AAR COMMENCES SEARCH AND RESCUE OPERATIONS FOR UK MINISTRY OF DEFENCE IN THE FALKLAND ISLANDS

News / Business aviation

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AAR announces its Airlift division has commenced operations for Search and Rescue (SAR) and Support Helicopter (SH) services for the UK Ministry of Defence in the Falkland Islands.

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AAR Airlift Group, together with British International Helicopters (BIH) and Air Rescue

Systems (ARS), is delivering turnkey SAR and Support Helicopter services to the British Forces South Atlantic Islands (BFSAI) operations. Team AAR is providing Finmeccanica AW-189 SAR helicopters, Sikorsky S-61N support helicopters, flight operations, maintenance, logistics, facilities support, and personnel management at the Mount Pleasant Complex in the Falkland Islands and the surrounding maritime region. The mission includes 24/7/365 all-weather SAR, helicopter emergency services, rescue hoist operations and passenger and cargo transfers.

Following award of the 10-year, $275 million (£180 million) contract in January 2015, AAR sourced two new AW-189 aircraft customized by Finmeccanica to meet the program requirements. The aircraft were accepted in November 2015. This program premiers the first Civil Aviation Authority approved AW-189s operating in a SAR role.

“AAR has integrated a team of industry experts to deliver to the UK Ministry of Defence a sophisticated commercial SAR service fit for a military and civil application, the first operation of its kind,” said Steven B. Harrison, President, AAR Airlift Group. “We are committed to providing a reliable, quality SAR service that maintains the standards of the Royal Air Force, as well as continued excellence for the commercial support helicopter services.”

AAR Airlift Group provides expeditionary airlift services in support of contingency operations worldwide. The Company provides passenger and cargo transport, air ambulance, night vision operations, search and rescue (SAR), airdrop, and other special mission services. AAR Airlift Group includes Rotorcraft Services, a provider of engineering and design for rotorcraft modifications and completions, asset sales, component repair, life cycle support programs, and field maintenance. AAR Airlift’s fleet of fixed-wing and rotary-wing aircraft serves defense and NGO customers in Afghanistan, Africa, the Mediterranean, Indian Ocean and Western Pacific, and now the Falkland Islands. Since 2005, AAR Airlift Group has flown more than 242,000 hours, delivering over 302 million pounds of mail and cargo, and transporting more than 1.9 million passengers in remote and austere locations around the globe.

British International Helicopters (BIH) is the largest British-owned helicopter operator with a fleet of 25 principally owned helicopters employing over 150 personnel. The company has particular expertise in offshore operations and in the defence sector, operating the Flag Officer Sea Training (FOST) helicopter support programme for the Royal Navy and providing the Ministry of Defence with helicopter services in support of British forces in the Falklands. BIH also provides Police and Air Ambulance capability and utility/commercial helicopter charter services. Rigby Group plc, the ultimate holding company for BIH, was formed in 1975 and is the parent company for a portfolio of privately owned and highly successful businesses operating across Europe, the Middle East and North Africa.

ARS is a premier provider of Advanced Helicopter Operations training solutions and delivers response services worldwide to Search and Rescue, Law Enforcement, Fire Department, Military, Utility and Commercial Operators. The company is an FAA 133 Certificate holder and FAA 141 training school with a focus on 133 operations. ARS’s state-of-the-art flight training facilities offer single and twin-engine aircraft and mountain, urban and off-shore advanced helicopter training operations. As an ISO 9001: 2008 Manufacturer of Advanced Helicopter Operations Equipment, ARS designs and builds the most innovative and safety oriented helicopter response equipment available.

01 APRIL 2016

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