

Priority 1 Air Rescue Announces Formation of Board of Directors

Board brings together senior military special operations aviation leadership, commercial training/simulation expertise, and decades of rotary-wing experience.

MESA, AZ, UNITED STATES, August 21, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [Priority 1 Air Rescue \(P1AR\)](#), the global standard in rear-crew helicopter training, staffing, and equipment, announced today the formation of its Board of Directors. The board, established in March 2026, brings together leaders from special operations aviation, commercial flight training, and the rotary-wing operating world — a group whose collective experience reflects the same standard of rigor P1AR applies to every crewmember it trains.



P1AR Live Flight Training

“

P1AR was built by operators, for operators; this board brings expertise from some of the most respected organizations in military aviation, commercial training, and the helicopter industry at large”

Brad Matheson, Founder and President

aircrews through our program.”

P1AR has trained more than 15,000 aircrew members across 40+ countries, delivering ab initio training for the U.S. Coast Guard and MH-139 transition training for the U.S. Air Force, as well as programs for law enforcement, search-and-rescue, and utility helicopter operators worldwide.

“P1AR was built by operators, for operators,” said Brad Matheson, Founder and President of Priority 1 Air Rescue. “This board brings people who have run some of the most respected organizations in military aviation, commercial training, and the helicopter industry at large. Their experience helps us hold ourselves to the same exacting standard we always have, as more operators put their

Jon McLaughlin, Executive Chairman
McLaughlin is General Partner of
Emberline and CEO of Airworthy.com.
He has served as Senior Director of
Strategy and Corporate Development
at Erickson Incorporated, the heavy-lift
helicopter operator, and held a
director role at Pan Am World Services
(IAP). He is a private pilot.

Lieutenant General John Evans, U.S.
Army (Ret.), Independent Director
Evans commanded the 160th Special
Operations Aviation Regiment
(Airborne) — the "Night Stalkers" —
and went on to serve as Commanding
General of U.S. Army Special
Operations Aviation Command and
Commanding General of U.S. Army
North (Fifth Corps). Over his 36 years
of Army service, Evans served multiple
combat deployments to the Middle
East and was also the commanding
general of US Army Cadet Command,
supervising 975 Reserve Officer
Training Corps (ROTC) programs and
1700 Junior ROTC programs.

Brad Thress, Independent Director
Thress served as President and CEO of
FlightSafety International, the world's
largest provider of professional
aviation training and full-flight
simulation. He also spent 27 years at
Textron Aviation, most recently as
Senior Vice President of Global Parts,
Programs and Flight Operations, and previously served as President of Able Aerospace. He is a
former U.S. Air Force fighter pilot and Cessna demonstration pilot.

Ed Washecka, Independent Director
Washecka is the founder and former CEO of Waypoint Leasing, which grew to become one of the
largest helicopter lessors in the world with more than 150 aircraft under management. He also
previously served as CEO of Era Helicopters and as a Vice President at SEACOR Holdings, giving



P1AR Hoist Procedural Tower



P1AR Hoist Ops

him direct experience operating and financing helicopter fleets across the offshore, SAR, and utility sectors P1AR serves.

Chris Breaux, Director

Breaux is General Partner of Emberline and Chairman of Interra. He previously held investment banking roles at Jefferies and served as Senior Vice President of Mergers & Acquisitions at Umpqua Bank.

“Every one of these individuals has built or run something real,” said Jon McLaughlin, Executive Chairman. “They understand what it takes to operate at a high level in industries where the standard for performance is exacting — and that's the perspective we wanted at the table.”

About Priority 1 Air Rescue

Priority 1 Air Rescue is the global standard in rear-crew aviation mission training, staffing, and equipment. Its instructor cadre — full-time, multi-service, and certified to the P1 standard — delivers training across a continuum of classroom instruction, hoist procedural tower, VR simulation, and live flight. P1AR has trained more than 15,000 aircrew members across 40+ countries and holds training certifications across the FAA, EASA, Transport Canada, CAA UK, and IAA. P1AR operates training centers in Mesa, Arizona and Latresne, France.

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