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**Neo Aik Sia Named Recipient of HAI's Salute to Excellence
Safety Award**

Alexandria, Virginia (March 03, 2021) – Helicopter Association International (HAI) is pleased to announce rotorcraft industry professional Neo Aik Sia, is the 2021 recipient of the association's Safety Award. The award, sponsored by BLR Aerospace, recognizes an individual for outstanding contributions to the promotion of helicopter safety and safety awareness.

Neo Aik Sia joined the Junior Flying Club in 1972 in his native Singapore before he could even drive a car. He later earned his private pilot airplane rating six months after graduating from high school.

Neo was conscripted into the Singapore National Service shortly after school. Seeing an opportunity to stay in aviation, he opted to leave the service three months later to enlist full-time with the Republic of Singapore Air Force (RSAF) as a pilot officer. Once in the RSAF, he found his calling in safety.

Throughout his 29-year career at the RSAF, Neo progressively advanced through the ranks in areas where he could champion safety culture and implement safety programs. Throughout his service, he held multiple positions including head of accident prevention, senior staff director and lecturer, director of operational development, senior pilot, and squadron commander.

Neo was eventually responsible for all RSAF aircraft, maintenance, and ground safety and accident prevention programs. He developed and implemented a safety management system (SMS) in 2000 that has since proven its effectiveness through reduced accidents and incidents. Now retired from the RSAF, he uses his experience to help develop and refine SMS programs for civilian organizations.

After migrating to the United States in the early 2000s, Neo obtained his FAA airline transport pilot, ground instructor, and advanced instrument ground instructor certificates. He later worked with Air Methods, flying air ambulance, search and rescue, and maintenance test-flight missions in multiple locations across the United States.

In 2016, Neo was hired as the safety, quality, and standards manager for the Vision Technologies Aerospace subsidiary Aviation Academy of America, a national and international airline flight training academy in San Antonio, Texas. There he developed and implemented SMS and quality assurance system programs aimed at achieving and sustaining a zero-accident record.

SAFETY AWARD

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Most recently, Neo served as regional safety director at Blue Hawaiian Helicopters promoting safety and implementing an SMS program and the FAA's Aviation Safety Action Program across Blue Hawaiian's companies. He was also appointed as an FAA Safety Team (FAASTeam) representative.

Neo's passion is driven by the belief that all accidents are preventable. He mentors members of the industry on the need to understand accident causation, human factors, SMS, and the incredible importance of adopting safety excellence and safety culture as a way of life to eliminate accidents.

"Building a positive safety culture by changing mindset, attitude, and behavior is the biggest challenge of implementing a safety program," Neo says. "Without a positive culture, the program is often implemented robotically with minimal effort. I emphasize the need to embrace safety at all levels. With total safety as a lifestyle, we all benefit—ourselves, our families, and our organizations."

HAI recognized previous recipients of the Salute to Excellence Awards through events at HAI HELI-EXPO®, the association's annual trade show. Because of the pandemic, HAI is acknowledging the achievements of this year's recipients through a variety of virtual events, including a series of webinars relevant to the subject of each award. Each individual recipient or team will also receive a trophy and publicity surrounding their work.

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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.