HIRATAGAKUEN STRENGTHENS JAPAN'S AEROMEDICAL OPERATIONS WITH AIRBUS FLEET

News / Business aviation, Manufacturer

Kansai-based helicopter operator Hiaratagakuen welcomed its second H145//BK117D-2 today, following the milestone delivery of its first unit in December 2017. Currently operating 14 H135 and one H145//BK117D-2, this new H145//BK117D-2 will join Hiratagakuen's growing fleet to support emergency medical service (EMS) missions, and serves as a passenger and material transport. The first H145//BK117D-2 has already entered service in June 2018 for aeromedical operations at the Nagasaki Medical Centre in Nagasaki Prefecture.

With Japan's full-scale deployment of air ambulances in 2001, EMS helicopters, otherwise known as 'Doctor Helicopters', have taken on more prominent roles in the country, enabling rapid evacuation of casualties from affected sites, and providing critical care without delay aboard medically equipped helicopters, while in transit to the medical facility. In 2010, the Kansai government implemented region-wide EMS support network and Hiratagakuen became its main operator of these life-saving missions. Today, there are over 50 helicopters supporting emergency medical missions in 42 prefectures across Japan.

Mitsuhiro Hirata, Vice President, Aviation Operation Division of Hiratagakuen said at the delivery ceremony: "Operating in a time-sensitive EMS environment where every second matters, it is important for us to be equipped with the right helicopters for these demanding

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aeromedical missions. We have been well supported by a strong Airbus fleet for nearly two decades, especially with the recent introduction of the H145//BK117D-2 helicopters into our operations. We are confident that the timely addition of the second H145 helicopter will augment our aeromedical operations, as we continue to perform life-saving missions safely in the country."

Olivier Tillier, Managing Director of Airbus Helicopters Japan commented: "Airbus is happy to play a supportive role in Japan's EMS ecosystem, especially with the first EMS-configured H145//BK117D-2 entering service into Hiratagakuen's fleet early summer this year, joining soon by its second unit for aeromedical operations. Given its flexibility, agility and high operational efficiency, we know that our H145//BK117D-2 will continue to lend capable support to Hiratagakuen's every EMS mission."

The H145//BK117D-2 is developed in co-operation with Kawasaki Heavy Industries to deliver excellent performance throughout the flight envelope. It comes with the state-of-the-art Helionix avionics suite and designed-in mission capability and flexibility, especially in high and hot operating conditions. With a large cabin, a compact airframe and powerful engines, the H145//BK117D-2 is the aircraft of choice for a variety of missions including EMS, air rescue, law enforcement and aerial work. More than 1,400 H145//BK117D-2 helicopters have been delivered worldwide, achieving close to 5 million flight hours.

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