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19 October 2012 | last updated at 12:51PM

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### Six pilots with 1,000 flying hours honoured

By Adrian David

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KUALA LUMPUR: Six pilots, who achieved a minimum of 1,000 flying hours with the AgustaWestland AW139 helicopter, were honoured by the leading aviation company in the country.



Vincenzo Alaimo (left) handing over a plaque to Gen (rtd) Tan Sri Muhammad Ismail Jamaluddin.

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Weststar Aviation Services Sdn Bhd chief executive officer Gen (rtd) Tan Sri Muhammad Ismail Jamaluddin and AgustaWestland Malaysia managing director and regional head Vincenzo Alaimo at their Kota Baru base in Kelantan, yesterday.

Simultaneously, Alaimo presented Ismail with a recognition for Weststar's ability to reach the impressive milestone of 20,000 flying hours with their AW139 intermediate twin-engine helicopter fleet.

"We will like to thank AgustaWestland for supporting us in achieving our 20,000 hours milestone within 18 months. We look forward to greater collaboration with AgustaWestland and hope that they will continue to provide quality service to support our operations," said Ismail.

Alaimo lauded Weststar in achieving the 20,000 hours milestone in such a short time.

"Accomplishing its missions in demanding environmental and operational conditions is great. We now look forward to celebrate future major operational milestones with this leading customer, who is set to start

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introducing into service the complete AgustaWestland family of new-generation helicopters, including the all-new AW189 and AW169 models, as we get closer to certification expected in 2013 and 2014 respectively.”

The Malaysian offshore aviation services provider, the largest in South East Asia, achieved the milestone in just 18 months.

The company, which is also the largest civil operator of AW139 helicopters in Asia, has ordered 16 AW139s with 12 aircraft already in service.

They commenced AW139 operations in April last year from their bases in Kerteh and Kota Bharu, and a forward base in Kuala Terengganu, to serve offshore oil and gas companies like Petronas Carigali, ExxonMobil, Talisman, Newfield, Petrofac, and TOTAL.

Weststar will be the first operator worldwide to benefit from the commonality in design across the AW139, AW169 and AW189 family of new-generations helicopters.

As well as possessing the same high performance flight characteristics and safety features, the helicopters share a common cockpit layout, design philosophy and maintenance concepts that will allow for more effective and efficient operations and quicker familiarisation periods for pilots and staff.

The offshore division of Weststar Aviation Services now has a total of 21 helicopters already delivered and on order - 15 AgustaWestland AW139, two AW169, two AW189 and two Sikorsky S76C++ helicopters - servicing various offshore aviation operations around Peninsular Malaysia. East Coast operations are slated to commence next year.

In the general aviation sector the company operates seven Eurocopter helicopters and one AW139 VIP helicopter as well as one Gulfstream, Boeing 737 and Boeing 727 business jets from its base at Subang.

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