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As I sit here to pen my first “Note from the Editor, I reflect on the fascinating industry that we all share. Very few professions require the skills and mental aptitude to perform everyday tasks which the role of a helicopter pilot requires. The knowledge, proficiency and attitude required to perform the most basic flight, and make it ordinary, is something that few people possess or job titles require.

There is a reason why the vast majority of helicopter pilots are type A personalities. The meek or timid would find the demands of our jobs overwhelming, even on the most ordinary day. Now throw into the mix a less than ideal situation, emergency or failure and the psychological strength it takes to successfully deal with that situation takes a special kind of individual, or at the very least, a specially conditioned individual.

This self reflection is often not apparent due to the fact that we are surrounded by professionals that we strive to emulate. Of course, the pitfalls to this condition is if we are emulating the wrong kind of pilot. Especially early in our careers a pilot that flies a helicopter in a manner that would be considered “cowboy” could look to be skillful in the eyes of the less experienced aviator. As we gain experience and knowledge we find that these individuals are steps away from becoming an NTSB report. But as a whole, the vast majority of our senior industry role models demonstrate the professionalism that we endeavor to mirror.

If you sit down with a group of helicopter pilots the “war stories” will be endless. Enthralling tales of “there I was...”. Books have been written and movies have been made of our experiences, but at the end of the day it is a job that we just enjoy doing.

At HeliOps we strive to bring insight into that world and continue to educate and improve our mental understanding of the complex world of rotary wing flight. Through images and text we aspire not only to entertain but to cultivate the knowledge base of our readers.

I would like to thank Ned and all the contributors here at HeliOps for the opportunity to facilitate our conversion month after month on the helicopter industries intriguing role in the world of aviation. From firefighting to news, from EMS to flight training, from high altitude rescues to military special ops, the exploits of our fellow pilots are fascinating to say the least. The study of others experiences and adventures gives us the opportunity to be better and more knowledgeable pilots. Education on airframe components and emergencies better prepare us for the tasks in the cockpit. Insight on operational aspects, insurance and rule making gives us an understanding of the behind the curtain activities that keep our industry moving along. To have a role in bringing our readers these stories is an honor and is testament to the true professionals that I have had the privilege to work with.

From my first day behind the stick of a helicopter in Cannes, France I have had the chance to learn and work with people that I truly admire. I have had the opportunity to experience mission profiles that validated my decision to embark on becoming a helicopter pilot. From my role as an instructor at FlightSafety, Eurocopter and EuroSafety, to flying tours and charters in the US Virgin Islands, to working on the AEGIS program landing on US Naval ships, to hooking and slinging drones to shore, to flying EMS pediatric patients, to high altitude rescues – this industry has provided me with a career that I am very proud of.

As you sit back and reflect from your first day at the controls of a helicopter to the position you now hold, be proud of the hard work and tenacity it took to get you where you are now. We are part of a unique club. We are helicopter pilots.

Fly Safe! ■

GLEN WHITE
EDITOR