



Press Release

INVERNESS SEARCH AND RESCUE HELICOPTER SERVICE LAUNCHED

- Inverness search and rescue helicopter base set to go live -

The launch of the Inverness civilian UK search and rescue (SAR) helicopter service was marked today (Tuesday 17 March) in a ceremony held at the new SAR base at Inverness Airport.

Bristow Helicopters Ltd, a UK limited company, was awarded the ten year UK SAR contract by the Department for Transport in March 2013 and will deliver the service on behalf of the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) from ten bases strategically located close to areas of high SAR incident rates.

These bases will go live in a phased approach with the first bases at Inverness and Humberside due to begin receiving taskings from the Aeronautical Rescue Coordination Centre (ARCC) on 1 April 2015.

Bristow crews will deliver the UK SAR helicopter service on behalf of HM Coastguard with state-of-the-art helicopters, equipped with the latest search and rescue technology including night vision, mission management and increased onboard medical capabilities.

The base was officially opened by Richard Parkes, Director, Maritime Operations at the MCA and was attended by representatives from the Royal Air Force 202 Squadron. Also in attendance were other search and rescue organisations with whom Bristow and HM Coastguard have been working closely, and a host of invited guests who have been instrumental in preparing the new service.

Richard Parkes, Director, Maritime Operations at the Maritime and Coastguard Agency said: "HM Coastguard has been providing search and rescue helicopter services in Northern Scotland for over thirty years. Today I am immensely proud to be welcoming our third civilian base in Scotland, at Inverness.

"I would also like to pay tribute to the outstanding work that RAF Lossiemouth has carried out over many decades, both inland and out to sea. We will ensure that their legacy is continued."

Samantha Willenbacher, Director of UK Search and Rescue at Bristow Helicopters Ltd, said: "It is an honour to have been chosen to deliver this vital service across the UK. We know this is a service that people rely on in times of great need and we are committed to continuing the great work of the military.



“We have enormous respect for the dedication that our military colleagues have demonstrated in delivering search and rescue over the past 70 years and we have always understood how vital it is that their knowledge and expertise is maintained. We have worked closely with them in preparing for the civilian service to go live and have also welcomed many of them into the new civilian SAR force.

“I would like to thank all of those here in Inverness, from RAF Lossiemouth, and around the UK who are supporting us in our preparations for the service going live.”

The company’s aircraft and crews have been at the Inverness base since January 2015 making preparations for the service going live and conducting a raft of training exercises with local search and rescue partners.

The base is led by local Inverness man Chief Pilot Captain John McIntyre. Captain McIntyre started in aviation flying fixed wing aircraft from Inverness Airport after being awarded a flying scholarship through the Air Training Corp. He joined Bristow Helicopters in 1989 and graduated from the company’s cadet training school. During his career he has flown oil and gas and military support missions in Europe, Africa and the Falkland Islands as well as SAR operations and crew training in the UK, Holland and Libya.

Captain McIntyre said: “Everyone here at the Inverness search and rescue base is very grateful to the local community for making us feel so welcome and we are very much looking forward to delivering a first-class lifesaving service to them. Close ties and good working relationships are vital to our success and I am happy to say that we have had nothing but positive support and feedback from our colleagues in the military and other emergency service organisations whilst establishing the base here. I also really appreciate the support we’ve had from Highlands and Islands Airports and the Inverness Airport Business Park.”

Inglis Lyon, Managing Director of Inverness Airport operator HIAL said: “We welcome the opening of Bristow’s new search and rescue base at Inverness Airport. The new facility represents a significant investment by Bristow, both in terms of its training and operational capability, and Inverness Airport is proud to serve as the Highland base for this vital service.”

David Hastings, Chairman of Inverness Airport Business Park, said: “Bristow’s state of the art search and rescue centre is a significant new addition to Inverness Airport Business Park. This facility represents a major investment by Bristow and we are delighted to welcome such an important addition to the business park. It is a development which underlines the valuable role Inverness Airport plays as a magnet for investment in the area.”



The UK SAR base at Humberside will also go live on 1 April 2015, while Caernarfon and Kent will go live on 1 July 2015, followed by St Athan on 1 October 2015. Prestwick and Newquay will become operational on 1 January 2016 and the remaining three bases at Lee-on-Solent, Sumburgh and Stornoway will follow in 2017.

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For further information please contact the Bristow Helicopters Communication team on 01224 806 602 or via bristow@webershandwick.com

Notes to Editors:

About Bristow Helicopters Ltd

Bristow Helicopters Ltd is the leading provider of search and rescue (SAR) services in the UK, on behalf of Her Majesty's Coastguard, having been awarded the UK SAR contract and the Gap SAR contract for Northern Scotland. Bristow Helicopters has a long history of providing world class SAR services in the UK, beginning in 1971 and has flown more than 44,000 SAR operational hours in the UK and conducted over 15,000 SAR missions, during which more than 7,000 people have been rescued by our crews and helicopters. For more information on Bristow's SAR operations, please visit www.bristowsar.com

Bristow Helicopters Ltd. has served the offshore oil transport industry in the UK for nearly 60 years. Bristow Helicopters Ltd. is an affiliated company of Bristow Group Inc.

About Bristow Group

Bristow Group Inc. is the leading provider of helicopter services to the worldwide offshore energy industry based on the number of aircraft operated and one of two helicopter service providers to the offshore energy industry with global operations. The company has major transportation operations in the North Sea, Nigeria and the U.S. Gulf of Mexico, and in most of the other major offshore oil and gas producing regions of the world, including Australia, Brazil, Canada, Russia and Trinidad. For more information, visit the Company's website at www.bristowgroup.com