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Helicopter Association International Hires Mike Hertzendorf as VP of Operations

Alexandria, Va. (August 31, 2020) – Helicopter Association International (HAI) is pleased to announce the hiring of Michael J. Hertzendorf (US Army, Ret.) as vice president of operations.

Hertzendorf will oversee HAI’s work for its members in flight operations, maintenance and technology, safety, and education. He will also work closely with HAI’s Government Affairs Department to ensure HAI members across the vertical takeoff and landing (VTOL) industry are protected from overburdensome regulations.

After a 29-year career in the US Army as a special operations aviator, Hertzendorf most recently served as CEO of NUAIR, where he was responsible for the integration, synchronization, and execution of all activities necessary to develop a National UAS Traffic Management System within New York State’s 50-Mile UAS Corridor. His background in both manned aviation and unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) has provided Hertzendorf with a unique perspective.

“Mike brings an exciting skill set to HAI, and we’re very happy that he joined us,” says James Viola, president and CEO of HAI. “This is a great time of excitement in the international VTOL industry—exciting and challenging, as we integrate an entirely new class of aircraft into the airspace while ensuring the safety of current operators. Mike’s history as an army aviator and leader, along with his work at NUAIR, means that he understands the issues and can represent the needs of both groups.”

“I’m excited to join the HAI team in these unprecedented times for aviation,” says Hertzendorf. “I look forward to advancing HAI’s global presence as well as incorporating future VTOL platforms. With their experience in rotorcraft and low-altitude operations, HAI members are well positioned to take advantage of advancements in VTOL technology that I believe will ultimately improve the economic viability of our industry.”

Hertzendorf has more than 20 years of command and leadership experience, finishing his army service as chief of staff of the 82nd Airborne Division. He holds a master’s degree in national security and strategy from the US Army War College, a master’s degree in public administration from Murray State University, and a bachelor’s degree in business administration from Ithaca College. Hertzendorf is a commercial instrument rotorcraft and private single-engine land pilot, and he volunteers on the Military Advisory Committee for Tuesday’s Children, a nonprofit supporting youth, families, and communities affected by terrorism and traumatic loss.

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The addition of Hertzendorf caps a series of internal changes within HAI's Operations Department. Chris Martino is now senior director of operations and international affairs, and Zac Noble has been promoted to director of maintenance and technology. HAI's education program has moved to the Operations Department, and Greg Brown has been promoted to director of education.

"Our Operations Department is vitally important to HAI's mission, which is to support and promote the VTOL industry," adds Viola. "With their many years of experience on the flight line and in the hangar, our Operations staff have the expertise to confront the day-to-day issues that face commercial and general aviation operators, as well as manufacturers. Our restructuring of the department will help HAI to better serve the needs of our members and to promote a safe, efficient, and economically viable operating environment for the VTOL industry."

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HAI is the professional trade association for the international helicopter industry. HAI members represent more than 3,000 aviation businesses and individuals who safely operate more than 4,500 helicopters approximately 2.3 million hours each year in more than 73 nations. HAI is dedicated to the promotion of the helicopter as a safe, effective method of commerce and to the advancement of the international helicopter community.

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