FIVE YEARS OF FLYING ABOVE AND BEYOND AT FLOYD CARLSON AIRFIELD

News / Maintenance / Trainings

This month, Bell celebrates the fifth anniversary of the opening of the Bell Training Academy Floyd Carlson Airfield. Since it's opening, the Floyd Carlson Airfield has become well-known around the world for providing a top-tier customer experience. The airfield is comprised of various runways and an elevated landing platform designed to simulate the environments that pilots may endure while operating their aircraft, ranging from navigating through rough terrain to landing during emergency situations.

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Chad Sparks, general manager, BTA, commented: “The Floyd Carlson Airfield enables BTA’s mission – to partner with our students on their journey to become the safest and most proficient pilots in the world. Together with our amazing instructors and staff, world class simulators, and interactive academics, we continue to exceed the expectations of our customers, time and time again. The BTA is honored to continue the legacy of pilot Floyd Carlson, who dared to challenge what’s possible to make the innovative advancements that we continue to build upon at Bell today.”

The Floyd Carlson Airfield also offers full touchdown autorotation – one of the many key differentiators of Bell’s customer training experience. Over the past five years, more than 8,000 customers have come from 75 countries to train at the state-of-the-art facility and learn from Bell’s expert instructors. Some BTA trainees include those from the New York Police Department, Virginia State Police, Jamaican Defence Force, Montenegro Air Force, private commercial companies, and individual pilot-owners wishing to enhance their skills.

Floyd Carlson’s lasting legacy

As a teenager, Floyd Carlson became fascinated with the aviation field. He joined Bell in the 1940s as a test pilot for early generation fighter aircraft. While the thrills of working in this position proved great for Carlson, he still had another mission at the back of his mind – he wanted to transform the nature of flight safety across all commercial and military helicopters. This thought ultimately landed him a gig that would propel him forward as a name still widely known today as ‘Bell’s most notable pilot’.

For 40 years, Carlson was the test pilot for every Bell aircraft designed and built until his

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retirement. His insights notably led to the CAA certification of the Bell Model 47, the world's first commercial helicopter to receive certification for civilian use. As this year marks 80 years after Carlson's first flight, the legacy that he created continues through every pilot that takes off from the BTA's Floyd Carlson Airfield.

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