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BLI: Two 1 HS UH-1N Hueys take BLI status

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Senior Airman Amanda McCarty

Two UH-1N Huey helicopters from the 1st Helicopter Squadron recently obtained black letter initial status, indicating the aircraft had no maintenance discrepancies when released for flight.

DynCorp International Andrews Support Division Helicopter Branch is the maintainer for the 19 helicopters assigned to the 1 HS, the largest helicopter squadron in the Air Force.

"Our DynCorp maintainors are part of the 1 HS, not a contractor attached to provide service," clarified Lt. Col. Timothy J. O'Brien, 1 HS commander. "Their 'we can, we will' attitude is awesome and truly commendable."

DynCorp maintains the helicopters on a day-to-day basis and a phase inspection is completed every 200 flying hours. The phase team inspects and makes required repairs. A large number of repair checks are then performed in flight.

"Every effort is made to ensure the absolute minimum number of write-ups are carried forward," said Shelton G. Lacy, DynCorp Helicopter Maintenance Branch manager.

Although it has been a year since the squadron's last BLI, 10 of their 19 helicopters have achieved this status.

The two aircraft with recent BLIs, tail numbers 69-6661 and 69-6630, both flew with zero discrepancies in July, which marked the first-ever BLI for 69-6661.

Colonel O'Brien noted the squadron's success was due to teamwork.

"Our relationship and the successes it breeds are truly a showcase of how it should be for the Air Force," said Colonel O'Brien. "Where else does a civilian contract maintainer provide 16/18 or 17/18 aircraft flyable day after day, seven days a week, especially on 35-year-old helicopters?"

The team effort of crew chiefs, the phase inspection team, supply personnel and flight crews led to the accomplishment, agreed Mr. Lacy.

Two black letter initials are such an accomplishment because it's a rare occasion, said Mr. Lacy.

Many aircraft never receive a single BLI and some maintainers go their entire careers without experiencing the milestone of having a BLI aircraft, said the branch manager. "These facts plus the aircraft's age makes this a noteworthy event."

"DynCorp strives to meet or exceed our customer's requirement in quality, safety, services and responsiveness and to continually improve our processes to support the SAM Fox tradition of our customer," he said. "We strive to be the best helicopter maintenance branch in the Department of Defense."

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