

# Police Aviation News

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Issue 264

April 2018

**German Police Upgrades**

*E.S.G. Win Important  
Police Upgrade Work*

**Big Plans for Ukraine**

**NPAS Annual Report**

**AAA Trustee Shuffle**

**Wiltshire Fly In**

## EDITORIAL

It is that time of year again when most countries and operational units draw a line under the past year. The year 2017-18 has now passed by and all things to come are from a new and hopefully exciting year of opportunity.

Now is the time to write a few notes to set out the parameters of what happened yesterday and the month before. Leave it too long and the memory will dim, and your memory will play tricks with you – you will start adding tomorrows memories to your annual report that rightly belong in the report of last year. Then the confusion and perhaps the arguments will start.

The sooner you do the report the better – you can always mess about with the detail nearer publication day. As the experts have shown us time and again, leave the job undone at your peril.

*Bryn Elliott*



# LAW ENFORCEMENT

## FINLAND

**BORDER GUARD:** The Finnish Border Guard — Air Patrol Squadron based in Vantaa are upgrading their fleet of AW119 helicopters to take sensor turrets.

The value of the European Union funded contract, excluding tax, is €128M for which the operator will get a fully certified modification package including necessary test flights for the four Border Guard AW119 Mk II helicopters (OH-HVL, OH-HVM, OH-HVN and OH-HVO). The work comprises hardware, equipment, components, cables, wiring, consumable and bulk material but excluding Buyer Furnished Equipment. It will also include modification and release to service of the nose fairings to enable turret installation and related training <sup>[TED]</sup>



## GERMANY

**RHINELAND-PALINATE POLICE:** Immediately prior to the opening of the HAI Heli-Expo in Las Vegas German exhibitor ESG Elektroniksystem- und Logistik-GmbH announced it had fitted a Mission Management System to the two Rhineland-Palatinate Police EC135P2+ helicopters D-HRPA [0230] and D-HRPB [0318] originally delivered in 2002 and 2004 respectively. *See cover image.*

The post-upgrade delivery of the second helicopter took place shortly after EASA approved the Supplemental Type Certificates (STC). The changes involved integration of the Star SAFIRE 380-HDc Electrooptical System into the high landing gear, integration of ESG's newly developed Police Tactical Workstation (PTANG) Operator Workstation and ESG's software-defined Mission Management System (ESGMM), an additional foldable cockpit display, HD-Downlink system and EuroNav 7 including SATCOM and FLARM.

The PTANG Operator Workstation is the most compact system on the market. It is equipped with two 15 or 17" inch full HD displays aligned on top of each other, DZUS slots for equipment such as video recorders, switches, circuit breakers and accessories.

Installed in the H135/145 cabin, either on the left or right side, it gives extra room for additional specialists. During flight, tilt and distance of the displays can be rapidly adjusted to the operator's ergonomic needs. Designed for robust law enforcement missions, the operator workstation has a damage-tolerant design and can be mounted quickly without tools.

ESGMM is optimised for high-performance video management with very low latency. Tactical digital mapping and augmented reality "TaViO" with customized overlays are complemented with broad data management and sensor fusion functions. The software provides a clean-sheet ergonomic graphical user interface, that is optimised for touchscreen operation with gloves. ESGMM offers a broad spectrum of functions and is adaptable to customer-specific requirements. The unit is based at Koblenz Winingen.

**BUNDESPOLIZEI:** ESG may have been somewhat pleased with the now completed contract in Ko-

**FRONT COVER:** *Rhineland-Palatinate Police EC135P2+ helicopter*

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blenz but this has now been somewhat overshadowed by winning the contract issued by NATO Support and Procurement Agency (NSPA) for the German Federal Police for the fleet-wide replacement of all mission equipment in the AS332L1 Super Puma, EC155 and EC135 helicopters. The new mission systems will extend the wide range of capability options of the German Federal Police, such as surveillance, reconnaissance, border control, anti-terrorism and sea rescue and add to the force's existing capabilities.

The same mission systems can be used in each of the three helicopter models to reduce the costs of training, and spare parts provision. As with the Rhineland-Palatinate contract the heart of the mission systems lies the PTANG (Polizeitaktischer Arbeitsplatz ) Operator Workstation, developed by ESG.

The EO/IR system of choice is the Hensoldt [the latest iteration of Denel and Zeiss] Argos II HD. The system is designed for installation on helicopters, fixed wing aircraft and unmanned aerial vehicles to provide observation and targeting capabilities for military, border and maritime patrol and law enforcement missions. The Argos is centred around a fully integrated, 16-inch class Stabilised Turret Assembly, providing best-in-class stabilisation for the Megapixel HD Thermal Imager (MWIR) and a Multi-Spectral HDTV Camera, both featuring continuous optical and electronic zoom capability.

ESG will be adapting the mission systems to the requirements of the German police force, as well as performing the integration and EASA-certification for EC155 and EC135, entirely in-house. For integration into the Super Puma, ESG has contracted the firm HeliOne from Stavanger in Norway. HeliOne have been undertaking the separate glass cockpit upgrades on the police Puma for some time.



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## HUNGARY

After many months sat at Staverton the first of the former NPAS MD Explorer helicopters is believed to have left for delivery to the customer on February 22. Details and identity remain unknown as the airframe left shrink wrapped on a low loader. In the weeks since it is believed that three have been shipped to Hungary.

Firm detail on the future of these airframes is sparse but there is anecdotal evidence from the HAI Show last month that fourteen Explorers will be in service with the Hungarian Police in due course.

Which is more than can be said for the new improved Explorer line. At the same event Lynn Tilton declared that due to heavy commitments to military work on 150 MD530 helicopters her small company currently had no time available to spend on the Explorer or the project based on the MD600. She did however state that all fuselage production was now based in the USA.



Lynn Tilton currently has no time to bring out an upgraded MD Explorer. [Colin Adcock took this image of the Essex Air Ambulance at Colchester in January]

## INDONESIA

**POLIS:** The North Sumatra Police on Monday publicly revealed the results of its investigation into how a National Police helicopter could end up being used to transport the bride and groom in a wedding video that went viral.

The North Sumatra Police's deputy chief, Brig. Gen Agus Andrianto, said the investigation team discovered that the helicopter pilot and co-pilot had conspired with a middleman to rent out the police helicopter. It seems that the wedding organiser arranged and rented a commercial helicopter for 120M Indonesian Rupiah [£6,000] but that it became unserviceable.



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The middleman then contacted pilot members the police air unit and they agreed to secretly rent out a helicopter belonging to the National Police.

The deal only came to public notice after a video of the bride and groom alighting from a poorly disguised police Bolkow BO15 decked out in the standard blue, white and red colours of the local police fleet emerged on social media. The back of the pilot and co-pilot were visible in the background undertaking 'equipment checks', before taking off. Questions were asked, and it was found that at the time of the wedding the two pilots had not been answering calls from their colleagues. It has not been ascertained whether they were paid. [AsiaOne]

## UKRAINE

**INTERIOR MINISTRY:** Ukrainian Interior Minister Arsen Avakov and French Minister for European and Foreign Affairs Jean-Yves Le Drian have signed an agreement on the purchase of 55 helicopters produced by Airbus Helicopters for the needs of the Ukrainian Internal Affairs Ministry.



The Interior Ministry plans to receive helicopters of three models - H145, H125 and H225 to operate alongside an existing fleet of Mil Mi-8 helicopters, to carry out a range of tasks with the National Police, State Emergencies Service, Border Services and the National Guard.

Deliveries are expected to commence this year but will be staged to allow time for the supply of pilots to be built up.

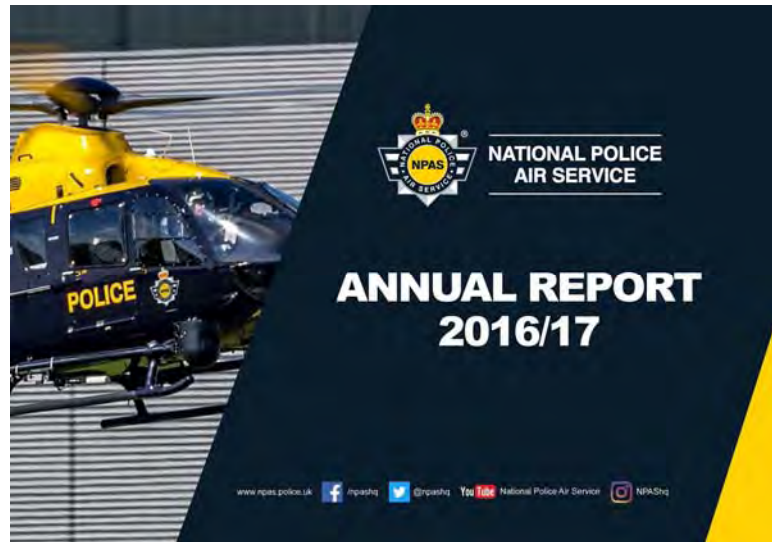
By August this year the National Police of Ukraine will announce the recruitment of police helicopter pilots in time for the 2020 the arrival of the first ten H145. Law enforcement agency specialists and specialized educational institutions, will be involved in the search for and training of the personnel of the helicopter crews. Although the statement suggested that the first officers trained were not existing pilots with significant flight experience to call upon it did state that they will be expected to train those that follow them. [media/UIM]



## UNITED KINGDOM

**NPAS:** One year after the year it relates to the NPAS report for 2016/17 has appeared on their website. And a very thin report it is too.

*Ed: The tiny document 16 pages, down from 20 last time, down to under 4,000 words [from 4,500, 6,500 and 7,000 in successive previous years]. And yet it repeats itself regularly.... four mentions of Doncaster even though the facility was not taken on charge until at least three months after the 'year-end' for this report. No doubt there will be four more mentions in next year's report.... The £3.3M they mention Doncaster cost was not all paid in the 2016/17 year. In fact, the statement "NPAS Doncaster build completed on time and on budget" would not have been evident until last summer, at least three months after the accounting year the report relates to. As NPAS seem keen on taking the dateline out of context I feel free to copy their lead and again mention the events of June 2017.*



NPAS said they could not allow visits to the facility by PAVCon attendees because it had not been handed over and that was June 2017, 2.5 months after the year end this report supposedly relates to. The full handover of the facility had not taken place at the time of my visit there on September 27, 2017. Mention of "completed on time and on budget" is therefore wholly inappropriate for the year 2016/17.

Furthermore, there is a statement 'Developments toward the implementation of fixed wing aircraft into the fleet in early 2018' which at the end of this accounting period is incorrect. The realisation that the aircraft delivery would not take place until 2018 came to light many months later. In April 2017 delivery was still due in 2017 and a truthful annual report focussed on that period should therefore state that fact [possibly with an explanatory footnote].

Lots of mention of the 15 bases of course but as Doncaster is/was and remains empty of aircraft the reality is 14 bases since Tees Valley, Warton and Wattisham closed at the end of the 2016/17 accounting period. And let us not forget that Ripley, Derbyshire closed on the eve of the period, way back in March 2016.

There is no mention of the HMICFRS inspection of NPAS which took place in that period – although the resultant report was of course much later in the year and perhaps something to endure in the next report.

The response time for Priority 1 and Priority 2 incidents, those that require a response within 20 minutes or 60 minutes, is from the time the aircraft gets airborne and not from the time when the request for air support assistance has been received at the NPAS control room at Wakefield. If the time taken for a call for assistance, transmitted from the officer on the ground to his force control room, and then relayed to the NPAS control room at Wakefield is added, the response time for an urgent, Priority 1 incident may very easily exceed 20 minutes. The report omits any reference to calls that are cancelled before the aircraft reaches the scene of an incident. In previous years this has been a significant number - 38% of all requests in 2015/16. This was highlighted in the HMICFRS report on NPAS published in November 2017 and the authors should have been aware of that.'

According to the text NPAS is the 'sole' provider of police air support in England and Wales. It seems to ignore drones operated by others or even themselves. Maybe they have since dropped drones but a year ago when this report relates to they were very much intended for inclusion in the NPAS inventory.

Finding something positive in the report has been difficult but each base is now presumably fully equipped with a Ford Ranger with a 2,000-litre mobile fuel bowser for off-site support. Most pre-NPAS ASUs had a similar set-up in place so it is barely worthy of remark. Even that raises questions though, with reported recruiting issues it makes one wonder where the driver comes from.

There are intriguing items in the report – especially in the brief financial sections. Here is an item of "sale of aircraft £950,000" ... an unexpected item as I was not aware that any MD902 sales fell into that year – and of course was it for 1, 2 or more airframes? The other item is listed under "other income" at £480,186 and that seems to be at least part derived as the income from leasing the former G-XMII to the Norwegian Police.



*The page 8 comments on Safety are also difficult to square with what happened a year ago at the PAVCon NPAS were hosting. One person that was blatantly absent in June was the recently appointed NPAS Head of Aviation Safety. He was set to speak but did not and never showed at any time at the event even though his office was just a mile away. International Safety Officers at that event were ignored and affronted.*

*The report states that the organisation 'continue to engage with other safety organisations and actively collaborate...' If nothing else there was no Head of Aviation Safety until he was moved over from being tasked with fixed wing integration in March 2017. The number of engagements with safety officers with international police services seems infinitesimally small and as far as PAN is aware, undetected. Conversely it seems that as NPAS gets smaller the number of safety reports have increased; 200 reports in 2014 and 610 in 2016!*

*So, what might the correctly applied 2016/17 report contain? By my uninformed measure it might have mentioned Ripley closing, laser spectacles trials, Almondsbury eventually being approved but temporarily blocked, a very high-profile escorting of Barack Obama on his visit, the memorial flypast over London, the MD902s up for sale and eventually being out of service early in 2017. Nothing too exciting I agree but certainly better than accidentally extracting stories from the following year. We can go with brevity but accuracy is important.*



There had been agitation out there that although the 2017/18 Fiscal Year was nearly at an end, NPAS had still to publish the 2016/17 Annual Report. Perhaps related to this lack of information it appears that at least one well briefed Member of Parliament tried to throw some light on the situation. In late February Di-ana R. Johnson, the MP for Hull North asked how many helicopters are stationed in each of the bases of NPAS; and on how many days has each such base had no operational aircraft available for each fiscal year since NPAS was created.

Notwithstanding the lack of reports covering the last two years, she received a written answer referring her to the NPAS annual reports covering the service's financial position and operational performance. Probably more helpfully the reply also referred to the far more recent and super critical HMICFRS study into Police Air Support published on 30 November 2017. Unfortunately, despite the advice in the Parliamentary written answer, the NPAS Report for 2016/17 fails to answer her specific question in any way, shape or form. [mySociety Ltd/PAR]

Late last year West Yorkshire Police let a contract to Deloitte LLP for Consultancy to support the development of a detailed business case for the NPAS rotary aircraft fleet replacement programme. The contract commenced in October and the first phase was scheduled to complete at the end of March. There is no value given to this contract, primarily because the ultimate end date is given as late 2022 and therefore there will be further stages. [TED/BlueLight]

A little further back in the timescale NPAS also have an ongoing contract with Dovetail Aviation Ltd., based in Salisbury, Wiltshire for flight testing services. The three-year £50,000 contract is with Christopher D Taylor a highly regarded test pilot to provide professional aviation services to NPAS from October 2016.

Drawing on a wealth of knowledge and experience gained from the Royal Navy, Royal Air Force, QinetiQ, the UK CAA and the EASA, and having flown over 370 types of aircraft, Taylor has long been the man to go to for a broad range of flight testing tasks.

Within the market sector Taylor has been testing emergency services rotary and fixed airframes for such as Babcock and the Airborne Technologies. For the latter his flying was to check out the modified REGA A109SP Search and Rescue helicopter.

For NPAS testing has been of the Vulcanair P68R in Naples [in April and July 2017] and, also last summer, flight testing the Laser Protective Eyewear. Earlier work for NPAS included undertaking work in 2015 towards the January 2016 EASA Certification of the Mid Life update to EC135T2+ fleet. The current contract is due to run through until 2019. [TED/BlueLight]

At one point in last month plans were in hand to close the base at Boreham, near Chelmsford, Essex and move the aircraft to Lippitts Hill [London Base] on April 20. It became generally known that the former military airfield control tower at the wartime airfield is to be demolished. Currently the 1940s control tower is home to the NPAS Boreham helicopter unit.

Although the demolition plans remain in place the departure from the base is now on hold thanks to negotiations between NPAS and the gravel extraction company.

The unit is expected to eventually move to the new base at North Weald – although building has yet to start there.

We understand that the tower will be demolished, and gravel extracted from that area too. A local preservation unit will try to get the WW2 concrete airfield code letter "JM" retrieved and moved elsewhere. [Eric Probet/PAR]



*Ed: In a statement NPAS told PAN: "Boreham is not the only NPAS base with a question mark over the longevity of our lease into the future. Owing to the complex picture of ownership, leases and other arrangements that we inherited from the 43 forces that we serve, this is not unusual. Nor has it, until very recently been an issue of concern for us, because the gravel extractor from whom we lease the site had given no indication of their intent to develop the site at any point soon."*

*The recent indication that this was about to change led to the Lippitts Hill plan but now there is a stay on that that may offer sufficient time for the eventual move to be direct to North Weald. There is no permanent future at NPAS Boreham, and the NPAS National Board will therefore discuss this issue shortly.*

**SCOTLAND:** At the Babcock International facility in Staverton, Gloucestershire, work has continued on the new Airbus Helicopters EC135T3 airframe G-PSHU for Police Scotland. The machine now sports its dual language titles as shown here in these studies by James Lloyds.

In the last week of March this aircraft departed the Babcock facility and flew to Glasgow via a Blackpool fuel stop.



Elsewhere in the Babcock facility another EC135T2\* conversion for NPAS of G-WCAO to G-POLH is taking place. The airframe is painted but relatively early in the upgrade process. [MJ/James Lloyds]

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## UNITED STATES

**ARIZONA:** Last month the Mesa Police Aviation Section partnered with the Federal Aviation Administration Safety Team and Helicopter Association International to run its 18<sup>th</sup> Annual Safety Fly-In at Falcon Field Airport near Phoenix in Arizona.

Helicopter crews and pilots gathered to share their best practices, learn new strategies for mitigating risks, and receive updated safety training.

**EVENT VIDEO**

At the March 21 event several operational helicopters were flown in including the Mesa MD, a Bell 407, several Airbus Helicopters AS350s, a BK117 from the Maricopa County Sheriff's Department, Pinal County Sheriff's Department, US Border Patrol, Phoenix Police Department, Mesa Police Department. The event also drew in the local Newscopter crew in their R44 as well as a Schweizer S300 and an AH-1 attack helicopter from locally based commercial companies. Others drove to the event designed to bring everyone together to talk with the FAA Safety Team, HAI/USHST (U.S. Helicopter Safety Team), and National Transportation Safety board about how to remain safe while in the air, especially around others.

A feature presentation was "UAS/Drones – Safe operation in congested NAS and coexisting with Rotorcraft," presented by John Nunes but it seems that the Bar B-Q at the event was also a distinct draw. [AZ Family]

*Ed: Fortunately, this was not a group who claim they already know everything there is to know about flight safety and training. They understand Networking though. The local media [who were invited] have an interesting video on the event*

**CALIFORNIA:** Fresno County Sheriff's Dept. Air Squadron, based at Yosemite International Airport, has operated MD helicopters since late 1996.

In late 2015 it was announced a new aircraft was being acquired the following year at a cost of \$3.5M to replace one of the two existing 24-years old MD500E helicopters, Eagle One and Eagle Two. In January 2016 a report on Twitter said they had ordered an MD530.

Somewhat later than predicted MDHI announced the delivery of a new, custom-configured MD 530F to Fresno County Sheriff's Office at the recent Heli-Expo Show in Las Vegas.



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Officially accepted into operation in February as EAGLE 1 it is the first airborne law enforcement unit in the US to fly MD Helicopters' advanced, FAA-certified all-glass cockpit featuring the Garmin 500H EFIS flight display, Garmin GTN650H touchscreen GPS/Navigation and communications panel, Aero Computers UC-6000 airborne mapping system, and a Garmin GTR 225 audio panel.

Powered by the Rolls-Royce 250-C30 650shp turbine engine, EAGLE 1 also boasts extended landing gear, a Fargo 21-gallon auxiliary fuel tank, wire strike protection system, and Talon LC Keeperless hydraulic release cargo hook for external loads up to 2,000 pounds. Satellite Phone, PA System, FLIR 380HDc, 5" and 12" Displays and M4 Mounts.

**CALIFORNIA:** At HAI Heli-Expo in Las Vegas March 2018 Bell announced the signed purchase agreement for the sale of the first law enforcement configured Bell 505 Jet Ranger X to the Sacramento Police Department.

The Bell 505 will be outfitted with several law enforcement provisions including high skid gear and is scheduled for delivery from the production line to a completion centre in early April. The role fit will include a dual format camera, mapping software and searchlight.

The new helicopter is slated to replace the 1970's era Bell OH-58 Helicopters the department currently utilises. These helicopters were acquired as military surplus in 1997. The Bell OH-58 helicopters have flown for nearly 20 years and over 30,000 flight hours, serving the Sacramento Region.

**SOUTH CAROLINA:** Officials with the Charleston County Sheriff's Office unveiled the department's new \$3.4M Bell 407GX helicopter last month. It was purchased from Bell and had previously been in use by the Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office in Florida.

The 407 has a newer model FLIR infrared imaging system, a microwave down link that allows real-time video streaming operable by either pilot or the rear seat passenger. The Churchill mapping and navigation system provides street overlays of the surrounding area. The landing skids are equipped with flotation devices.

The 2012 build Bell is the newest addition to the sheriff's office air support unit and will replace a military surplus Bell OH-58.

**VIRGINIA:** There are 425 highway signs in Virginia that proudly proclaim, "Speed limit enforced by aircraft," and they're all lying. It seems that the State Police department hasn't aerially enforced the speed limit for more than five years.

Enforcing speed limits from the sky takes a lot of resources and the Cessna aircraft used cost \$150 per hour to operate, in addition to pilots, training, computer software, troopers and cars on the ground. Maryland also stopped enforcing speed limits by plane in 2012

It appears that the signs are legally required to stay up just in case the police wish to recommence speed patrols if funding becomes available. [Bristol Herald Courier]



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# AIR AMBULANCE

## CANADA

**ALBERTA:** CanWest Aviation will begin providing ambulance service in Peace River in April, replacing long standing operator Northern Air.

Alberta Health Services made the announcement in a press release last month even though the operation of the contract is still in dispute. Which of the two airline operators will deliver the service remains unresolved.

CanWest will have one emergency, fixed-wing air ambulance in Peace River available around the clock and parked in the open. A second plane, which will be used for scheduled air ambulance service in northern communities, will be based in Grande Prairie.

After a request for proposals in March 2017, Alberta Health Services awarded CanWest the contracts for eight air ambulance locations across the province, including Peace River.

However, CanWest, which does not have a hangar at the Peace River Airport, didn't have the infrastruc-

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ture in place to begin operations right away prompting a one-year extension for operator Northern Air. In September 2017 Northern Air filed an application for judicial review citing concerns with CanWest's ability to meet the province's air ambulance infrastructure criteria as well as its experience with specialised services.

The judicial review is scheduled for June 2018, the recent temporary solution court actions have not gone in favour of Northern Air.

Meanwhile, a separate legal action was initiated after CanWest negotiated to obtain a former helicopter hangar at the airport through a lease transfer. This led to the town receiving legal advice not to proceed with said transfer until after the judicial review. Can-West sued the Town of Peace River late last year and last month, a judge ruled the town was being unreasonable.

CanWest's lack of a hangar at the Peace River airport is an issue that both Alberta Health Services and the town are working on rectifying, subject to the vagaries of judges. Meanwhile Northern Air were highlighting concerns about leaving an air ambulance parked outside in the northern weather. More injunctions have been promised.

## GERMANY

**ADAC:** The operator is best known for its 'Automobile Club of Germany' rescue and air ambulance services. More recently though ADAC has been seen reaching out to attract other operators to use its training services – particularly those based at Hangelar near Bonn. To that end it has been a prominent attendee at such distant air shows as the US HAI Heli-Expo.

A new venture in conjunction with the Milestone Aviation Group was announced last month. Milestone, the global leader in helicopter leasing, announced the lease of four Airbus H135 helicopters to ADAC Luftfahrt



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Technik GmbH (ADAC) in Germany. Two aircraft were delivered last month with two more scheduled to deliver in April and May 2018; all aircraft were sourced from Milestone's light-twin order book with Airbus Helicopters.

Attracted by the possibility of outsourcing part of their mission training requirements and accessing new technology without capital expense, the German Army sought proposals from helicopter maintenance and repair organisations to provide a turn-key solution for their aircraft needs. ADAC, with their proven record of supporting a fleet of over 50 aircraft, partnered with Milestone to win the contract. Within a short period of time, Milestone was able to provide four new H135s fully compliant with the German Army's specifications and with an operating lease structure that guaranteed full use of the aircraft within the army's budget.

[Milestone/ADAC]

## INDIA

**BANGALORE:** If the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP), the administrative body responsible for the civic and infrastructural assets of the Greater Bangalore metropolitan area, keeps to its deadlines, by July the region will have eight new helipads.

The BBMP plans to have a helipad in each of the eight zones to facilitate the operation of helicopter air ambulances serving well-equipped emergency hospitals. The construction of helipads in every BBMP zone could be complete in four months according to the promises of Mayor Sampath Raj.

The city currently has over 50 helipads, but most of them are on private land and do not cater to public operations. The civic body's initiative will be the first-of-its-kind wherein an urban local body will own its own helipads. The land has been identified and tenders are pending. Customers will be charged a nominal amount, which will go to the private firm building the helipads and running the air ambulance service.

The public purse will provide the land and construct the compounds but will not be providing anything else. The BBMP is also considering tying up with insurance firms to subsidise the service for those belonging to the economically weaker sections. The civic body is mulling including the helicopter flight charges too in the insured amount, However, there is nothing concrete yet on that front.

It is expected that the BBMP will not need any clearances from the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) as the helipads will be constructed at ground level. [New Indian Express]

## SOMALIA

**MOGADISHU:** Kenya-headquartered AMREF Flying Doctors has opened a station and positioned a medevac aircraft with medical crew in Mogadishu, Somalia, in co-operation with its partners Phoenix Aviation. AMREF Flying Doctors now has rapid response 24-hour air medevac capability from Mogadishu to Nairobi, South Africa, Europe or Asia, and it is the first EURAMI-accredited provider to have an aircraft and crew permanently based in Somalia that serves military, humanitarian and expatriate staff.



With a range of 1,500 nautical miles, the Citation 550 Bravo medevac jet is fully kitted with a tandem Life-Port stretcher system to take two patients at a time, combined with state-of-the-art medical equipment, and oxygen lasting for up to 16-hour flights.

In addition to this long-range service, plans are in hand to bring in an AMREF aircraft suited to local operations into unpaved local landing grounds in Somalia, this is likely to be a Beechcraft King Air. AMREF has a dedicated fleet of aircraft ranging from Cessna Caravans and Beechcraft King Airs to Cessna Citation Bravo Jets offering 24-hour emergency air ambulance evacuations in East Africa. [AMREF/AirMed]

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## UNITED KINGDOM

**AAA:** The Association of Air Ambulances sets itself up as the 'go to' organisation for UK air ambulances by attempting to handle the affairs of nearly all the high value air ambulance charities [those who collect millions in charity funds every year] and have made a great thing out of handing out buckets of government money from the Libor funds to fellow air ambulances [and taking a little off the top [or bottom] for itself.

How the AAA conducted its affairs and made its money have not suited the taste of everyone in the industry and it has not actually been able to meet its oft implied claim to represent all.

Clearly something has been brewing in the background for at the beginning of the year the Chair of the Trustees, Hanna Sebright, resigned and then the National Director/CEO, Clive Dickin, also departed.

There was no public announcement on the resignation of the Chair Hanna Sebright in early January and no apparent intention to issue a public message on the sudden departure of Clive Dickin. Hanna remains involved in the AAA and is the Midlands Air Ambulance Charity CEO.

In each case private messages were quietly sent to the AAA membership on both items and the one on Clive departing happened to come my way. Enquiries of numerous other aviation and medical media titles seems to indicate that they too were not told of either departure.

At the AAA AGM in London, on 26<sup>th</sup> March the meeting confirmed that Paula Martin [Cornwall AA] would be the new Chair and Patrick Peel [East Anglia AA] deputy. One new member to the board is Jonathan Jenkins the CEO of London AA.



*Ed: So, despite the initial and resounding silence vacancies have been filled at the AGM at the end of March but clearly the lack of a wider, transparent, announcement must restrict the pool of possible candidates to those who might be 'in the know'.*

*Clive Dickin joined the Association in April 2012. In nearly six years as National Director, he has overseen many successes and developments. Notable among those are: working with HM Government to access millions of pounds of bank fine money for member charities; he embraced and made his own the revision of the VAT Act, which saved members millions of pounds although what he failed to acknowledge was that the move was well in hand before he arrived. It was never his to own.*

*He did however shake up an organisation that was simply a name with no funds of its own and precious little income in prospect. He made it the money it needed to pay his salary and more besides. He promoted the All Party Parliamentary Group for Air Ambulances; established a Code of Conduct; pushed the profile of AAA upwards using a range of communication tools, such as Airway, the Association's quarterly magazine; and set up the controversial and expensive annual Air Ambulance Awards of Excellence and Conference in a swish London hotel.*

**EAST MIDLANDS:** For ages informed people on the perimeter of the air ambulance charity business have been muttering that "One day" things will go wrong and "...the wheel will come off." What they warn against is that the money in the industry will attract the wrong people and the stories that come out of that will seriously hurt the industry. I am not so sure we are there yet, but *The Times on Sunday* published a damaging item on March 18 that comes close. The article itself does not seem earth shattering but it seems to have pulled the Charity Commission out of its lethargy.

The Air Ambulance Service charity [TAAS], operates three air ambulance operations from Coventry and East Midlands Airport. In 2003 it was founded as the Warwickshire and Northampton Air Ambulance in Coventry, subsequently picked up a second operation in Derbyshire, Leicestershire & Rutland in 2008 then later in 2012 rescued the Children's Air Ambulance [TCAA] from its grubby beginnings in Devon. The group currently has an income of about £16M a year.

Over the years the constituent parts of what it is now TAAS have been mired in controversy that it has largely overcome each time.

The Children's Air Ambulance  
Giving children a chance



In 2010, and again in 2013, volunteers for The Air Ambulance Service protested about the high salaries of senior staff at the charity. Central to this was that the Chief Executive, Andy Williamson, was then paid over £110,000. The charity response that the money brought highly motivated fund-raising staff held sway.

In late 2012 this magazine reported on the controversy surrounding the takeover by TAAS of TCAA. The rest of the charities were constantly criticising the cross-border fundraising tactics of TAAS appearing as the evocative TCAA and claimed both names caused misunderstanding over whether they were local or national. Even the BBC got in on the 'bashing' act during 2013 saying that thousands of pounds were spent on hiring a pair of famous and well-heeled celebrity dancers, Anton de Beke and Erin Boag, to give dance classes to staff. This was just one of many claimed instances of alleged misuse of charity funds.



Most donors believe that they are giving their pennies and pounds to pay for a helicopter, its landing ground and base. A few realise they are paying for the crews and the doctors but everything beyond that point becomes less clear. Fewer still realise the scale and cost of the 'tail' that each charity has when they are giving. Perhaps fortunately, only a tiny number go to the bother of studying the full accounts.

Much of the furore surrounding TAAS died down after the creation of the AAA. The national group appears to have mended some fences and brought about a truce of sorts. There were still plenty of background mutterings about how TAAS was using its 'universal' sounding name and the heart-string pulling Children's offshoot to take valuable income from across the nation for what is a very 'middle England' operation. Strangely few voice their very real annoyance publicly.

According to *The Sunday Times* storyline Mr Williamson has retained his love for mingling with the rich and famous and thereby, the paper alleges, faces an investigation of an abuse of his position.

They cited that on a summer's day in 2016 charity bosses from the TAAS country, were mingling in one of the corporate hospitality tents during the Gold Cup at Royal Ascot. They were sharing meat platters and picnic hampers with champagne and Pimm's to drink. The charity's funds were picking up a large part of the bill.

The guests included Andy Williamson, head of the charity, and his wife Linda, who are joint directors of a public relations and celebrity agency, along with the *EastEnders* actress Anita Dobson.

It would seem a good trait to have when you run a celebrity agency, but the storyline points out that Williamson exhibits an "absolute fascination" with celebrities. He asked a concierge service for the super-rich, that had been hired by his charity, to help him meet celebrities, including the Hollywood actor Charlie Sheen, to arrange a "meet and greet" with the band Little Mix and for him to join The Ivy's private members club with another *EastEnders* actor Adam Woodyatt.

There is visual and anecdotal evidence to be had, plenty of images with Boris Johnson, actors and actresses and minor Royalty being drawn to the constituent charities. All the charity air ambulances do it of course, celebrity raises more funds.

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Whatever the truth of the allegations it seems that the Charity Commission is reopening an investigation into TAAS which had first been triggered by complaints from a former trustee. Rebecca Harding reported her concerns in January last year about alleged misconduct, mismanagement and insufficient oversight by trustees. The charity also faces allegations about bullying.

Meanwhile the AAA suspended the membership of TAAS pending the outcome of the Charity Commission enquiry.

*Ed: The Times on Sunday say that the commission have admitted that its response fell short. This is not new. The Charity Watchdog is largely understaffed and is rarely able to send its staff on investigations. Several far more serious issues, including the old TCAA, have similarly been under investigated. The suspension by the AAA seems a mite premature but perhaps they know something that are not supposed to know or guess!*

**GREAT NORTH:** The operation that covers the regions of northern England immediately south of the Scottish border is to build itself a new flying base alongside its supporting charity administration block. The aircraft will pull out of the base at Durham Tees Valley Airport and the office staff out of Darlington town centre.

In January 2017 the GNAAS submitted plans for its new operational base and Medical Centre of Excellence at Urlay Nook, near Stockton-on-Tees, on the former Elementis chromium works site. The former industrial site is a short distance from the airport [see below].



©GoogleEarth

A year later, in mid-February, the plans were approved by Stockton Borough Council and the charity entered a new phase of negotiating a lease on the site.

The charity has grown to be an employer of around 50 people. Most of these work in frontline healthcare but they are supported by essential support services such as the fundraising operation which last year alone had to generate £5.1M to keep the aircraft and crew flying.

In addition, the GNAAS needs to commit to a programme of research and development that will allow them to drive standards ever higher. That target requires a need to have facilities for clinicians to advance their techniques and carry out their research projects and to share our expertise

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with other healthcare workers from this region and beyond. The current facilities would not support those aims.

In addition to the moves in the east of its area GNAAS has now submitted plans for an upgrade to its Cumbrian airbase at Langwathby, near Penrith. It too intends to include space for research and training as well as providing essential facilities for its operational aircrew.

Plans have been submitted to Eden District Council for the replacement of GNAAS' existing modular units with new ones measuring 22m x 6m. [www.gnaas.com](http://www.gnaas.com)

*Ed: The GNAAS owns three AS365 Dauphin helicopters. They are larger and quicker than the types operated by other air ambulance charities but considerably older. Two date from 1991 and the newest is only a few years younger.*

*They are though full IFR capable machines and that can be important in the north of England.*

*The three helicopters were bought from Leeds Bradford International Airport based aviation experts Multiflight between 2011 and 2012 and they remain with the same company for maintenance.*

**LONDON:** The air ambulance service that primarily operates from an eyrie above the Royal London Hospital in Whitechapel, released its 2017 mission statistics last month. The data shows that the air ambulances and response cars were dispatched to 1,797 trauma patients across London last year. The most prevalent missions were to major Incidents, stabbings and shootings followed by road traffic collisions.

The charity supported the medical response at major and significant incidents including the Westminster, London Bridge and Finsbury Park Mosque attacks and the Grenfell Tower fire. The top three busiest boroughs were Hackney (107 patients treated), Newham (103 patients treated) and Westminster (99 patients treated).

*Ed: A team of medics and former patients are off to Africa to tackle a Sahara race to provide funds for the air ambulance. The team including three doctors, a paramedic and a pilot from the charity are taking on the gruelling Marathon des Sables to raise £50,000 for the air ambulance charity, by completing the 150-mile race across the Sahara Desert, which is often described as "the toughest footrace on earth".*

**MIDLAND:** Last month's front cover image of the new H145 for the Midland Air Ambulance hid the fact that bad weather hindered a planned media launch at the unit base at RAF Cosford. The event instead took place at the Babcock International facility at Staverton.

At the reconvened event Formula One racing legend Nigel Mansell CBE, and former England Captain and Rugby World Cup Winner Mike Tindall MBE, joined forces to launch a £7M H145 into service.

Midlands Air Ambulance Charity which was formed 27 years ago in 1991, is one of the longest serving and busiest air ambulance charities in the UK and has to date airlifted over 49,000 people. The lifesaving charity operates three strategically located air ambulance helicopters across six Midlands counties, serving a population more than six million people.

#



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The new H145 upgraded air ambulance helicopter has now officially entered the Midlands Air Ambulance Charity's fleet and is registered with the call sign G-RMAA. The new build H145 was built in Germany and received its medical fit out at Babcock Mission Critical Services in Staverton, Gloucestershire.

The new helicopter will undertake an average of three air ambulance missions every day and will provide a great number of benefits to patient care within the Midlands. It travels greater distances without the need for refueling and enables the aircrew to respond even faster due to increased speed capability.

The larger interior means additional aircrew can be flown to major incident scenes, and further medical equipment can be carried on board to treat more complex emergencies. [www.midlandsairambulance.com](http://www.midlandsairambulance.com)

**WILTSHIRE:** The charity air operation carried out its first landing on the helipad at its new airbase at Semington, near Melksham on March 20. The new base is a few miles to the west of the original facility at the Wilshire Police HQ in Devizes.

The landing was followed by the official handover of the airbase to Wiltshire Air Ambulance. The building will now be fitted out before the charity's fundraising, administrative and operational teams move in by this summer.

David Philpott, Chief Executive of Wiltshire Air Ambulance, said: "Today has been a significant day in the history of Wiltshire Air Ambulance with the handover of our new airbase. We are now in the final phase of the building work as we undertake the fitting and equipping of it before it becomes operational.

"Our primary contractors, Rigg Construction (Southern) Limited, and our architects and project managers, CMS, have ensured that our new home has the best possible facilities for our helicopter, our pilots, paramedics and our charity team to enable us to continue to save lives in the future.

"We have received amazing support from people for our new airbase, including donations, and we'd like to thank everyone for their backing."



Wiltshire Air Ambulance and aircrew after the helicopter's first landing on the helipad at the new airbase. (l-r) Paramedics Steve Riddle, Jo Gilbert and Pilot Nicky Smith. ©WAA Supplied



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Currently the charity leases offices in Calne for its fundraising and administrative team and has leased the hangar at police headquarters since the joint operation was set aside in the wake of the creation of NPAS. The new airbase has a Flight and Operations Centre for its aircrew, a hangar for the helicopter and medical equipment, offices for the charity team, training suite and a visitors' viewpoint.

After the air ambulance became a stand-alone operation three years ago they had to find a new location to vacate the existing police facility. Semington was chosen after an exhaustive search. The location is centrally located within Wiltshire and will allow the Bell 429 helicopter to reach all parts of the county within 11 minutes – matching the times realised at the current base. In addition, as there is no ambulance station in Melksham air ambulance paramedics with their critical care skills have agreed to make available their capabilities to the local population.

Overall the Wiltshire Air Ambulance has been operating for 28 years and has undertaken thousands of missions and saved countless lives.

## NORWAY

**FORESTRY:** Helitrans AS based at Trondheim Lufthavn Værnes in Norway has gained a contract for the provision of forest firefighting services for the Directorate for Civil Protection and Emergency (Direktoratet for samfunnssikkerhet og beredskap or DSB) in Norway.

# FIRE

## SEARCH AND RESCUE

**FALKLAND ISLANDS:** Britten-Norman has completed the first in a series of avionics upgrades to a fleet of five BN2B-26 Islanders owned and operated by the Falkland Island Government Aviation Services (FIGAS) since the mid-1980s. The avionics are being upgraded to the Garmin G600 glass cockpit standard including the GTN650/750 GPS/NAV/COMM, GTX335R remote transponder and electronic engine instruments.



One aircraft will also be equipped with the Garmin GWX70 weather radar. The contract also includes fitting an entirely new bespoke instrument panel to suit each airframe, and a separate contract to upgrade the aircraft from 50-amp to 70-amp generators.

Two engineers from Britten-Norman are on the Islands supervising the mechanical work being carried out by the FIGAS maintenance engineers and completing the systems' installation. All the Islanders will undergo an aircraft strip out, re-fit, testing and certification. The FIGAS flight operations are supported by the FIGAS Maintenance Section who is responsible for the servicing of the aircraft at Stanley Airport.

FIGAS has been an integral part of Falklands' life since 1948 and its very first Islander VP-FAY, destroyed in the Falklands War, entered service in October 1979. The service has provided a wide spectrum of official air support activities including air ambulance, fishery patrol, mail service and the carriage of officials. Over the years the type has added a wider range of customer needs including passenger, freight, and scenic flights. Overall, tourists and local passengers make up most of the traffic. The aircraft hop to almost 30 different airfields located in the East and West mainland islands.

Kurt Whitney, Quality Manager at FIGAS in charge of the program, says that with its multi-role capability and suitability for high frequency, short haul operations, the Islander is ideal for FIGAS operations and the Falklands environment: "Some of the aircraft are now more than 30 years' old and the choice was whether to replace the aircraft or upgrade what we have," he explains. "With this new avionics suite, the aircraft will be good for at least another ten years when we can re-asses our future needs."

Kurt says that passenger demand is on the increase: "We operate very much as an internal air taxi, and with the steady increase in tourism, our passenger numbers increased by more than one thousand this season (the winter to summer season)."

One aircraft has already been successfully upgraded and the next aircraft is due to be upgraded this month. The remaining aircraft will be completed by 2019. The contract was awarded to Britten-Norman by FIGAS in March 2017 under competitive tender. (Penguin News)

*Ed: The five remaining airframes are VP-FBD entered service January 1986, VP-FBM entered service May 1989, VP-FBN entered service July 1990, VP-FBO entered service July 1990, VP-FBR entered service March 1992. 'FBO is now the only aircraft designated for patrol duties and will presumably be the airframe to receive the Garmin GWX70 weather radar.*

## ICELAND

**COASTGUARD:** The Icelandic Coast Guard is planning to purchase three new SAR helicopters to replace its fleet of Airbus Helicopters AS332L1 helicopters, which currently consists of one owned by the ICG and two, which are leased. The project is in its initial stages and may not appear as a formal tender for a year.

Initial These 3 new helicopters will be used for SAR operations around Iceland, both on land and offshore, maritime patrol, medevac, firefighting, sling work and other support around the country. The procurement will include spares, tooling, training and possible support package (PBH).

The helicopters are required to be Civil Certified (EASA) and to be equipped with Ice Protection, 4-Axis Autopilot, Internal and External NVG compatible lighting, Dual Rescue Hoists, Emergency Floatation Gear, be able to fly long-range SAR missions (200 NM+) and operated by a crew of 5 persons (2 pilots, rescue man, hoist operator and a doctor).

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The ICG is seeking information from the helicopter OEM(s) that believe that they have a helicopter that can fulfil this role for the ICG. The ICG is also offering other OEM(s) of equipment used on SAR helicopters (mission-specific equipment) that could enhance the use of the helicopters to answer the RFI. Interested parties can acquire the RFI document from Jon Erlendsson, project manager at the ICG ([jon.erlendsson@lhq.is](mailto:jon.erlendsson@lhq.is)). [TED]

## UNITED KINGDOM

**SAR UPDATE:** During October to December 2017, there were 329 people rescued across all taskings. Of all bases, Prestwick rescued the most people (53). Of all persons rescued 42% were responded to by the four Scotland helicopter bases. Outside of Scotland, the busiest bases were, Caernarfon, Lee-on-Solent and Newquay, accounting for 40% of all rescues. During the latest quarter a further 100 people were assisted, of which 64% were accounted by the Sumburgh base. One of the Sumburgh taskings involved assisting over 50 people.

Land based taskings accounted for the majority of SARH taskings during October to December Definition - Land, coast and maritime 2017, in line with previous quarters. Most searches took place on land and coastal areas (95%) with Land: only 5% taking place over maritime. [MCGA]

## INDUSTRY

As part of a transition to a broader product strategy, in February **Bell** dropped the "Helicopter" from the company's name and adopted the dragonfly as the new symbol of its brand.

The switch returns the company to its roots as a pioneer in aviation technology. Prior to launching into the helicopter business in the early 1940s, the original Bell Aircraft was the designer of fighters, such as the World War II-era P-40 and the X-1 supersonic research aircraft.

By the early 1960s, the company had refocused around a portfolio of military and civil helicopters, before introducing tiltrotor aircraft to military customers. In the last few years, Bell has moved beyond helicopters and tiltrotors, experimenting with ring-wing autonomous aircraft and advanced autonomous flight controls.

The purpose of the move was to remove the perceived confines of being a helicopter focussed company. [Flight]



While the NPAS Vulcanair P-68s are still conspicuous by the absence, **PDG Aviation Services** (ex PDG Helicopters) are buying two and recruiting pilots for what states are "Special Operations." One of the P68Ts was bought from Bio Flight of Denmark and UK registered as G-PDGV [485-52TC] and is 2½ years old.

The intended operation will embrace an in-house fixed-wing Special Operations (SPO) including aerial survey, filming & photography across Europe. They will be based at either Wolverhampton or Cumberland and are required to have an EASA CPL(A), SP-MEP-IR, Class 1 medical suitable for single-pilot commercial operations and 700 hours total.

The **British Airline Pilots' Association** (BALPA) has launched its bid to host an international conference for the world's pilots in Manchester in 2021.

The International Federation of Airline Pilots' Associations (IFALPA) is the representative body for global pilots. More than 100,000 pilots in over 100-member associations around the world are currently in IFALPA membership.

Its annual conference is a notable event in the world of aviation attracting high-profile speakers. In recent years it has taken place in Montreal, New Orleans, Panama City and this year is meeting in Luxembourg where BALPA's bid was announced.

The Greek Government has signed an agreement with a charitable foundation to build and equip hospitals.

Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras signed the agreement with the **Stavros Niarchos Foundation** for a grant valued up to €250M (\$307 million.)

The funds are marked for constructing and equipping a children's hospital in the second-largest city of Thessaloniki and new buildings for existing hospitals in Athens and the northern town of Komotini. Funds will also go toward equipping the air ambulance service among others.

The foundation, a legacy of one of Greece's top shipping magnates, has provided millions for various programs in Greece. It is most widely known for building a cultural centre housing the Greek National Opera and the national library.

**Universal Avionics Systems Corporation** announces that Elbit Systems Ltd. is in the process of completing the acquisition of Universal Avionics through an asset acquisition agreement. The parties have received the applicable government approvals and the closing is anticipated to occur in the coming weeks. Under the ownership of Elbit Systems, Universal Avionics will become a wholly-owned subsidiary.

*Universal Avionics [www.uasc.com](http://www.uasc.com) is a leading manufacturer of innovative avionics systems offered as retrofit and forward-fit solutions for the largest diversification of aircraft types in the industry. It has Corporate offices in Tucson Arizona and facilities in Kansas, Georgia and Washington states, as well as offices in Switzerland and Singapore.*

Last year **Cessna Aircraft** launched a high wing utility twin as the Model 408 SkyCourier, a twin-turboprop, high-wing, utility aircraft offering passenger and freight variants. The 19-passenger version will have large cabin windows and separate crew and passenger doors, the cargo variant sized for three LD3s and 6,000 pounds of payload, featuring a large cargo door and a flat floor cabin. It will cruise up to 370 km/h, with a maximum range of 900 nm (1,700 km). Single point refuelling will speed turnarounds. It might suit as a modern competitor for the Dornier 228 in the ISR role.

Around seven years ago the now defunct Reims Aircraft in France – they built the Cessna based 406 as their own - were proposing a similar type with both cargo and ISR aspirations but this is a clean-sheet design that should offer modern options in cabin flexibility and payload capability, superior performance and lower operating costs than its competitors. The structure is to be built from traditional aluminium and will be equipped with PWC PT6A-65 engines, fixed undercarriage and Garmin avionics. The unpressurised cabin will be 70inch (178cm) tall and wide, with a flat floor and an 87inch (221cm) cargo door.

The 408's design was developed to match a FedEx Express requirement and they will be the launch customer, with an order of 50 cargo aircraft and options for 50 more.

Initial wind-tunnel tests were completed last month, the first flight remains on schedule for 2019 and first deliveries anticipated in 2020.



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# ACCIDENTS & INCIDENTS

**23 December 2017 Beechcraft BE200 King Air N.** Air ambulance of Sanford AirMed Sioux Falls, South Dakota. The aircraft and medical crew were en-route to collect a patient in Rosebud, South Dakota. As it came into land the aircraft entered a slightly higher than normal traffic pattern which resulted in an un-stabilized visual approach. Less than one inch of snow covered the runway and upon landing, the left main landing gear struck a ridge of snow created by a snow plough [a berm], pulling the aircraft off the runway. The aircraft departed the left side of the runway and proceeded a short distance before coming to a stop in a grassy area adjacent to the runway. There were no injuries but a post-flight walk around revealed that the aircraft had struck a runway light with one of the propeller blades. [Concern]

**12 January 2018 Bell 206L4 N336AE.** Air ambulance of Air Evac Lifeteam, O'Fallon, Missouri, USA. Aircraft undertaking a transport from scene flight when the pilot suffered a medical emergency that impaired his ability to operate the aircraft. The pilot had engaged the stability augmentation system and autopilot systems (HeliSAS) after departure from the scene and moments later became unresponsive. The flight paramedic was able to access the cockpit and assist the pilot to land the Bell safely in a rice field. The flight paramedic and nurse performed an emergency shut down of the aircraft and removed the pilot from the aircraft. Additional resources were dispatched to transport the patient and the pilot to medical facilities. [Concern]

**22 February 2018 Eurocopter HH-65D 6543.** United States Coast Guard. Made a "precautionary landing" on open grass of a baseball pitch in the San Francisco Golden Gate Park, California, USA after a warning light alerted the pilot to a mechanical issue. [NBC]

**4 March 2018 Airbus Helicopters BK117 N6187** Air ambulance of Flight for Life made an emergency landing at the Sheboygan County Memorial Airport. There were no damage or injuries reported from the emergency landing. The helicopter reportedly had a hydraulic issue. [Media]

**6 March 2018 Airbus Helicopters N856ME** Air Ambulance The helicopter was forced to land along Hileman Road in Tyrone Township near Altoona, Pennsylvania after hitting a bird. The aircraft suffered damage to the lower plexiglass on the starboard side of the nose. The helicopter was able to land safely, and no one on board was injured. [Media]

**8 March 2018 Eurocopter HH-65 Dolphin 6555** U S Coast Guard. A bird strike forced a Opa Locka based U.S. Coast Guard helicopter crew to make an emergency landing on a beach on the southern side of Key Biscayne, Florida. The Coast Guard said the helicopter crew was on a routine flight when they hit a bird which fractured the pilots [right] screen and made an emergency landing. [Media]

**10 March 2018 Hindustan Chetak [Alouette III] CG803 Indian Coast Guard.** The helicopter, on routine patrol off the south coast near Mumbai crash landed six nautical miles north of Murud, near Alibaug in Raigad district of Maharashtra Mumbai. The engine failed and the Chetak autorotated towards a sandy beach but came down upright but among large boulders which damaged the underside of the fuselage. The co-pilot, Assistant Commandant Capt. Penny Chaudhary, exited the helicopter and was struck on the helmeted head by the slow moving main rotor suffering major injuries from which she died 17 days later at the naval hospital INHS Asvini in south Mumbai. The others on board the routine sortie, Deputy Commandant Balwinder Singh, Assistant Commandant Chaudhary, and two divers Sandeep and Baljeet, were not injured. The Chetak was operating with another Chetak and a Mi-8 when the incident happened. [Tribune]



**14 March 2018 Airbus Helicopters EC135 VH-ZGA.** Aviator Group contracted as a Pilot Service marine helicopter operating with two pilots crashed into the sea 30km off Port Headland, Western Australia whilst transiting to bulk carrier MV Squireship. One of the pair, Brett Gallard, died. The other pilot a 64-year-old male training captain with Aviator Group was picked up from a life raft about an hour after the crash and taken to South Hedland Hospital with minor injuries.

**17 March 2018 Eurocopter HH-65 Dolphin US Coast Guard.** The helicopter from Air Station Port Angeles came within 50 feet of hitting a drone whilst operating at 300 feet training near Fairchild International Airport. The crew manoeuvred to miss what they thought was a bird but identified it as a recreational drone. [Peninsula Daily].

**18 March 2018 Bell OH-58A N311JP** City of Jacksonville Sheriff's Office. Helicopter made an emergency landing at Windsor Parke Golf Club (Hole 16), 13823 Sutton Park Drive, off Hodges Boulevard. Jacksonville, Florida. The reason is undetermined. No injuries were reported. [ASN]

**24 March 2018 Airbus Helicopters EC-135T1 HB-ZIR.** Rescue helicopter operated by Air Glaciers SA crashed in the Great St. Bernard area during an avalanche rescue operation. The airframe ended up on its left side with the MRB destroyed and the Fenestron tail detached. A crew member was injured. [Media]



# FLIGHT SAFETY

The International Helicopter Safety Team has gathered accident information from countries across the globe and continues to see an encouraging trend of safer civil helicopter operations. Preliminary 2017 data from 49 countries show that most have decreasing totals for both fatal and non-fatal accidents. Looking forward, the teams plan to place a stronger focus on human factors and safety actions based on empirical analysis.

Total civil helicopter accidents in 2017 were down 6% compared to the prior year and fatal accidents were reduced by 17% year-over-year. Comparing 2017 to 2013, total accidents decreased by 32% and fatal accidents were cut by 44%.

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After analysing dozens of helicopter accidents that resulted in fatalities for pilots and passengers, the U.S. Helicopter Safety Team ([www.USHST.org](http://www.USHST.org)) has determined that the further development and wider usage of four flight technologies will improve safety across the helicopter industry and save lives: -

**Develop Autopilot Equipment for Light Helicopters** – Current light helicopters have flight characteristics that are challenging and demanding of pilot work load. The development and certification of a stability augmentation system (or autopilot device) for light helicopters will increase flight stability and mitigate loss of control issues.

**Develop Full Authority Idle Protection Devices** – The use of full authority idle protection devices in helicopters would increase safety by reducing the risk of engine stoppage in a piston helicopter. The device would be capable of ensuring that the engine remains running at nominal RPM despite the pilot making a rapid throttle reduction. The USHST believes that current technologies can be adapted for the development of this device.

**Install and Use Flight Data Monitoring Equipment** – Helicopter flight data monitoring devices, including audio/video recording devices, offer the ability to collect data on normal and atypical operations. Most of fatal accidents that occurred since 2009 had insufficient data surrounding the details of the helicopter's state when the event transpired. Because of this deficiency, proactive interventions cannot be put in place before an event occurs.

**Provide Enhanced Vision Technology Whenever Warranted** – Enhanced vision systems such as night vision goggles, synthetic vision systems, and combined vision systems assist a pilot in recognizing and preventing unplanned flight into degraded visibility conditions due to weather. They can also increase safety during planned flying at night. The USHST believes that this technology provides pilots with better tools that can contribute to more informed and proactive decision making as related to visibility. The USHST also cautions that enhanced vision systems should not be used with the intent to equip pilots to fly in risky weather conditions.

An interim report on the fatal accident to the Irish Coast Guard Rescue 116 one year ago has been issued by the Air Accident Investigation Unit (AAIU) in Ireland.

Interim safety recommendations have been issued to Sikorsky and CHC, the operator and the Minister for Transport: -

- The manufacturer should ensure that the latitude and longitude information recorded on the Flight Data Recorder reflects the most accurate position information available.
- The operator should conduct a review of its SMS to ensure that they are robust enough.

The AAIU has also suggested that the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport, as the issuing authority for the Irish National Maritime Search and Rescue Framework, should carry out a thorough review of SAR aviation operations in Ireland to ensure that there are appropriate processes, resources and personnel in place to provide effective, continuous, comprehensive and independent oversight of all aspects of the operations.

## UNMANNED

The European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) published the first formal [Opinion on safe operations for small drones](#) in Europe. This formal Opinion is an important stepping-stone to keep drone operations safe and secure and build a wider regulatory framework. The Opinion will serve as a basis for the European Commission to adopt concrete regulatory proposals later in the year. A first meeting chaired by the European Commission to discuss this Opinion with the EU Member States already took place on 21 February 2018.

More information: <https://www.easa.europa.eu/drones>

A company interestingly called MAD Event Management is running an event in Miami this month [April 19-20] set on planning for the use of Drones in this year's Hurricane Season.

Unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) – also known as “drones” – are beginning to reshape the way public safety officials and emergency managers tackle disasters, and a new educational conference will help frame the discussion around this amazing new technology. The *UAS/Drones for Disaster Response* conference will be held at the Biscayne Bay Campus of Florida International University from April 19-20 to help key stakeholders charged with responding to disasters better understand the role that UAS



and other unmanned systems can play *UAS/Drones for Disaster Response* will feature key speakers from government agencies, major universities, and private industry who have first-hand experience and knowledge in utilizing UAS during disaster operations. Workshops will focus on the various aspects of UAS deployment during the preparedness, response, and recovery phases of a major incident. Live flight demonstrations will allow solution providers to safely showcase the latest UAS technology in the skies surrounding the event. Day 1 has a 45-minute workshop entitled 'Drone Use Cases for Public Safety and Emergencies' <http://uasdrones.org> For exhibitor or sponsorship information, please contact Martha Donato at [m.donato@madeventmanagement.com](mailto:m.donato@madeventmanagement.com)

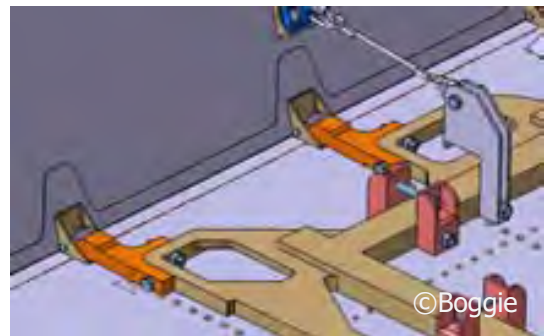
In February 2018, DroneShield announced that the Queensland Police Service would be utilising multiple units of DroneShield's DroneGun for aerial protection of the XXI Commonwealth Games in Brisbane the operator was saying less about the subject. The Australian media is now reporting that a DroneGun has been deployed in a live incident near a Commonwealth Games venue in Brisbane. The media reports indicate that a drone breaching an aerial exclusion zone around the Games' venues was neutralised using a DroneGun, and the drone operator was apprehended. While the drone wasn't breaching an exclusion zone it was still detected and brought down. The operator is being referred to the Civil Aviation Safety Authority for a decision. Around 2,000 police officers, 2,000 Defence personnel and 4,000 security staff will be deployed to Broadwater Parklands to protect the Games and the thousands of people visiting venues.



## EVENTS IN THE COMING MONTHS

### PAvCon 2018

The build-up of the event continues with more companies signing up. Many old favourites of course but not a few new exhibitors drawn to the new location. Among the new attendees this year are Boggie srl from Italy. They operate from three sites in Italy. Customers of Boggie are typically operators, maintenance com-



panies, management organisations, builders of aircraft and private owners.

Boggie srl are Leonardo/AgustaWestland approved suppliers for design and production. They develop and certify minor changes and STCs – the images right are taken from their website. Recent work includes a range of modifications and HEMS configuration on helicopters including Airbus AS350, SA315B, AS365





N3, Leonardo AW119, AW139, in addition to fixed wing types such as Piper P68, Cessna C172, EADS CASA 212 (FAR 25)

Currently the main sponsors of PAVCon Europe are Bell and Cirrus but recent talks with Airbus Helicopters seem to promise a high level of interest from them this year. Currently there is a proposal that an H145 helicopter may feature in the static park for all three days of the event. Bell look likely to bring a 505 and Cirrus a SR22 to add to the numerous aircraft that are normally based at the venue.

**Search & Rescue 2018**

The SAR community’s annual gathering will return to London from June 26-28, 2018. The event is being held at the Hilton London Kensington, 179-199 Holland Park Ave, London W11 4UL.

Unique in offering maritime and land-based case studies, the conference will hear from: UK Maritime and Coastguard Agency; UK Mountain Rescue; the Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary; Danish National Police; Cape Verde Coast Guard;

As well as other speakers from Denmark, Greece, Norway, Serbia, the Slovak Republic and USA.

The event will include a scenario-based workshop, delivered by a former SAR leader in the Canadian Coast Guard. <https://searchandrescueeurope.iqpc.com/>

**APSCON 2018**  
**LOUISVILLE, KY | JULY 9-14**



**ADVANCING PUBLIC SAFETY AVIATION**

The annual get-together of APSCON [as was ALEA] is scheduled for Louisville, Kentucky. Normally this event is held in the southern USA states so this is a major change in direction and has its risks. It will at least be easier for East Coast members to attend but slightly more difficult for International attendees. Check-out <https://publicsafetyaviation.org/>



An image from one of the front-line Twitter account operated by NPAS units in the UK.

This from one otherwise in the news [check out page 8 for a less snowy view].

Clearing snow at NPAS Boreham in Essex. A fairly rare occurrence although this year has been slightly harder than some.



**THIS MONTH**

**10-12 April Commercial UAV Expo Europe**, Amsterdam, Netherlands. Last year's launch in Brussels underscored the need for a pan-European drone event at which industry, universities and government could come together to advance drone technology and use across numerous industries throughout Europe. Enquiries to Kat McDonald [KMcDonald@divcom.com](mailto:KMcDonald@divcom.com) +1.207.842.5646

**11-12 April 2018 5th China Civil Helicopter Operation & Development Forum** operated by the Oppland Media Group in Beijing. The Great China general aviation market is growing very rapidly, and many investors consider the market, there are more than 400 CAAC registered general aviation operators in service. Projections suggest that the helicopter fleet will exceed 1,000 this year. They are used for industry, agriculture, forest and oil & gas transportation, also, the new hot market in HEMS service, low altitude tourism and private operation.

Topics for discussion include:

- Current Situation and Countermeasures of Chinese General Aviation Industry
- Policy and Regulation Update of Chinese Civil Helicopter Industry
- Current Situation and Demand Forecast of Chinese Civil Helicopter Industry
- Chinese Police Helicopter Development Status and Constraints
- Market Outlook for Oil & Gas Helicopter Industry
- HEMS Capability Development and Fleet Management Plan
- Chinese General Aviation MRO and Aviation Parts Support Management
- Opportunity and Challenges of Chinese Helicopter Finance and Leasing
- Chinese Helicopter Low Altitude Tourism

**17-18 April 2018 LETA Thermographers Training**. Hosted by the Florida Office of Agriculture Law Enforcement, 2758 County Road 136, PO Box 136, White Springs, Florida Cost \$300 per person training. [www.leta.org](http://www.leta.org)

**17-19 April 2018 Medtec Europe**, Messe Stuttgart, Germany. Medtec Europe has become the **one**-meeting-place for all stakeholders in the medical technology industry. Over 90,000 people have attended the European shows over the years, with billions of euros of business generated as a result. The show brings together Europe's leading medical technology buyers, suppliers, research & development experts, and engineers together with marketing & sales professionals and engineers to showcase the diversity of the innovation within the medical device industry. Operator: UBM EMEA, Elisabethstraße 13, 53721 Siegburg Germany. Tel.: +49 (0) 2241 95 97 81 0 Fax: +49 (0) 2241 95 97 82 0 [www.medteceurope.com](http://www.medteceurope.com)

**18-21 April 2018 AERO Friedrichshafen**. The Helicopter segment is becoming ever more important at AERO. In 2018, Hall B5 will be opening its doors as a helicopter hangar. The central point of contact here will be the German Helicopter Association (DHV) which has been participating at AERO since 2014. The helicopter area will take in trade fair stands and exhibits from the DHV's member companies in the widely diverse segments from air rescue to aerial work.

In the West Foyer everything revolves around drones. AERODrones provides a unique combination of high-end exhibition and expert symposium, making it attractive to a broad range of professionals.



Friedrichshafen, the home of Zeppelin ©PAR

THREE COUNTIES  
DEFENCE &  
SECURITY  
EXPO

2018

**31 May 2018 Three Counties Defence and Security Expo (3CDSE) 2018**, the region's leading expo for the defence and security industry. Following on from the success of the first Herefordshire showcase for the defence and security industries, the event has grown, but maintains its original premise to provide a forum for military, suppliers and security agencies to identify common interests, solutions and opportunities. Priced to provide an opportunity for SMEs to exhibit shoulder-to-shoulder with prime contractors such as BAE Systems, Thales and Vodafone, the promoters hope that this event will meet its promise of becoming a significant fixture in the defence expo calendar. Web site: [www.3cdse.co.uk](http://www.3cdse.co.uk) E-mail: [info@3cdse.co.uk](mailto:info@3cdse.co.uk)



A sunny end-plate image from Singapore where the bi-annual air show was nice and warm to perhaps overcome the cold of this years winter in Europe, the chill of Las Vegas and even perhaps quell some of the stabbing pains currently running through the cricket world in the Southern Hemisphere summer.

***Bell 505 interior with a Bell 429 beyond.***