

AN INTRODUCTORY FLIGHT IN AN EX-MILITARY HELICOPTER - IMPORTANT INFORMATION

The risks associated with flying in a Westland Scout or Wasp Helicopter

INTRODUCTION

The following information is essential reading if you are considering flying as a passenger in an Ex- Military Westland Scout or Wasp Helicopter. The risks encountered are higher than those associated with flying in a modern civilian helicopter and could result in a serious injury or even death in the event of an accident. This flight is being operated as an "Introductory Flight" by Dragonfly Aviation and Captain Mark Cowley under the terms of its (DTO) Declared Training Organisation in accord with CAA Guidance given in CAP 1653 "Introductory Flights – Guidance to Operators"

The flight does not come under the terms of CAP 1395 "Safety Standards Acknowledgement and Consent (SSAC)" as the helicopters do not need to be operated in accord with CAP 632 for Ex-Military Aircraft due to their light weight, as opposed to a very heavy helicopter such as a Huey. However, in line with SSAC guidance this document seeks to inform you of the reduced safety standards when flying in any Ex-Military helicopter as opposed to a modern civilian helicopter. Once you have read this document you should have sufficient information to make an informed decision as to whether the risks are reasonably acceptable to you.

Prior to the flight, you will be required to acknowledge you have been provided with this information and consent to the increased level of risk.

If at any time up until engine start, you decide the level of risk is unacceptable to you, a full refund will be made of any of payments that you have made for the introductory flight.

BACKGROUND

Certain activities such as flying as a passenger with an airline have a legitimate expectation of a very high level of safety. In contrast, some adventurous activities, such as horse riding, bungee jumping, parachuting, or motor sport present a higher level of personal risk which participants need to readily consent to as part of the recreational value of taking part. Flying as a passenger in a Westland Scout or Wasp even with a very experienced pilot, is an adventurous activity and comes with some increased level of risk.

WHAT ARE THESE RISKS?

The risk can be described as the likelihood of a hazard occurring and the severity of the outcome should it occur. The potential hazards are wide-ranging and can be broadly divided into two categories. Firstly, those generally encountered when flying in any single engine helicopter with a single pilot anywhere in the world, and secondly those specific to flying in an Ex- Military Westland Scout or Wasp helicopter.

NON-AIRCRAFT-SPECIFIC RISKS

If you choose to fly with Dragonfly Aviation in the Scout or Wasp helicopter you may encounter the following hazards. The list is not exhaustive, but it identifies some of the more significant items, with details as to how I as the pilot attempt to mitigate these risks. Please note that all these 'non-aircraft-specific risks' are like those encountered if you were to charter any small commercial helicopter on a sight-seeing trip or single engine aircraft.

Pilot Incapacitation: I have a regular CAA medical which includes an ECG and other tests to ensure that I am in good health. Like passengers in most other single pilot aircraft, you will not be wearing a parachute, so in the highly unlikely event of me as the pilot becoming incapacitated you would not have the option of leaving the aircraft by evacuating with a parachute on.

Personal Health: Before flying, you will be required to confirm that you are fit to fly and do not suffer from any serious medical conditions. If you are fit enough to drive a car, you do not suffer from any serious medical condition, and you have not got a cold or sinus infection, then your health should be adequate to fly as a passenger.

Apart from your physical health, you should also have the mental capacity to remember some straightforward emergency procedures that I will explain to you on the ground and in the helicopter before flight, and a degree of physical strength and movement to execute them. If you are in any doubt, please obtain further medical advice.

Mid-Air Collision: We operate in what is termed 'uncontrolled airspace'. Simply put, if you are flying in a large passenger aircraft, air traffic control will ensure your separation from other aircraft, so the chance of a mid-air collision is extremely remote. In contrast, I operate the Westland Scout and Wasp in 'uncontrolled airspace', which means that I am responsible for ensuring my own separation from other aircraft on what is called the 'see and avoid' principle. Naturally, I keep a good look out and I encourage you to help me manage this risk by pointing out any other proximate aircraft that you might see. The chance of being involved in a mid-air collision is low. Other hazards that can be encountered include birds, overhead wires, drones, and trees, again I am trained to avoid these.

Regulatory Oversight: Although I am a commercial helicopter pilot with many thousands of hours experience, gained in over forty years of flying, the CAA cannot issue me with an approval to carry passengers commercially in the Westland Scout or Wasp as it is not a helicopter that was ever designed for civilian use. The Westland Scout and Wasp fall outside the scope of CAA guidance given in CAP 632 Operation of Ex-Military Aircraft due to their relatively low weight and therefore cannot be operated in accord with SSAC (Safety Standards Acknowledgement and Consent) rules. However, such approval is not required for a simple introductory flight.

It is important to understand that the governing legislation around private flying is considerably lighter than that associated with commercial air transport (flight with airlines), and it is significantly less than that provided for operators such as British Airways or EasyJet with their aircraft.

Aircraft Maintenance: The Ex- Military Westland Scout and Wasp helicopters are maintained to very high standards by a CAA approved specialist helicopter maintenance organisation. The servicing is conducted in accordance with a schedule agreed with the CAA and involves regular inspections throughout the year. These range from the daily checks, through to 25, 50 and 100-hour inspections to the in-depth 'Annual Check'.

Design Standard: The Westland Scout and Wasp were designed in the 1960s as fighting machines in a military environment with an expectation of a limited operational life. Whilst we know that the basic design is very sound and can comfortably withstand the stresses of air-to-ground or seaborne combat, the helicopter was designed to carry combat troops and weapons systems NOT for the carriage of fare-paying civilian passengers. The commercial aircraft of today are designed to significantly higher standards and benefit from the latest technology and materials. Inevitably, whilst a well proven design, any flight in an historic aircraft exposes you to a greater risk than flying in a modern Robinson, Bell, MD or Eurocopter helicopter.

AIRCRAFT SPECIFIC RISKS

The following risks are those specifically associated with flying in a Westland Scout or Wasp Helicopter:

Turbine Engine or Component Failure: Engine failure could be a possibility. The Rolls Royce Nimbus engine is a turbine engine designed in the late 1950s and 1960's. This is regularly serviced and inspected according to the rules required by its CAA Permit to Fly.

In the event of an engine failure, I am trained to perform an auto-rotation procedure which will allow me to make a controlled emergency landing.

Whilst I am an experienced pilot with many thousands of hours, an engine failure at a critical time could result in a significant accident and always carries some risk of serious injury or even death.

There are several other non-normal situations that could occur as the result of component or other failure, but you can be assured that I am experienced and tested on an annual basis to manage such events.

HOW DANGEROUS IS IT?

Unfortunately, there is insufficient data to quantify the risk accurately, but I believe it is likely to be slightly higher than that related to other recreational aviation activities. In January 2011, the CAA provided data for a 10 year period which indicated a fatality risk of around one death per 100,000 flying hours. The chances of injury will be higher.

WHAT IF SOMETHING DID GO WRONG?

The aircraft is fully insured for third party and passenger liability with a combined single limit of at least £5.0M. If you hold personal life assurance or similar policies, you should make your own enquiries as to the extent of cover whilst participating in an adventurous activity such as this.

SUMMARY

I have covered above some of the major hazards associated with undertaking a flight in a Westland Wasp or Scout Helicopter. Whilst I try and mitigate these risks down to a level as low as reasonably practicable, the residual risk is still greater than that associated with flying as a passenger on a large multi-engined commercial helicopter. There is always the possibility of a serious injury or even death because of participating in this flight.

I believe you should now have sufficient information for you to make an informed decision as to whether you wish to consent to these risks and to fly with me as a passenger, or not. However, if you do require any further information before deciding, please contact me on 07860 634760 and speak to me directly and I will be pleased to answer any further questions you may have.

Finally, please remember that:

If at any time up until engine start, you decide the level of risk is unacceptable to you, a full 'no-quibble' refund of your payment will be made.

The helicopter creates a very noisy environment and although you will be given a headset or hearing protection it may not be suitable for children of the age of twelve and under or those with some physical or mental impairment, without close supervision from a responsible adult. Children must be seated in the back of the helicopter with the responsible adult and away from any flight controls.

INDEMNITY DECLARATION

I agree that neither I nor my heirs, executors or administrators will make any claim against Dragonfly Aviation and Mark Cowley the pilot, his respective servants or agents in respect of any loss or damage to property or injury to person (including resulting in death) which I may suffer and I, so as to bind myself, my heirs executors and administrators, hereby indemnify Dragonfly Aviation and Mark Cowley and his respective servants or agents against any claim which may be made by any third party against him arising out of any act, neglect or fault on their part

I confirm that I have reviewed the indemnity declaration and read this information sheet, and I understand and accept the elevated risks in flying in this vintage helicopter, I am in good general health and would be capable of passing a medical to drive a vehicle.

Name..... Name..... Name.....

Signature..... Signature..... Signature.....

(If aged under 16 the signature and consent of a parent, guardian or carer is required)

Date.....

Introductory Flight V5 (April 2023)