Over 362 Years
For PHI Aircraft

At approximately 11 a.m. on May 22, one of Petroleum Helicopters' 305 rotary wing aircraft logged the company's 3-millionth flight hour. This achievement is a first not only for PHI but for the entire commercial helicopter industry as well.

Robert L. Suggs, president of the pioneer helicopter firm, noted that three million flight hours is the equivalent of 342 years.

"The distance covered in those three million hours of flying time is just as significant," Suggs said. "PHI's helicopters have flown a total of 259 million miles, equivalent to 443 round trips to the moon, or about 12,300 times around the world at the equator."

Suggs referred to the three-million-hour milestone as a tribute to the 1,960 men and women of PHI, including 680 pilots, 1,125 mechanics and maintenance personnel, and 155 administrative and communications specialists. Suggs said the most important factor in realizing the 3-millionth flight hour has been the "team spirit and dedication of the PHI staff to the highest standards of helicopter flight operations and maintenance."

The bulk of PHI's services are employed in the transportation of oilmen and supplies to and from offshore drilling rigs and production platforms. But the 30-year-old company's helicopters have been engaged in many other diverse activities.

PHI aircraft have played key roles in some spectacular operations, too. There was the rescue during the Hurricane Donna of 216 Puerto Ricans from rooftops and trees; the landing of the first passenger on Mt. Whitney; the first midair catch of a NASA suborbital rocket payload; the first "off airways" instrument flight of a commercial helicopter; the development of special helicopter communications systems and weather service.

Suggs noted that PHI has always made its aircraft available for emergency operations, such as transporting Red Cross relief personnel, surveying flood damage with public officials, assisting local government agencies in the planning of industrial development sites and aerial inspection of public works projects.

Commenting on the unique achievement of the 3-millionth flight hour, Suggs expressed appreciation for the cooperation of the citizens and elected officials of Lafayette, Morgan City and New Orleans, where PHI's flight operations and executive offices are headquartered. He also cited other cities and towns where PHI operates flight bases: in Louisiana at Cameron, Houma, Intracoastal City, Leeville and Venice; in Texas at Galveston, Freeport, Rockport and Sabine; and in New Jersey at Atlantic City.

PHI's fleet of 305 rotary wing aircraft includes a variety of helicopter types — Bell Jet Rangers (206B and 206L models), Bell 212's, Boelkow 105's, and Aerospatiale Pumas and AStars. It is the world's largest commercial helicopter fleet.

The company is also an authorized service center for Bell Helicopters, a Federal Aviation Agency repair station and a distributor and service center for Aircraft Radio Corporation, Bendix, King Radio and Wulfsberg Electronics. A PHI subsidiary, Evangeline Airmotive, Inc., is a distributor of Avco Lycoming LTS-101 turbine engines and parts.

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