

Police Aviation News

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APSCON Omaha Issue

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APSCON 2019

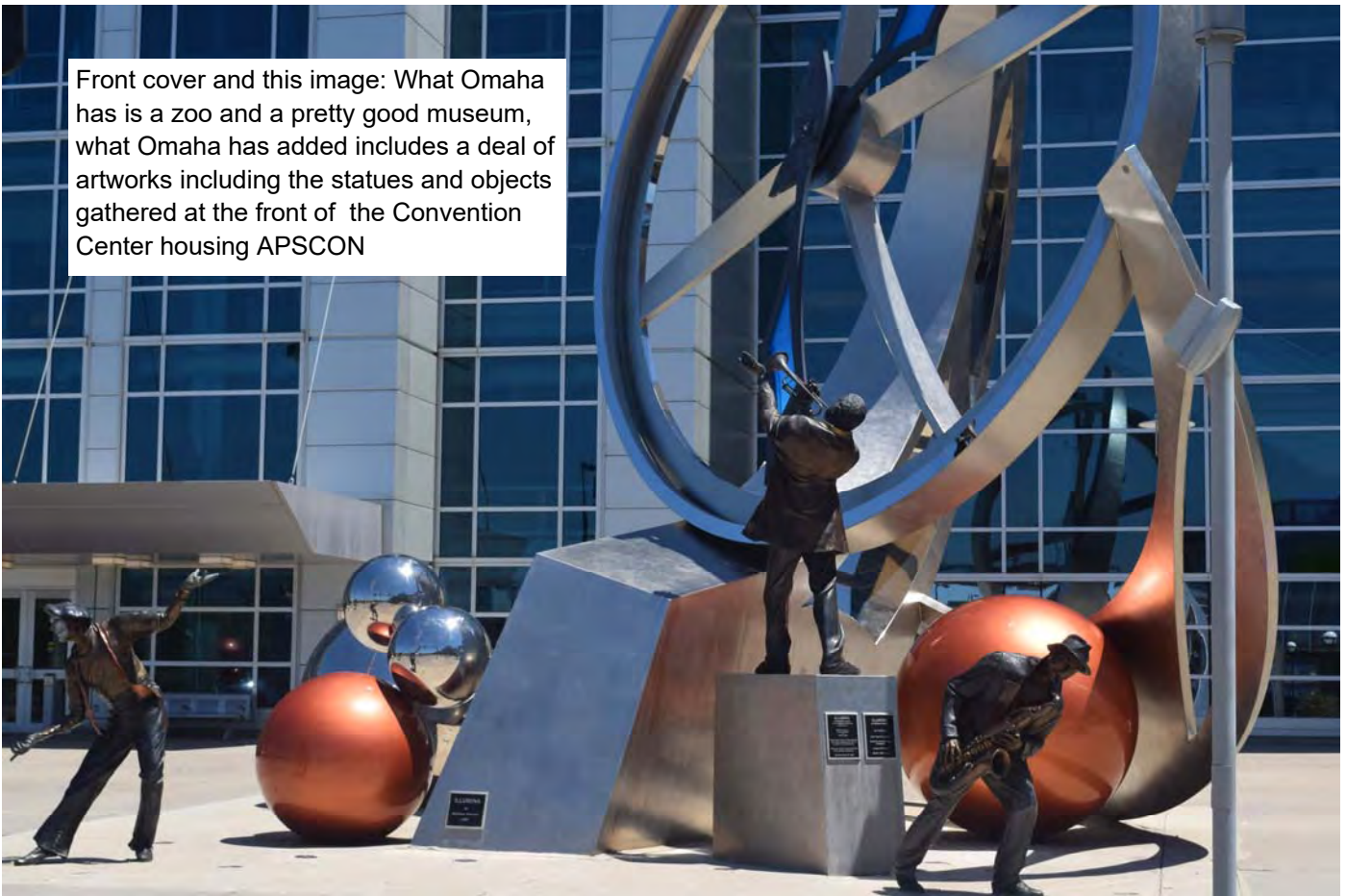
APSCON 2019
OMAHA, NE | JULY 15-20



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This year APSCON 2019 the 49th Annual Conference & Exposition was held at the CHI Health Convention Center in Omaha, Nebraska, a northern US state that was seeing a first ever visit from the organisation [APSA/ALEA] www.publicsafetyaviation.org

Front cover and this image: What Omaha has is a zoo and a pretty good museum, what Omaha has added includes a deal of artworks including the statues and objects gathered at the front of the Convention Center housing APSCON



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As is generally expected the APSA events are held in heat of summer in locations that offer good rates to conventions and that generally means that no-one else wants to be there. There are set Venues like Houston and every few years a wild card new venue is introduced to give other states an opportunity to have the event close by. They do not always work out. In Omaha the weather that Nebraska offered was even hotter than usual and even the local people stayed inside – a common theme of chatter among those attending.... “Where are the people?”. Even at the world-famous zoo the animals steadfastly stayed in the cool while visitors peered fruitlessly to see them. Downtown Omaha was similarly deserted.

The event made full use of the oddly named convention centre and the adjoining Hilton hotel and the very welcoming people of Nebraska [when found].

As ever the local connection was to make use of nearby APSA members to act as joint hosts of the event. In this instance the hosts were the Nebraska State Patrol and the Omaha Police Department – both small air units supported by their ground-based colleagues in the task.

Omaha Police have a small unit based on the use of DoD Surplus Bell OH58 helicopters. They are currently operating from the international airport close to the venue but have plans to move their operation to a new facility. Although officers were present at the event there was no aircraft displayed, a fact that related to the small number of resources they have and a recent minor damage only accident to their operational airframe.

The Nebraska State Patrol is based at the State capital town of Lincoln, a city smaller than Omaha and 60 miles to the west.

With a history that goes back to traffic patrols in 1946 the Nebraska State Patrol purchased its first helicopter, a new 1970 Bell 206B Jet Ranger. In 1979 that helicopter was replaced with a 1979 Bell 206BIII Jet Ranger, and the following year supplemented by three Cessna 182RG's. Over a period of nearly 30 years these aircraft have flown a combined 40,000 flight hours serving Nebraska.

The agency's five aircraft, a Bell 407 and three Cessna T206H Turbo-Stationair and a Piper Super Cub



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fixed wing operate almost daily on duties including aerial speed enforcement, traffic observation and search and rescue.

Utilising Troll's future-proof mission equipment, Nebraska State Patrol automates air and ground transmission and reception while simplifying the ability to simultaneously capture and transmit live video to local agencies, field operations and distant command centres. These new capabilities include tactical IP diversity antennas and receivers to connect airborne, tactical and command personnel to managed cellular and secure networks. These systems enhance legacy infrastructure while providing a path to expand coverage, improve connectivity and enhance interoperability with local agencies and existing equipment. Troll also supplies the dual-polarized SKYLINK MINI II is a multi-axis, stabilized, high-gain antenna that is automatically steered toward airborne or ground assets. This allows the Mini II to focus all its signal energy in a narrow beam, increasing received signal level, reducing the need for amplification while maximizing range and throughput.

The main draw of the APSCON event is training, most of the week being set aside for education related to aviation and observation. With some classes there are certificates to be earned – a pointer that allows the unit boss to demonstrate the worth of the time away from the unit and the inevitable cost of attending and paying for the courses.

For the first time in many years a European police aviation unit has sent officers for training and for the inevitable networking. The Netherlands, this year's national host for the PAvCon Europe event in Amsterdam, sent four officers for TFO related training and they came away with 'Trained Thermographer' certificates. The two-day Airborne Thermographers Certification Course is spread over a full 9-hour day and sponsored by FLIR.

The Safety seminar towards the end of the first full day of the event drew a respectable crowd mainly drawn from delegates



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rather than exhibitors and attracted participation by the Netherlands Police contingent a move that added a very different slant to discussions that have traditionally been Americas orientated.

The prime focus of the Safety Seminar programme was on TFO training and the different ways in which each operation sought to meet its needs.

Not for the first time the massive chasm between the well-funded Netherlands training and that achieved by most US operations was brought into focus. As larger national organisations European police long ago won the arguments over the need for training. That does not extend to sending trainers across to the USA or any other place, so it remains a cash limited resource. The smaller fragmented US units must fight many individual cases and that is where APSA excels for their support. It also excels in making its trainers available for foreign missions including the support of PAVCon Europe.

During their recent trips to PAVCon in Amsterdam in June both Clay Lacey (Texas DPS) and Bryan Smith (Florida and APSA Safety lead) had come to appreciate the differences but few others had.

US units struggle to find decent training of TFO crew, and most must make do with a short duration, days or maybe weeks course, the Netherlands have the luxury of months, nine months, to train up their new TFOs.

The panel was comprised of members of five US units with a single Netherlands representative.

The co-located exhibition was only running over three days, a 'Sneak Preview' on one evening followed the next morning by an official ceremonial opening that this year included bagpipes, the Union Flag and national anthem that stamps the event as US focussed even though there is significant Canadian membership of the Board.

A long-standing attendee at past ALEA events, Churchill pulled out all the stops for its appearance at



Local media was interested in the event and the visitors... Dutch TFO Rene Bloemberg faces the camera.



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APSCON. In addition to a large booth space with a large display wall they had a trailer mounter control room parked immediately outside the convention centre to control the signals coming in from their sensor equipped Cessna 208 Grand Caravan N208CN. The latter was based at the airport to enable it to undertake sorties over the show and to take up potential clients.

Churchill Navigation's new demonstrator aircraft for its ISR products is kitted out as a Special Mission ISR aircraft with four 24-inch touch screens in four workstations and several external sensor loads. All the equipment is fully removable, allowing the operator to use the airframe in a freight or passenger carrying role on demand with very little weight penalty.

Dakota Air Parts returned to exhibit at APSCON 2019, offering support and parts for the different platforms including UH-1 series, OH-58A/A+/C, OH-6, Bell206B and 206L series, MD500 Series, T53 Engines, Rolls-Royce M250 engines, and more!

Dakota currently have in-stock Rolls-Royce M250 engines including M250-C47B and C47M models, T63 engines, Bell 206 main rotor blades and compo-



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nents for OH-58 and Bell 206 as well as the UH-1. They have a new to market, composite tail rotor blades available for Bell 206 series helicopters. It is a direct replacement for Bell 206A and 206B series helicopter tail rotor blades.

While Wescam remains as a sales brand the company is now part of L3 Harris Technologies, Inc. and the new branding was very much on show.

The company claims that by merging L3 Technologies, Inc. and Harris Corporation, they have created a global aerospace and defence technology company. Their combined business volume and future growth prospects will provide a significant opportunity for suppliers to provide best-in-class performance, quality and pricing. It does however further reduce the number of independent entities in the industry www.L3Harris.com

Following the introduction of the industry leading DVCS6100 digital intercom system in 2008, Becker Avionics is now offering the innovative AMU6500. This new generation digital intercom system incorporates several advanced features such as 3D audio technology and Bluetooth compatibility. 3D audio allows for customizable left or right channel separation into crew helmet or headsets for corresponding left or right engine or system(s) malfunction(s). Selectable channel separation of left or right audio radio frequencies for complex missions with multiple radio frequency operations is also available. Enhanced safety and efficiency by reducing crew workload along with improving situational awareness were primary design considerations of the AMU6500 at Becker Avionics.

Additionally, the AMU6500 digital intercom provides for Bluetooth pairing of cell phones, MP3 players, or tactical headsets that have this capability. The new system can control up to 12 separate radios with a weight and space reduction by integrating the Remote Electronic Unit (REU) into the intercom head that otherwise would be installed on the avionics rack.

StandardAero has received another order for its highly successful AS350/EC130 crash-resistant fuel tank (CRFT), developed in cooperation with Robertson Fuel Systems, a HEICO company based in Tempe, Arizona, this time from the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (LASD).

The initial order is for one CRFT, as the LASD prepares to progressively upgrade their existing fleet with modern safety improvements. The CRFT kit is expected to be delivered to the LASD for field installation by their selected provider, Hangar One Avionics in August. LASD is one of several U.S. parapublic operators to adopt the CRFT into their fleet in the coming months.

The AS350/EC130 CRFT is constructed of extremely durable composite material, based on proven military technologies from Robertson, and has been rigorously tested and approved to the highest safety standards, fully compliant to FAA FAR Part 27.952 fuel system crashworthiness requirements. In addition to being approved for virtually all variants of the popular AS350 helicopter series, including

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the EC130 B4, CRFT customers operating B2 and prior variants can now take advantage of a \$25,000 training credit made available by Airbus Helicopters for installing the CRFT on their eligible aircraft. www.standardaero.com.

Norwegian MRO Heli-One was exhibiting its Americas based support facilities in BC Canada on its Omaha booth but at the same time it was announcing more details on its long-standing and renewed contracts with the Bundespolizei in Germany.

The latest contract is an agreement for further helicopter upgrade work on the legacy Puma fleet. The contract with the German Federal Ministry of Interior to modify its incoming Airbus H215 fleet and existing AS332 Super Puma aircraft. The project covers four H215s with an option for an additional 16 AS332L1/H215 aircraft and in its entirety will take up to eight years. The work will take place at the company's Stavanger facility, and each aircraft will have dozens of modifications with the latest technology to make it flexible and mission-ready for its complex operational use. The German Federal Ministry of Interior will benefit from Heli-One's experience in developing and implementing industry-leading modifications with a focus on crew requirements.



The fleet is operated by the Federal Police (Bundespolizei), providing public safety services for German citizens and participating in international missions. Its large and diverse fleet will see four Airbus H215 helicopters enter service in 2020 to join the existing 19 AS332L1s, 42 H135s (and variants), 19 H155s, and 10 H120s. The aircraft perform a range of missions including search and rescue, border security, maritime

 An advertisement for FLIR featuring a white and black LAPD helicopter in flight against a city skyline. The helicopter has "LAPD" and "N267LA" visible on its side. The background shows a dense urban landscape under a clear sky.

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The contract focuses on installing mission equipment to harmonise the H215 with the existing fleet. Each H215 will receive over 50 modifications, including cabin installations, communication and navigation equipment, search lights, cameras and rescue equipment. Additional AS332L1/H215s will also have upgrades to bring them up to operational conformity with the fleet.

Heli-One has worked closely with the Bundespolizei for years and has been performing a glass cockpit in the AS332L1s for some years.

The Australia based Mahindra/Gippsland Airvan manufacturer has seen some success with selling its aircraft into US law enforcement community as an alternative to the smaller Cessna high wing singles. They have seen introduction to such as the CHP and CAP in some numbers. At Omaha they had a low-key presence sharing a booth with Air Bear.

In a shock development during the show both the GA8 and GA8-TC 320 aeroplanes, all serial numbers were grounded after a July 14 fatal accident occurred to a GA8 Airvan in Sweden. It turned out to be a short-term setback but awkwardly timed for the APSCON show.

During a flight where the purpose was to drop parachutists the GA8 suffered a structural failure at 4,000 metres altitude and crashed killing all nine aboard. A wing detached from the aeroplane prior to the accident and the cause was initially not confirmed. The Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) of Australia, the authority of the State of Design of the affected type design, issued a legal instrument, temporarily prohibiting operations of the GA8 Airvan in Australia, which took effect on 20 July 2019 and planned to be valid for 15 days. Based on all available information at the time, and considering the Australian legal instrument, EASA issued Emergency AD 2019-0177-E to prohibit all flights, thereby grounding the affected aeroplanes registered in EASA Member States, until further notice. Since that AD was issued, CASA Australia informed EASA that the results of the physical inspection of the accident aeroplane indicate that it appears to have been exposed to aerodynamic loads beyond those for which the type design is certificated. Within days EASA decided to allow GA8 aeroplanes to fly again.

Most evenings of the event brought entertainment, mostly sponsored by the larger and more able of the MROs. Bell hosted the opening reception in the Hilton Hotel and Airbus held the closing event in a nearby



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bar, the Blatt Beer & Table.

In between the two there were the Night Vision Awards Reception followed by the ever-popular Pig Pickin' Banquet and FLIR Vision Awards held in the convention centre. These very popular events require several sponsors to cover the inevitable costs.

Long term night vision goggle users picked up a crop of awards. The ten-year service award marks the operation that has flown with night vision goggles and went to Boston Medflight and Spokane County Sheriffs Office. The 15-year award went to Los Angeles County Fire Department and Santa Barbara County Air Support have been operational for 20 years – they also picked up a Mark of Excellence Award.

These awards were not all confined to the USA, three Australian operators in the State of Victoria laid claim to the National Advancement Service Award for championing NVGs outside America.



Will the venerable Bell 47 see a return to law enforcement?

It is a large group but only seeks to represent the winners in that most of the faces are from the sponsors! Nonetheless we have Tom Roberts, pilot LA County, Mike Reno, Vertical Magazine, Adam Aldous and David Luke of Nightflight Concepts, Vikki Rosplosh, ASU, Lyn Burks Rotorcraft Pro, Twain Josephson, Jake Hart and Eldin Elvira of ASU, Mark Onorato, Boston Medflight, Corporal Jeff Welton and Deputy Krystal Bitser TFOs, Lt. Steve Jones and Undersheriff Dave Ellis all with Spokane County Sheriff's Office.



For many years now MD Helicopters have supported a music spot called Duelling Pianos that followed the FLIR Vision Awards, but Lynn Tilton pulled the finance for their party before the event. A sign of the times, MD is more into the foreign defence market these days, and there are precious few rewards for them in law enforcement with their Vietnam era helicopters. Of the other projects there was no news.

The event was announced in the Conference Preview but was not in the final programme, so it was no last-minute let-down of APSA.





The effective end to the event is the Awards Reception held in the Hilton hotel across from the Convention Center. At this attendee are reminded of the various educational scholarships announced at the opening meeting and then proceedings move into handing out a range of tokens to mark aviation units that have achieved the Accreditation standards of the Airborne Public Safety Accreditation Commission.

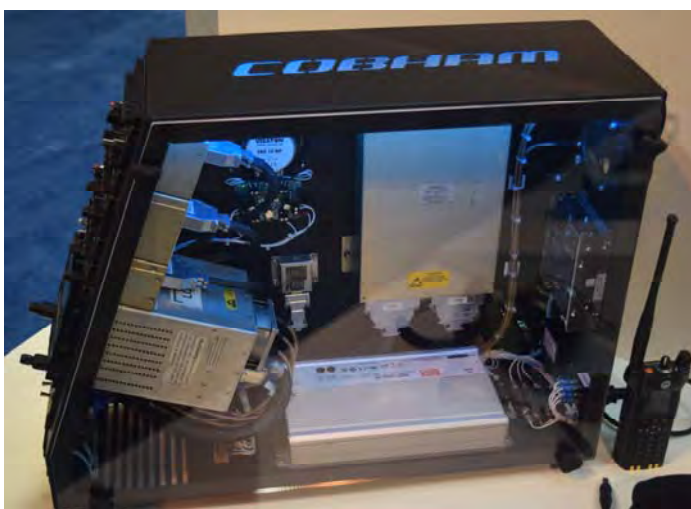
These cover a range of standards varying from the standard to the difficult and relate to management, operations and flight safety. APSCON itself is about bringing together a broad range of skills and providing education. Without the APSA standards there would be nothing, so it is very much a case of the industry seeking to regulate itself and very much in its infancy even now.

On the night the units joining those in Accreditation, or enhancing their own levels achieved, were the California Highway Patrol, Atlanta PD., Metropolitan Nashville PD and Pinellas County Sheriff.



The main fare of the Awards were seven categories sponsored by industry but not judged by them, they mark a broad set of skillsets including lifetime achievement, bravery and technical capabilities both on the ground and in the air. The only requirement is that the recipient must be a member of APSA.

This year's recipients were Tod Yates, he was retiring from being Master Sergeant with the Oklahoma City PD ASU and he received the Robert L Cormier Award. This award identifies and recognizes an individual or individuals whose personal efforts or actions have perpetuated the professionalism and advancement of airborne law enforcement in public service. It acknowledges activities during any period, including lifetime achievement. One of his lifetime achievements was reequipping his unit with new airframes and on the floor of the exhibition was an H125 of Oklahoma PD. The helicopter was displayed by Airbus and the award was sponsored by Bell. These awards are not type specific and that regularly brings up several odd situations.



Bob Cormier was an Lt. with Dallas PD, an ALEA member and editor of Air Beat who died in a crash on July 24, 1984. He was being piloted by James C Taylor in a Bell 206B3 N16981 when they struck the 523' unsupported communications tower located on top of the radio shop at the central maintenance garage. Both pilots perished in the subsequent crash.

For the first time in all these years Cormier's widow Mary was present at the awards presentation with her son Michael. She spoke briefly and with great pride in the continued link with her late husband and the award. As the sponsor, Bell subsequently entertained her.



The Captain "Gus" Crawford Memorial Aircrew of the Year Award went to two officers from San Diego County Sheriff's in California for a rescue they undertook. The Airbus sponsored award identifies and recognises an individual and/or crewmember(s) whose flying efforts and profes-



sionalism epitomize APSA's motto, "To Serve and Protect from the Air." Two Deputy Sheriff's, William Liniewicz and Michael Davis. They traced and managed extricate a man from freezing waters and certain death skilfully using a new static line which they had not had time to train on.

The 2019 Technical specialist Award sponsored by Safaran was awarded to Edward Orzechowski of St Johns County Sheriff's Office in, St Augustine, Florida for his maintenance of their fleet of Bell OH58 aircraft.

This award identifies and recognizes an individual whose efforts or actions in maintaining or repairing aircraft (or aircraft parts, including avionics) operated by a law enforcement agency were performed in an extraordinary manner, above and beyond what is normally expected, and whose efforts have brought distinction upon themselves, their department and APSA.

The 2019 Safety Award sponsored by MD Helicopters recognises an individual who has demonstrated a longstanding and continuing dedication to airborne law enforcement safety. This dedication can be measured by documented achievements in the areas of, but not limited to, management, safety, education and maintenance that significantly improved the safety of an airborne law enforcement unit or the airborne law enforcement industry. This year it was awarded to Bryn Elliott primarily for the



Oklahoma City Police Department brought along their latest H125 N720KC to the event and displayed it on the Airbus booth. The PD has chosen to adopt the Luminator searchlight and so far have them for three aircraft. The searchlight controller below is fitted alongside the TFOs seat in the H125.



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Each of the winners was comprehensively lauded with a long citation and a video accompaniment. A retiring member of the Oklahoma City Police Department launched the first of the awards and Peel Regional Police brought up the rear with an unmanned Aerial Systems recognition.

organising of the PAvCon Europe Police Aviation Conferences and information services.

The Tactical Flight Officer Award sponsored by Kropp Holdings, is for a flight crewmember serving as a Tactical Flight Officer whose performance in the operation of tactical equipment and/or coordination of ground-based assets was exemplary and resulted in the successful conclusion of a call or mission. This year the award went to Kristopher Kubasta an officer with the San Jose PD in California.

The Fixed Wing operator award sponsored by Air Bear Tactical Aircraft, LLC & L3 Technologies recognises a pilot and/or crewmember whose performance of their duties utilizing a fixed-wing aircraft has had a significant impact on the operation of their agency. It went to a Canadian, Christina Holovach, a constable TFO with the Saskatoon Police ASU for her work operating in the back seat of a Cessna 182 single engine observation aircraft.



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Unmanned Aerial Systems Award sponsored by FLIR Public Safety Group is a relatively recent introduction as drones play a greater part in policing. It recognizes an individual or group whose efforts or actions have promoted and/or furthered the development and/or use of UAS in the performance of public safety aviation missions. Again, the recipient was a Canadian, Stephen Clarke of the Peel Regional police in Ontario.

So, another APSA event rolled to a close. Omaha was difficult to get to and very hot throughout. Fortunately, most of the action was inside and protected by hard-working air conditioning systems. Regardless of the difficulties of getting there – the airline trip from the Netherlands was twenty hours via Chicago, and that from Australia a much longer trek – the show went well for virtually everyone attending.

ASPCON 2020	July 20 - 25, 2020	Houston, TX
APSCON 2021	July 26 - 31, 2021	New Orleans, LA
APSCON 2022	July 25 - 30, 2022	Reno, NV



Next to Airbus was Metro with one of their EC145s for the HEMS market. During the show it was announced that Metro had ordered some of the new Kopter SH.09s for HEMS use. Kopter were not present at the show.



The event is certainly not all about helicopters. Half a dozen fixed wing aircraft were marketed at the APSCON show including Airvan, Cessna, Cirrus, Pilatus PC-12 and PC24, the Kodiak and the show saw the welcome return of the Seeker.

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Bell brought along one of the first in-service JetRanger X in law enforcement configuration. This example is in service as N279PD/ c/n 65102 with Sacramento Police Dept., [SPD] in California. When it returned to police service after the show it was based out of McClellan Airport in California, with the Sacramento Police Department (SPD) Air Operations team [see also page 11]

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