FRENCH NAVY TAKES DELIVERY OF FIRST H160 FOR SEARCH AND RESCUE MISSIONS

News / Manufacturer



The French Navy has taken delivery of the first of six H160s that will perform search and rescue missions. The aircraft is part of the interim fleet that will be delivered by the partnership formed between Airbus Helicopters, Babcock, and Safran Helicopter Engines.

Bruno Even, CEO of Airbus Helicopters, commented: "The delivery of the first H160 to a military customer is a major milestone for the H160 programme. This is the first public service version of the H160 to be delivered worldwide. Furthermore, the delivery takes place soon after two H160s entered into service this summer, in Brazil for the private and business aviation segment and in Japan for news gathering missions", he added. "With this H160 we will strengthen our partnership with the French Navy, delivering the right helicopter for its critical search and rescue missions. Together with our partners, we will also ensure that the H160 is ready when needed".

In 2020 the French Armament General Directorate (DGA) signed a contract with Airbus Helicopters, Babcock, and Safran for the delivery of four H160s in a search and rescue (SAR) configuration. In 2021, the DGA confirmed an option for two more H160s. The first H160 for the

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French Navy was delivered to Babcock by Airbus Helicopters in May 2022. It has since then been modified into a light military configuration by Babcock. The modular cabin was also adapted for SAR operations and a Safran Euroflir 410 electro optical system was integrated.

The H160 will gradually start operating from the Lanveoc-Poulmic naval air station (Brittany), Cherbourg airport (Normandy), and the naval air station in Hyères (Provence). The interim fleet of H160s will ensure critical search and rescue missions while awaiting the delivery of the H160M Guépard. In the frame of the French Joint Light Helicopter (Hélicoptère Interarmées Léger: HIL) programme, 169 H160M Guépards are foreseen to replace five types of helicopters in service with the French armed forces. The French Navy's operational feedback with these H160s will benefit the design of the military version of the aircraft and its associated support system.

Babcock, in partnership with Airbus Helicopters and Safran Helicopters Engines, will ensure the highest level of availability for the French Navy and the continuity of SAR operations on the Atlantic and the Mediterranean coasts. Built by Airbus Helicopters, the H160 is certified for the use of night vision goggles, which are necessary for winching operations at night.

The H160, as a next generation medium twin engine aircraft, powered by Arrano engines, is modular by design in order to address missions ranging from offshore transportation, private and business aviation, emergency medical services, and public services.

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