



PRESS RELEASE
For 21 June 2022

Legendary helicopter pilot's altitude record still stands 50 years on

Lausanne, Switzerland, 01 June 2022 – **The absolute record for helicopter altitude made in 1972 by celebrated French test pilot, Jean Boulet, still remains unbeaten on its 50 year anniversary.**

Boulet took the lightened Aerospatiale SA315 Lama 001 to an impressive 12,442m altitude on 21 June 1972, above Istres airfield in France. This absolute record for altitude was ratified by FAI, which holds the record dossier, as well as documents pertaining to Boulet's other FAI records.

The famous Lama helicopter was designed specifically for high altitude performance and was derived from the Alouette II with Alouette III components. The Lama had a Turbomeca Artouste III B engine and took its maiden flight in 1969.

The flight on 21 June 1972 also resulted in a long autorotation as the engine flamed out at -63°C temperature at altitude. Boulet, a highly experienced pilot, landed the aircraft safely.

Boulet gained his engineering qualification in France and trained as a fighter pilot in the USA. He joined SNCASE in 1947, which eventually became part of Aerospatiale Group. His career highlights included first flights of SE3000, SE3101, Alouette, Frelon and Puma, and he made 8000 hours of helicopter flights in his working life, and 9000 hours flying in total.

As part of the 50th anniversary celebrations of his 1972 record, Boulet's flight logbooks from between 1948-1975 were handed by his son, Olivier, to the 'Espace Air Passion' aviation museum in western France in order to preserve their historical significance into the future.

FAI Rotorcraft Commission President, Jacques Berlo, attended this ceremony and commented:

"I have always had a huge admiration for Jean Boulet and the Lama, so it was a great honour to represent FAI Rotorcraft Commission at this ceremony and meet the parties involved in this important initiative. The memory of Boulet and his achievements will live on, thanks to this public archive of his logbooks."

Jean Boulet died on 13 February 2011 and was recognised within the aviation community for his achievements and his contribution to rotorcraft history. He wrote a book called History Of The Helicopter, first published in 1982.

Notes for editors

Athlete profile: www.fai.org/athlete/jean-boulet

Record file: www.fai.org/record/11657

Photos: bit.ly/boulet1972

FAI logo: bit.ly/FAI_logo

About FAI

FAI, the World Air Sports Federation, is the world governing body for air sports and for certifying world aviation and space records. The FAI was founded in 1905 and is a non-governmental and non-profit-making organisation recognised by the International Olympic Committee (IOC).

FAI activities include Aerobatics, Aeromodelling, Airships, Amateur-Built and Experimental Aircraft, Balloons, Drones, Gliding, Hang Gliding, Helicopters, Manpowered Flying, Microlights, Parachuting, Paragliding, Paramotors, Power Flying and all other Aeronautic activities and Space records.

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