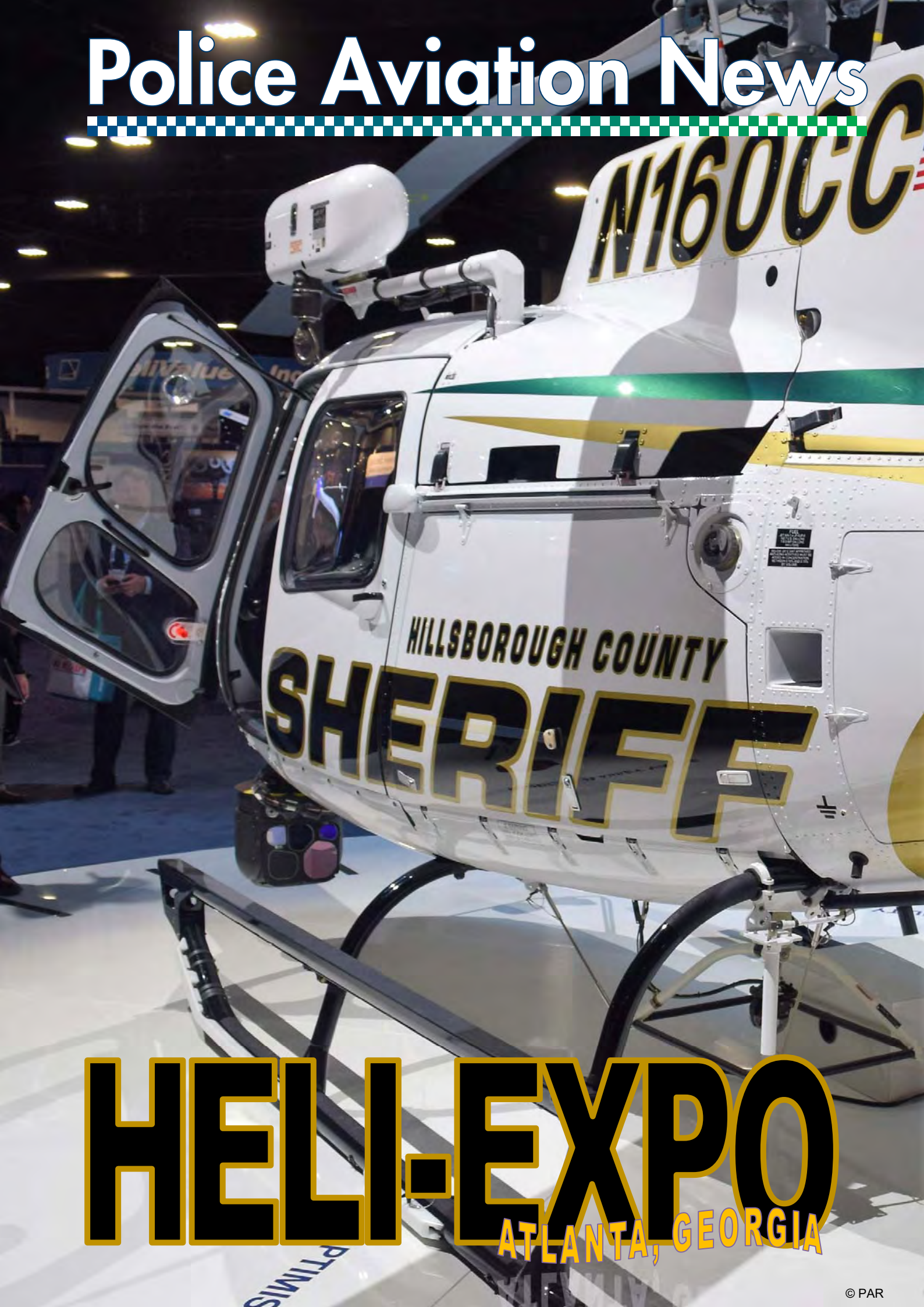


# Police Aviation News



**HELI-EXPO**  
ATLANTA, GEORGIA





5 -7 March 2019  
Atlanta, Georgia USA



Early in March the Helicopter Association International (HAI) Heli-Expo drew together all the great and the good in the helicopter industry. In truth it also sucked in some of the diminutive and the bad, that is the nature of such events.

Atlanta, is a new venue for the Heli-Expo and not necessarily a place everyone might actively seek out in the course of life. It turns out to be a pleasant enough bit of America with a couple of claims to fame even if they are the World HQ of Coca Cola and the HQ of CNN, the news channel that seems to haunt TV screens across the free world with its pontifications on how US politicians live their lives [and who really cares?]. I will go with the status of Coke, but their 35 years old headquarters could do with a scrub down! Perhaps a liberal spraying with neat Coca Cola will do the job, it reputedly can dissolve almost everything.

My previous experience of the place has been simply using the airport when heading down south to Alabama and Florida or east to Savannah - hardly a major knowledge base. This first interface with the city has confirmed it has some friendly and interesting people.

As for Georgia itself, interminable miles of largely unchanging green, an occasional museum to some obscure life experience and, more ominously, the site of the first ever modern concentration camp. It seems that America invented the gulag during its Civil War and the world followed. There may be worse claims to fame.

Arrival of the rotary exhibits at most venues is usually by dropping them neatly in to an adjoining car parking area - a simple enough procedure - but Atlanta complicated the procedure by landing the helicopters across the road, a process that required most of them to be dismantled and transported on low loaders under the freeway to the massive halls.

The jury is out on whether the attending exhibitors will see that as an acceptable and economical process. They may though, every show in the USA suffers severely from the iron grip of the local unions. Exhibitors can take in their handheld equipment but as soon as it requires a set of wheels or a toolset the unions are breathing down necks with an eye watering set of charges. It may be that the tug across the road process is no worse than usual. I understand that the show is back in Atlanta in three years and that new building works will greatly improve the logistics. Perhaps they are going to have a clamshell roof like Thunderbirds and fly straight in!



FRONT COVER: The top selling Airbus Helicopters model remains the H125, the latest iteration of the iconic police aviation single. The exhibited example is for Hillsborough County Sheriffs an operation based close to Tampa in Florida. It must however be recalled that the top selling helicopter remains the Robinson. 200 R44 four-seat piston singles, and 74 R66 turbine singles were delivered in 2018. [PAR]

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In the past visitors may have wondered why many, if not all, vehicle movers and mobile landing pad displays are without a typical load of a helicopter. That is a sensible expectation. That is the unions again. Even if it's your mover and your aircraft you cannot move it without employing and paying for a union driver! The economics are rarely right for the exhibitor so most leave the pad empty or transport a set of dismembered skids or a crate as an inadequate representative load. This year there was just one with a helicopter.

After all these years of getting the event together you would think that Helicopter Association International (HAI) would put together the greatest show on earth at the drop of a hat. Unfortunately it is not always so due to pressures beyond their control.

HAI is the professional trade association for the international helicopter industry. Membership represents 1,800 aviation businesses, which safely operate more than 4,500 helicopters flying approximately 2.3 million hours each year in more than 73 nations.



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Airbus Helicopters static displays at booth C305 included what remain the best-selling rotary craft in the world. Displayed were the H145 and an H125 in a law enforcement configuration complemented by a cabin display of the ACH145, equipped with an elegant Mercedes-Benz Style interior. There was a conceptual EMS mock-up of the H160 making its U.S. debut for visitors to witness first-hand the exceptional work-space that the cabin provides for these critical, life-saving missions. The type is not wholly new to the US visitors, last year you may recall saw an early H160 airframe that undertook a post-show tour of the USA.

Airbus unveiled a new version of its best-selling H145 light twin-engine helicopter at the show. This latest upgrade brings a new, innovative five-bladed rotor to the multi-mission H145, increasing the useful load of the helicopter by 150 kg while delivering new levels of comfort, simplicity and connectivity.

It is primarily a fix for a long-standing problem the company have had with the original four-set MRB – cracking – but it has many other attractions for the customer. The H145's new five-bladed rotor brings a significant increase in overall performance, with a maximum take-off weight raised to 3,800 kg and a useful load now equivalent to the aircraft's empty weight. The simplicity of the new bearingless main rotor design should also ease maintenance. The reduced rotor diameter will allow the H145 to operate in more confined areas.

EASA certification of the new H145 is planned for early 2020, with first deliveries to follow later that year. This upgrade will also be offered to current Fenestron H145 customers as a retrofit option in order to deliver the same improvements in terms of useful load, simplified maintenance and comfort to the existing version of the H145. Applying the fix to older examples of the type was apparently considered unrealistic.

At the show several orders were placed. Norwegian Air Ambulance Foundation (NAAF) has become the launch customer in the emergency medical services (EMS) sector for the new H145 helicopter and replacement MRBs are on order by REGA in Switzerland for its existing fleet.



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Five rotor head on the latest H145.

H125 for the police with the latest FLIR EO/IR sensor turret

The H135 being used for marketing the case for the US Navy training airframe contract was busy undertaking demonstration flights



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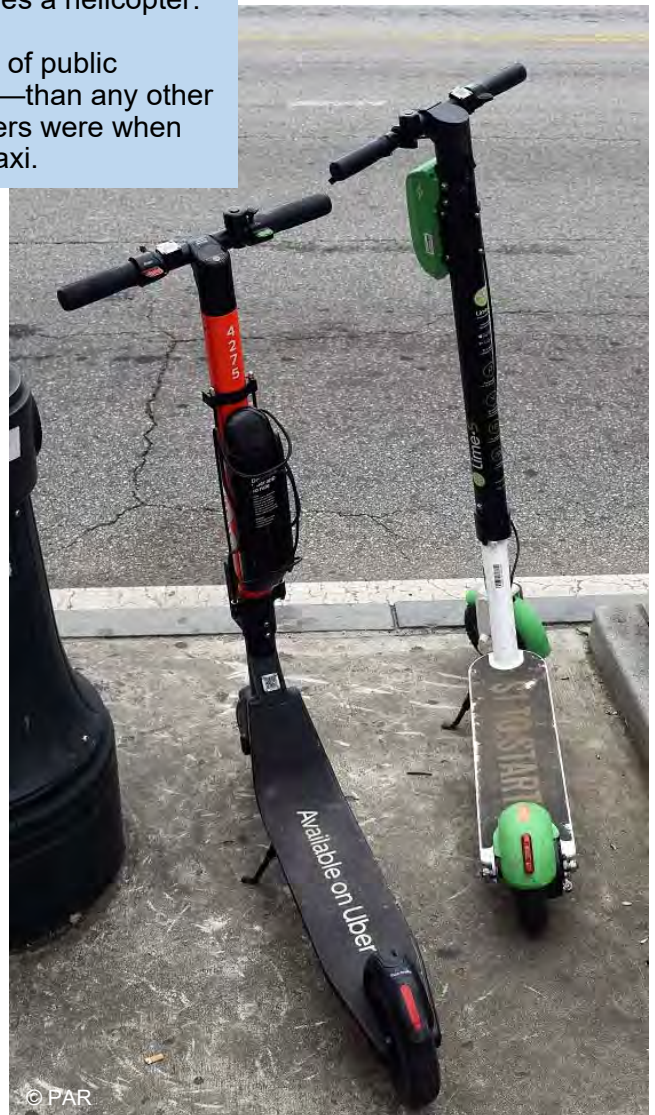
There were times when the technology outside the vast halls was more intriguing than that inside. Yes this will sure fly, but so does a helicopter.

© PAR

I think I had more conversations about the vast provision of public transport—ignored bicycles and pick up and go scooters—than any other subject. Even if it was how dangerous those silent scooters were when they whizzed by. Uber is into these too let alone the air taxi.



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Airbus Helicopters North America delivered 57 rotorcraft and logged gross bookings for 75 helicopters (net: 71) in 2018 (up from 70 gross orders in 2017), reaffirming its North American civil & parapublic market lead with a market share of 72%. On the world market Airbus say they sold 64% of the helicopters last year with 413 orders taken. Most were the H125 and related H130 models but, perhaps surprisingly, the next best seller was the H145 which sold four times as many as the H135.

Notable orders from 2018 include the first instalment of a 21-helicopter contract with Air Medical Group Holdings, three H160 bookings with a single VIP customer, a number of H125 bookings with the California Highway Patrol and U.S. Customs & Border Patrol, as well as a large increase in sales to private and corporate customers. Nearly 40% of all bookings were to customers new to the Airbus product line.

In 2018, Airbus Helicopters remained number one in four out of the five main market segments in terms of deliveries in North America, with 62% of the parapublic market, 71% of air medical, 56% of commercial/utility and 86% of private and corporate aviation. The H125 and H130 family continued to be best sellers with multiple deliveries to air medical and law enforcement operators, as well as utility.

As last year, a scale mock-up of the Racer high-speed demonstrator was on the booth along with updates on the Airbus Helicopters Urban Air Mobility strategy and HCare, Airbus' global customer support and service offer to customers.

Back in the flight arrivals car park Airbus were conducting flight demonstrations with an H135 in an overall white U.S. Navy paint scheme, the company is offering a partnership with the U.S. Navy to deliver the versatile H135 as their concept of a best-value training solution for its rotary-wing fleet replacement. Leonardo see the same contract as fitting with its AW119 single so it is something of a stark contrast in ideas.

Back home in Germany it seems that a first flight is imminent. As the industry turned its eyes towards Atlanta, Airbus Helicopters were preparing the future for flight. The City Airbus first prototype was seen outside the German plant at Donauworth, bearing a German registration ready for its first flight. Originally the flight was expected late last year.

The CityAirbus is a multi-passenger, self-piloted battery-powered vertical take-off and landing vehicle designed for urban air mobility. It is designed to carry up to four passengers over congested areas in a fast, affordable and environmentally friendly way.

These electric or hybrid development airframes were the talk of the bazaars but not everyone is convinced we have yet seen the design that will make commercial sense. Most of the machines flying now are simply lethal weapons with multiple head height mini-rotors. Indeed, when the question was raised with Leonardo it was clear they are sitting back to await developments rather than spending their own money on what might well be aeronautical blind alleys.

As ever Airbus products were scattered across the vast halls – with many owing their existence to earlier manufacturers names, Eurocopter yes, but some verge upon Aerospatiale and MBB for their roots. Among the interesting back stories surrounding the hall exhibits was that relating to an AS350BB N98SR (c/n 3013). The 1997 build AS350BB was an ex UK military training school at RAF Shawbury and a repaint



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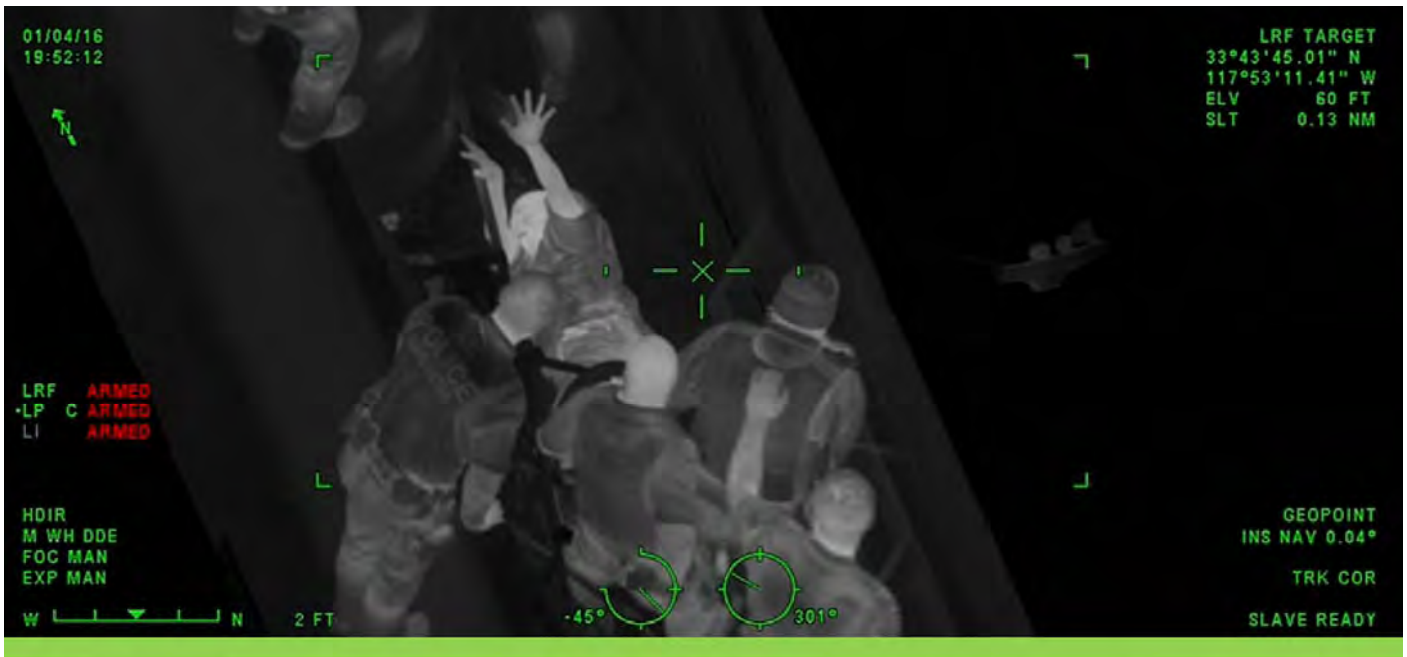
and a couple of registration changes later the old warbird was in the hall on an Experimental flight status along with some difficult to prove stories. The least of them was the very aircraft that the future King of England learned to fly on.

3013 is ex ZJ275/G-BXLB '75'. It wore its civil marks in the late summer of 1997 as it passed from Eurocopter France, to the then UK agents McAlpine Helicopters at Oxford as a 'green' airframe before being delivered to military service operated by FBS Ltd/FB Heliservices in the black and yellow conspicuity scheme until demobbed back to the civil marks in November 2017. The role of the AS350BB in training was replaced by a mixed fleet of H135 and H145 helicopters. It left the UK for the USA in January 2018 and spent a short while as N34JK before joining CNW Holdings LL in Delaware. It is in the markings of US Army Special Forces, not an operational role – it acts as drop machine for the parachute display team of that name.

There were originally 38 AS350BB Squirrels delivered, of which 4 were written off. Of the surviving 34, eighteen have already been transferred to civil registers, with two returning to UK military for Cobham's training academy at Newquay. The rest are believed to be still in store at Hurn or Newquay.

It is unlikely that any attempt will be made to undertake the process of moving these unique aircraft to formal civil certified status so their use will probably remain restricted as 'Experimental' or permit. [with additional information from Helihub]. The venerable type, now known as the H125, is still a best seller with 162 built in the last year.

Metro Aviation continues to reinforce its presence in the helicopter industry and its close link to the Airbus rotorcraft with a booth display including two mission-ready, EMS helicopters: one from Wake Forest Baptist Health and the other from Children's Healthcare of Atlanta. Metro Aviation highlighted the configuration opportunities by showcasing how current customers utilise their aircraft. Representatives from each operation were on hand to talk about their respective helicopters, Children's Healthcare of Atlanta EC145e and Wake Forest Baptist Health EC135P2+.



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The former ZJ275/G-BXLB '75' is now N98SR with a parachute group but it too spent time at Oxford in the past being prepared for service like G-BXKN [left]. That is 3005 ZJ272 and it remains undertaking a training role with Cobham Bournemouth.



© PAR

Metro Aviation continues to reinforce its links to Airbus Helicopters with a booth display including this Wake Forest Baptist Health airframe



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I guess we should pay attention to the Nexus, if only for its sheer bulk. Looks good and promises much but the word in the hall is that modern batteries are still not up to making such craft operationally feasible so it and its ilk are still probably where Drones were a decade ago. Great fun but not quite yet.

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The latter is a fourth customised Airbus EC135P2+ helicopter to act as a dedicated maintenance spare. It is also utilised as the primary aircraft for NASCAR races and other special events without disrupting customer service at the three regular bases. The first three aircraft were completed early last year for the Air Care Program. All four aircraft have identical avionics and medical interiors facilitating an easy transition between aircraft by pilots and medical crew.

PAC completely refurbished the aircraft interior with Metro Aviation's standard EMS interior, featuring crew and medical attendant seats, storage pouches, and a composite medical floor with a Ferno 28A-1 litter.

The configuration team matched the interior with custom paint packages and upgraded windows.

In addition to the EMS specific equipment, the team chose upgraded technology to enhance its missions including the Garmin GDL69 XM weather system and the Outerlink IRIS system for flight tracking and data monitoring.

AirCare expects the latest helicopter to enter service this spring, adding to a fleet to covering North Carolina, Virginia, West Virginia, Tennessee and South Carolina.

Metro recently outfitted an H125 for the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office based in Tampa, Florida., it was displayed on the Airbus booth. The H125 and installed mission package represents a significant increase in capabilities for the unit.

Metro configured the helicopter at its Shreveport-based completion centre with mission-ready equipment including a Goodrich electric-powered rescue hoist, LoJack system integration for the recovery of stolen vehicles, and NVG compatible avionics. The Hillsborough team worked hand-in-hand with Metro's experts to build a configuration suitable for conducting surveillance, hoist operations, and search and rescue missions. The aircraft joins a fleet of four Airbus AS350B2's and a Cessna 208 Caravan.

The EC-145e is delivered from the Airbus factory configured for VFR operations. Some including HEMS, offshore and law enforcement operators often require IFR capability and the Genesys avionics suite offers a cost-effective option to gain IFR capability for far less than the price of a buying a new IFR capable helicopter from the factory.

The STC was achieved with Metro Aviation, who has contracted with Airbus for delivery of 25 EC-145e.

<https://www.metroaviation.com/ec145e/>

Airbus Helicopters wrapped up the 2019 edition of Heli-Expo with 43 orders from worldwide customers encompassing the whole Airbus civil product range - H125, H130, H135, H145, H160, H175 and H225.

Bell have much on their plate these days with promoting the in production 407, 429 and 505 models to enhance the sales that provide the development funds that ensure the future and bringing on line the future military tilt rotor and their electric air taxi concept. Only the latter project was brought to the show, the 525 was not present.

The Nexus air taxi was certainly impressive and dominated the large booth but questions have already been raised over its hybrid electric specification [employing a SAFRAN engine to produce the electricity as well as batteries] where it and its ilk might operate and what the certification issues might be. It is early days for these future craft but it must be said that the Nexus is probably the most impressive concept model.

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Each of the manufacturers and many of the smaller exhibitors take the opportunity to have press/media calls and announcements. Among these the Bell agents in Poland that hosted last years PAvCon. JB Investments underwent a signing ceremony for four Bell 407 GXis. They celebrated the sale of three Bell 407GXi Helicopters to the Polish Police and one Bell 407GXi to a corporate customer.

This is the first sale of the Bell 407GXi platform to a European law enforcement agency. These successes are a testament to the newly upgraded capabilities of the platform and we are looking forward to the first aircraft delivery to the Polish Police this year.

Close to the Bell Booth a highly customised Bell 505 Jet Ranger X, N505GT was on display in the static area. SureFlight's Bell 505 GT Package includes, custom paint, seats, headliner, carpet, and repainted interior doors and a baggage compartment liner. SureFlight is a Garmin Avionics dealer and is also the first to offer an XM Weather option integrated with the Garmin G1000H flight deck with the Bell 505.

The standard interior and exterior finish of the Bell 505 is quite basic to meet the price point. A spartan interior and limited paint options leave a market for others.

SureFlight redesigned the interior by paying attention to striking a balance between cost, weight, and aesthetics. When acquiring a new entry level airframe the room for spending great amounts is limited.

SureFlight streamlined the upholstery on the crew seats providing an elegant rear close-out with a Bell Logo embroidery. The front of the headrest is smooth and contoured. All five of the seats employ a custom diamond stitching with accents matching the custom exterior paint scheme.

To cover the raw composite roof of the Bell 505, SureFlight created a very thin headliner that rests directly against the inner contour of the roof.

The Georgia State Patrol Bell 429 on the booth area was not new and featured at the ALEA event in Savannah three years ago.

The pre-event Leonardo press briefing focussed on the operations of one of their high profile US HEMS operators, Inter Mountain Health Care based in Utah. Inter Mountain have been with the Agusta product for many years and are currently operating modern variants of the Agusta A109 Grand and retain two ex-



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amples of the A109K2.

Intermountain Life Flight is Utah’s leading air ambulance service offering highly specialised medical transport using helicopters, airplanes, and ambulances since 1978. The future looks to be a massive leap in capability with the delivery of an AW169.

Airbus Helicopters may well have retained their pre-eminent position as the manufacturer with the greatest market share but Leonardo is snapping at their heels with its own market share climbing to 40%. As a company they additionally claim to now have 70% market share of China HEMS but what that amounted to in terms of airframe numbers was not quantified. It is though a new and growing market. The US market share bragging rights were greatly assisted by the sale of the US assembled AW139 to the USAF. European origin manufacturers placing eighty four units into the US market replacing venerable Bell helicopters is big news but does highlight the lack of decent US designs when it is newer European designs that are outselling the American product. The AW139 was of course originally a Bell Agusta design. The fact that they, Agusta [aka Leonardo] will shortly be announcing 1,000 deliveries should underline the bad decisions made a few years ago by Bell to get out of the 139.



© Leonardo

Leonardo say they are now already 550 US made Leonardo Helicopter flying across the world. With a US fleet estimated as in excess of 450 it illustrates that there are significant exports.

Another Bell reject was the 609 tilt rotor. Unlike the spritely 139 that project continues lethargically towards certification in 2020. Other much earlier dates have been promised in the past but the time must surely arrive eventually. Leonardo think there is a market for the type – not it believes ‘oil & gas’ as many have previously suggested, but more likely both law enforcement and HEMS – but time alone will tell. The unit price being bandied about just a year from sales being realised is still an imprecise \$25-\$30M.

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Training is one success area for Leonardo. In 2006 the group were training just 600 people, in 2018 the comparable figure had climbed to over 10,000 with some 41,000 simulator flights being undertaken in house. This all fits in nicely with three podium statements from the company referring to 'gravity kills' 'hazards' and 'things go wrong.' Now where have I heard that before?

Although there are numerous organisations saying that the bad days are receding there are plenty of instances that illustrate otherwise. The recent collapse of Waypoint Leasing and constant warnings as to the health of Bristow are just two of the main thermometers of health. For them the poor state of oil and gas no doubt illustrates their difficulties. The effect of this recession on that sector is profound. It appears that the industry is now showing a clear preference for smaller helicopters with the exception of the Sikorsky S-92 and as a result other similar sized airframes - the Airbus Helicopters Puma and Bell 525 - are currently struggling to make their mark.

Despite suffering from the downturn Air Methods, with its wider areas of expertise stretching into air medical, remains a lead player and accordingly had a large presence at the show. One of their lead mechanics, T J Hall, was honoured by the HAI Salute to Excellence with the Rolls-Royce Excellence in Maintenance Award. He has been in the industry 50 years so an award was clearly due.



Part of the duties of Air Methods' chief pilot Raj Helweg includes finding pilots to maintain the service. In recent years his task has evolved somewhat by the growing dearth of qualified people. Attracting suitable candidates in the past was simply a case of posting a simple notice of availability but now the task is significantly more labour intensive and Helweg and his team are obliged to sell the company, its benefits and the job on offer. There are plenty of other prospective employers out there in a growing market with diminishing pre-trained pilots.

Air Methods requires a minimum of 2,000 hours for new pilots and to ensure safety standards has invested \$100M over ten-years in training facilities including Level D simulators.

Wireless mission intercom technology innovator Axnes recently participated in a cooperative effort with Churchill Navigation to enable the location of remote or outside crew members utilizing PNG wireless handsets that can be displayed on aircraft equipped with the Churchill Augmented Reality Mission Management System-ARS-700 mapping system. Utilising the GPS location feature in the PNG handheld transceivers coupled with the positioning capabilities of the Churchill mapping system, this will now offer significant increases to crew safety and situational awareness for mission critical operations. This can be especially important to operations in adverse conditions, low visibility and at night. Axnes say they are grateful that Churchill Navigation, the market leader for first responder navigation and





augmented reality systems, has chosen to work with Axnes, the market leader in wireless intercom systems; thereby, jointly enabling both companies to offer this great feature to the first responder community to enhance their support of communities and jurisdictions across the globe.

The collaboration with Churchill is part of Axnes' plan to continuously increase the capability of their product line by offering new features as they become available and brings yet another feature to PNG Wireless intercom customers.

Kopter the Mollis, Switzerland-based helicopter manufacturer, are working towards a production future that they see as orientated towards the US market. In order to serve that prime sector they will be expanding their operations into Lafayette, Louisiana and making use of the 84,000 square-foot production facility off Highway 90 that was intended as the production facility for the Bell 505. Bell pulled production there and moved it to Canada which was contrary to agreements reached with the local legislature and caused much bad feeling. The choice by Kopter may well resolve many problems locally and for Bell.

The Lafayette production facility for Kopter will serve as the U.S. headquarters for final assembly & customization of their SH09 model aircraft. The company will bring around 120 jobs to the area by the year 2025, once production of their aircraft reach 100 units per year.

L3 WESCAM launched its InFlight training course as the latest solution in its family of aviation training platforms for MX™- Series airborne electro-optical and infrared



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(EO/IR) imaging and targeting systems. L3's In-Flight training syllabus includes theoretical in-class training combined with pre- and postflight simulation training and in-flight, mission-centric training. With the ability to tailor the training curriculum to match a customer's specific turret configuration and the advantage of both daylight and low-light flight opportunities, the course has been developed to support students of varying levels of skill and experience with conventional flight scenarios and operator experiences. Designed to facilitate student-centric learning, over four days includes in-depth training of all sensors, maintenance and organizational-level maintenance tasking, and crew resource management.

Where customers book all six seats and have the curriculum fully customized to support their exact turret and configuration. Training can be facilitated using the customer's aircraft and sensor system, or customers can take advantage of L3's extensive inventory of training assets complete with WESCAM's latest sensor offerings. The curriculum is delivered using a generic turret configuration.

L3 WESCAM's Cessna Caravan 208B is one asset used for this practical training – it allows for the installation of a variety of combination turrets as two turrets can be mounted at one time. Courses are hosted from L3's training facilities in the USA. Visit [WESCAM.com/flighttraining](http://WESCAM.com/flighttraining) for training dates and availability. To learn more about L3 WESCAM, please visit the company's website at [www.L3T.com/wescam](http://www.L3T.com/wescam). With headquarters in New York City and approximately 31,000 employees

StandardAero, Robertson Fuel Systems and Airbus Helicopters were all talking up safe fuel tanks and Airbus are now promoting a scheme to financially assist operators in changing to new safer tanks. They are offering discounted fuel tanks and will offer training credits to those who have already purchased the replacement equipment.

Where StandardAero and Robertson are relishing the overwhelming success of their retrofittable crash-resistant fuel tank (CRFT) for the Airbus Helicopters AS350 and EC130 series, it is not yet clear where the Airbus promotion lies. The standard crash resistant tank is manufactured in the UK by GKN, Portsmouth and that option is thought to be significantly cheaper than the CRFT options and yet equally effective.

Delivery of the CRFT into the European market is close, launch European customer and notorious mountain rescue service provider, Air Zermatt, is set to take acceptance of their first tank this spring.

Since receiving Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Supplemental Type Certificate (STC) approval in December 2017, and subsequent approval by the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA), the joint StandardAero and Robertson Fuel Systems team has delivered more than 108 CRFTs to its customers in the continental United States, Hawaii, Alaska, Guatemala and Australia, with an ample order book for more anticipated deliveries in the coming months.



Although much is made of the new replacement tank for the AS350/H125 series the tank now supplied by the airframe manufacturer is well regarded and comes from the same manufacturer as that for the Bell 206 and many other models.

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Spectrolab, Inc. has developed two new searchlights for use on military rotorcraft.

The Nightsun<sup>®</sup> XPM and the SLL 46-200 high-intensity LED searchlights meet current Military Specification (MIL-SPEC) guidelines for both the visible and infrared light spectrums. The Nightsun<sup>®</sup> XPM was tested aboard a Boeing Chinook helicopter in late 2018. Both searchlight products are also available to the commercial market.

Both products use additive manufacturing for reduced part count and improved maintainability.

Spectrolab, a Boeing subsidiary, designs and manufactures high-intensity searchlights for military and commercial customers around the world with its Nightsun<sup>®</sup> series of high-powered searchlights for use on helicopters and fixed-wing aircraft.

Searchlight manufacturers have had a hard time in recent years in facing up to the very real challenges presented by Trakka Systems. At one time a law enforcement searchlight was inevitably a Spectrolab product, hundreds of SX-16 and SX-5 lights remain in service, but the company sat too long on its well-deserved laurels and largely ignored the slow climb into a fully certified product of Trakka from obscurity. Other challengers – in particular Thommen – simply lost traction and money in striving to offer an alternative and ended up selling out to an existing US manufacturer of lights and searchlights Luminator.

Meanwhile buoyed by expanding sales revenue Trakka has continued to invest and diversify their original A800 searchlight into a model that is easier to operate and maintain. The simple searchlight is now available with integral cameras which suits operators, including HEMS, that have little primary need for stand-alone cameras. In taking over a non-ITAR camera producer in Sweden they are now able to offer a broad product range that offers the customer an integrated single source 'mission system' of cameras, lights and mapping.

The latest iteration of the searchlight is the TLX which they launched in 2016. It builds on Trakka's reputation for industry leading optics and produces 25% greater intensity and volume of light across the beam. The optics provide an efficient and even beam, from the centre all the way to the edges, resulting in a bright and uniform beam with an embedded multi-filter solution. Up to six different filters can be selected in less than 1 second at the touch of a button from inside the cockpit.

The A800 searchlight remains in service and production for the foreseeable future but the company see the new model as far superior in repair and maintainability. The two models look similar but it soon becomes evident that the newer model is broader and that has allowed significantly improved accessibility.





Trakka may offer their own camera systems by they are mindful that their main market opportunities remain in working with others and each offers integrated slaving for FLIR, Wescam, SWE, LEO & Cineflex cameras.



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Schweizer are back but it has a lot of past bad customer support practice to repair. The prime product the 300 has evolved over the years from the 1956 Hughes Tool Company Hughes 269/300 into a much respected trainer aircraft police forces across the world learned air support on.

When, fifteen years ago, Sikorsky bought out Schweizer, primarily for a factory site they subsequently abandoned, they neglected the demand for the helicopters then in production declaring them old fashioned and 'beneath' the technical expertise of the mighty Sikorsky. Too many parts, too poorly made, they heaped every negative they could on the products and did their best to destroy them and their reputation.

That the product was inherently excellent but perhaps unsuited for larger self important manufacturers has been displayed by the current turn around under the guidance of Schweizer RSG, a new company affiliated with Rotorcraft Services Group in Fort Worth, Texas. They are currently getting the spares issues sorted but expect to restart airframe production of the 300 next year to meet orders including one for 25 S300CBI from the International Defense and Aerospace Group [IDAG] who took over the former Bristow Academy.

Further down the trail the RSG tea are not ignoring the turbine powered 333 but the original airframe is the prime focus and 'baby steps' the means to get there.

In San Antonio, Texas the local police were the prime operators of the then relatively 'new' 1988 turbine development the



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330/333 and they found themselves abandoned and having to finance and swiftly reequip with Airbus Helicopters.

In 2014 they had one working machine as a trainer but three others inoperative – one Schweizer 333 purchased in FY 2004 forcibly retired as it had missing parts that could not be acquired and two other 333 helicopters purchased in FY 2000 retired and for sale. As SAPD said at the time all but one of the Schweizer helicopters are inoperative because Sikorsky Aircraft Corporation purchased the Schweizer plant in 2004 and stopped manufacturing parts and providing support for the Schweizer 333 helicopter by 2012. They had a fleet of which four of five helicopters required parts that were difficult or impossible to obtain due to the closure of the Schweizer plant. In their case financing a new Airbus Helicopters fleet rescued the operation.



Shock to the system in that next year the Heli-Expo is in late January rather than late February or early March. Anaheim. It seems it is all related to the misguided planning at HAI. The organisation is out to make money from every little item, the negotiated hotel prices are keen but it appears they could be even better as the hotels pay HAI a slice of their take and of course the customer ultimately pays. As an individual many ignore the HAI offer and book an identical room through a home travel agent and often match or beat the HAI price. Unfortunately the larger members of HAI that want lots of rooms in the same hotel find it is impossible to avoid the room rate so they end up paying the inflated price to the very organisation that is supposed to represent them or they take a hotel miles away and end up paying additional transport and parking costs. Yes, it seems they get screwed every time.

More than that those same member organisations have to pay to both be a member and then to exhibit. HAI undertakes to get the best deals possible out of the venue towns and cities and sometimes the deal is simply free. The venues want the Heli-Expo and the money and kudos that brings them. But does HAI therefore reflect that super discount by treating their vendors to at least a discounted rate? There is no evidence that they do.

Take Louisville, Kentucky that was a super deal. But that went really badly for HAI as the members rebelled against the location and a whole lot more and eventually the supposed 'two event' contract had to be bought out. Heli-Expo is not going back there again. It was supposed to be 2020 but instead HAI seems to have had to alter its whole date schedule to get into Anaheim again on almost any terms. There are rumours that the Atlanta deal was also very good for the HAI coffers – the jury is out on whether another row is about to erupt over this as well. So far it looks to be OK but the weather was, like Kentucky, challenging. It really was cold there was significant snow to the north and a killer tornado to the south. Not attractive.

It appears that HAI simply does not care. They just keep revamping the offices at headquarters and getting another couple of newer limousines for the principals.

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The lack of care is clearly illustrated by attention to detail. Atlanta is a new venue for all, most venues are new to some of the attendees. For some this is a once in a lifetime attendance. Any organisation with something of a heart would include on its website information about Downtown Atlanta and how the masses, the proletariat, might get there. This need only be half a page put together by an intern or the local tourist board in an hour or two.

Nowhere does it say that getting from the airport need only cost \$2.50 on a train that stops almost outside the Omni Hotel. Instead hundreds of people turn up at a strange airport and are faced with cabs, shuttles and hire cars. Totally unaware there are trains as an option. I know of numerous 2019 attendees who hired cars and then left them in the hotel car park racking up \$30-50 a day in parking charges. Who does that serve? The multiple excessive and often unnecessary charges bite into the expenses of the HAI members and cause them harm.

When it concluded the HAI HELI-EXPO 2019 reported an attendance comparable to prior years, thousands of attendees participated in over 150 education courses, technical briefings, workshops, forums, meetings, and seminars; and walked the over 1 million square feet of exhibits and meeting space throughout the week.

Fifty-seven aircraft were flown or trucked into the convention building and on display, a 58<sup>th</sup> crashed en-route to Atlanta. 480 attendees enhanced their skills through the Professional Education Courses, over 200 attended the Military to Civilian Workshop, while 2,880 took the Rotor Safety Challenge and over 400 sat in on Manufacturer Technical Briefings.

HAI state that exhibitors and attendees alike expressed very positive feedback for both the show experience as well as the city of Atlanta and the GWCC facility, and look forward to a return in the future -said to be three years. Next time I will certainly consider that train ride but still go by cab. It's nice to have the information to make a free choice!



Two giant halls were employed for the event and the exhibits and exhibitors were spread across the expanse.

There were large gaps, broad corridors and long distances involved.

It is tempting to wonder whether having to pay for all that space would have resulted in a more compact show in one hall.