’s sustainability commitments by allowing training to be completed in a reduced time period of just eight weeks, compared to the industry standard of nine months.

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