

Rob Mackie

Devon Air Ambulance

Rob joined the Army in 1971 as an aircraft engineer (Airframes & Engines), a job he thoroughly enjoyed for 9 years until he worked out that pilots have a lot more fun and got to go home earlier. Having applied for, and passed, the Army flying course he completed a full tour on the SA341 Gazelle helicopter and an extended tour on the Westland Scout AH1, serving in many theatres around the world.

Leaving the Army, he started work in Aberdeen flying Multi-pilot operations to the oil rigs in the East Shetland basin in AS 332L Super Pumas, working up from 2nd Officer to gaining his Captaincy. After 3 years he was moved to Humberside to support the gas fields in the Southern North Sea sector flying single pilot, initially on the AS 365C Dauphin and, latterly, 2 crew on the 365N and N2. This operation also provided relief pilotage for operations out of Blackpool and Strubby.

In 1993 an opportunity arose to become the base pilot at the newly formed Devon Air Ambulance based in Exeter and, as Rob was born and raised in Devon, it was too good an opportunity to miss. The greater majority of flying was single pilot VFR/IFR in Bolkow Bo105's, an aircraft he also flew as a Trinity House relief pilot servicing the lighthouses and lightships from Hastings around the SW coast as far up as Anglesey. After many years flying a great workhorse Devon Air Ambulance re-equipped with EC 135 T2+ and P2+ aircraft.

In 2015, reaching the dreaded 'age 60', it was time to hang up the goggles having achieved nearly 9500 flying hrs and 7890 HEMS missions. He remains an integral part of the Devon Air Ambulance though, as their Safety Manager and CRMT, believing that 'safety' is at the heart of all good operations.