

Hospitality

Wingless Flight



The exterior and interior of an Analar Corporation helicopter (top) and the corporation's facility in Kearny, New Jersey

An Interview with Michael Renz,
Owner and President, Analar Corporation

EDITORS' NOTE Mike Renz has accumulated more than 15,000 hours of helicopter flight time. With expertise in both flight operations and aircraft maintenance, he oversees all aspects of Analar's operations. Renz is a graduate of Decair Helicopter Flight School for Commercial Rotorcraft and of Aviation, Airframe and Powerplant Technical College at Stewart Air Force Base.



Michael Renz

COMPANY BRIEF Analar Corporation (www.analarcorp.com) is a New Jersey-based company specializing in the operations, maintenance, and management of helicopters and business jets. Analar has maintained an FAA Part 135 charter certificate since 1978. Analar has flown more than four million miles, transported over 300,000 passengers in safety and comfort, and has held the coveted ARG/US gold rating for operational excellence since 2005. Originally established as the corporate flight department for a major corporation, Analar now offers a complete array of flight services for passengers and management services for aircraft owners.

What is the history of Analar and how has it evolved since its inception?

In 1978, Analar Corporation was incorporated as a wholly owned subsidiary and designed to be the corporate flight department for Church & Dwight Co. Many executives, including the Chairmen, used the helicopters to commute every day from our Princeton, New Jersey base into Manhattan for business meetings.

I started my career working for a maintenance company called Ramapo Helicopters. Through that job, I received my airframe and powerplant technician's license in 1980. Church & Dwight and Analar were bringing their aircraft to Ramapo for maintenance and service – I was also working on my commercial pilot's license simultaneously while being an aircraft maintenance technician. Within a few years, I built up enough flying hours to satisfy insurance requirements, and at that time, Church & Dwight approached me for employment as a result of my dual ratings – requirements of being a mechanic and a pilot. I was very interested in their offer and decided to accept.

In 1986, I left Ramapo and went to work in Princeton for Church & Dwight/Analar Corporation. I was hired as Director of Maintenance/Helicopter Pilot for the company where I serviced and flew the company helicopters.

In 1992, the company started to see the effects of a downturn and, in 1993, through budget cuts, they decided to scale down the aviation department and lay off the pilots and personnel who worked for the aviation department. They were still interested in having an aviation department but one that was much leaner. As a result, I was hired due to my unique ability to both fly and maintain the company aircraft.

In 1995, with new management in place, they decided to shut down the aviation department completely. However, I was able to pull together resources to negotiate the purchase of the aviation company from Church & Dwight.

Analar is a registered trademark and for that reason, I purchased the name, the rights to the business, and the aircraft.

Once I obtained ownership of the company, it was imperative that I focus on marketing and work at building a strong charter business in order to make the company a success. This was made a bit easier due to Analar having had and maintained an FAA Part 135 certificate since 1978. This license provides the right for an aircraft owner to use the aircraft for compensation and hire.

In 2001, while building the Analar Corporation business, we derived a new concept to build and operate the first-only Helicopter FBO (Fixed Based of Operation). We were looking for a piece of property to build in New Jersey within close proximity of Manhattan. It was my intention to build a facility that catered to helicopters only, which encapsulated all the amenities you see at a corporate airport.

In 2005, we secured a piece of property at the River Terminal Development Corp in Kearny, New Jersey. We still needed to obtain a land use variance, municipal town approval, FAA/DOT permits, and a reasonable lease with the River Terminal landlord – it was a long process.

In 2010, we finally opened. We were discreet, but once the industry recognized Analar's involvement and infrastructure that we planned to create, they were excited.

What have you been able to create with the heliport? How has it been received?

The industry has received it very well. Pilots are the key people in this matrix of aviation. Pilots typically require permission from their bosses regarding which facility they utilize, but ultimately, the pilots will go where the best amenities are.

We have developed a world-class facility. We're leasing seven of nine acres – the other two

acres are reserved for a second hangar, which we received approval for in September 2012.

We are able to build a facility with a 24,000-gallon capacity Jet A Fuel Farm. We service the corporate and public helicopter community itinerantly within the New York area, provide a Class-A pilot lounge for pilots waiting in between flights, and have maintenance staff on-hand if unscheduled maintenance is required. The facility also features a 30,000-square-foot hangar where we can currently store up to 25 helicopters. When the second hangar is complete, the facility will be home to more than 45 helicopters.

We envisioned a full-service helicopter facility – not just a place to stop in and buy fuel.

What do you say to those concerned with the safety of helicopters?

Helicopters have always gotten a bad rap, but the majority of incidents revolve around helicopters that are operating in harsh or unfamiliar terrain like Medi-Vac, electronic news gathering, police aviation, firefighting, etc. If you look at corporate flying – which typically involves flying between heliports and or airport to airport – helicopter flying is extremely safe. Typically, 90 percent of accidents are pilot error; you won't see many mechanical related accidents with helicopters. The technology today is very advanced and if applied in the proper manner, it's truly a safe means of transportation.

I'm a check airman for our company, so I'm designated by the FAA to give check rides to our pilots – this translates into a stringent training sequence every year; we complete in-house training with tests and book work, and then we go out in the aircraft and fly. We practice emergency procedures, engine failures, hydraulic failures, tail rotor failures – everything that is required by the FAA and on a routine basis. We've prepared ourselves for the time we might be required to act during an unlikely event. In all my 15,000 hours of commercial flying, I personally never had an "in-air" emergency with a helicopter. This should give you some indication regarding the safety of helicopters.

Do you still fly personally?

Yes. I'm a hands-on CEO. After 30 years in the business, I still love what I do, I'm still the lead mechanic for the company and it's something that I am passionate about because our number one concern has always been safety. Every aircraft within our company is personally test flown by me and certified before it's returned to transport passengers. It has paid off in our unbelievable track record. ●