

The 50th anniversary of Mi-2 helicopters in the service of the Polish Armed Forces

- **The oldest helicopter unit in Poland. i.e. the 56th Air Base in Inowrocław, where – among others - PZL-Świdnik-made W-3PL and Mi-2 helicopters are quartered, celebrates the 54th anniversary of its establishment**
- **Mi-2 helicopters, with approximately 5500 units manufactured so far by PZL-Świdnik – celebrate the 50th anniversary of service in the Armed Forces of the Republic of Poland.**

Warsaw, 24th May 2017 – PZL-Świdnik, a Leonardo Group helicopter manufacturer, is pleased to inform that on 20th May this year the celebrations commemorating the 54th anniversary of the establishment of the oldest helicopter unit in Poland, i.e. the 56th Air Base in Inowrocław, were held at Inowrocław-Latkowo airfield. A special event accompanying the feast was comprised by celebrations of the 50th anniversary of introduction into service of the Polish Armed Forces of Mi-2 helicopter, whose approximately 5500 units have been manufactured in PZL-Świdnik during almost 40 years. Another accompanying event was comprised by the 5th Kuyavian Helicopter Picnic.

One of the most important attractions of the Inowrocław event was comprised by Mi-2 Alley, i.e. a demonstration of 11 helicopters in the service – among others - of the Police, Border Guards and Land Forces. Owing to support of PZL-Świdnik company one of the helicopters was presented in occasional painting scheme.

“The painting scheme combines history with the present times. One half of the fuselage features camouflage painting, which was present on military Mi-2 helicopters still by the end of 1990s, while the other half of the fuselage features new-uniform, dark green painting, applied presently to most helicopters of the Polish Air Force” – says major pilot Marcin Sieradzki, one of the organisers „The two painting schemes are divided by a stylized figure of a Greek warrior – a hoplite. In the times of the “Cold War” the code name of NATO for Mi-2 helicopter was “Hoplite”, which explains the Greek soldier figure” – major Sieradzki explains.

During the Inowrocław event, observers could admire in mid-air the Świdnik-made helicopters W-3PL Głuszec, SW-4 Puszczyc and W3-WA RM Anakonda, which performed a special demonstration of maritime rescue.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

The 56th Air Base in Inowrocław

The base is a military unit allocated to operations in modern combat field in close cooperation with land forces. The base was officially formed in 2011 to replace the 56th Assault Helicopters Regiment. The feast of the unit refers to the date when the first organisation order was issued to the commanders of the 56 Helicopter Regiment on 18th May 1963. Presently a number of PZL-Świdnik-made helicopters, including among others 8 W-3PL helicopters and 19 Mi-2 rotorcraft, are quartered in in the unit.

Mi-2 helicopter

Designed as a successor to SM-1 rotorcraft, Mi-2 is a multirole, twin shaft-turbine helicopter designed by Mikhail Mil's office and manufactured on mass scale since 1965 exclusively in PZL-Świdnik. In almost 40 years the production lines in Świdnik have manufactured approximately 5500 units of this model, with more than 300 delivered to Polish Armed Forces. Mi-2 helicopter was made in several civilian versions, e.g. as a transport, agricultural, training, sanitary and rescue and military helicopter, deploying – among others – missions in the field of maritime rescue, command, intelligence. Maximum take-off weight of Mi-2 helicopter is 3550 kg, and its maximum speed is 210 km/h. It can transport maximum of 9 people (a pilot + 8 passenger or 2 crew members + 7 passengers).

Last year saw celebrations of the 40th anniversary of Mi-2 SP-SBC helicopter, a machine with the longest manufacturing history in PZL-Świdnik plant. In its history it has had almost 4650 flight hours, and it was operated by approximately 30 pilots, deploying a wide range of tasks, including certification trials, e.g. of laminated rotor blades, tests of the equipment and modification of the installations of the entire population of Mi-2 and Mi-2 Plus helicopters and flights securing tests performed by other helicopters (e.g. design trials being part of Głuszec and Anakonda programmes). Mi-2 helicopters also took part in firefighting missions, performed on-demand and sightseeing flights and secured redeployment flights of helicopters purchased by clients. Still today it is used to train pilots of PZL-Świdnik, and external pilots.

Mi-2 SP-SBC deployed mission across Poland, transporting top-ranking state and local government officials, diplomats, clients and the media.