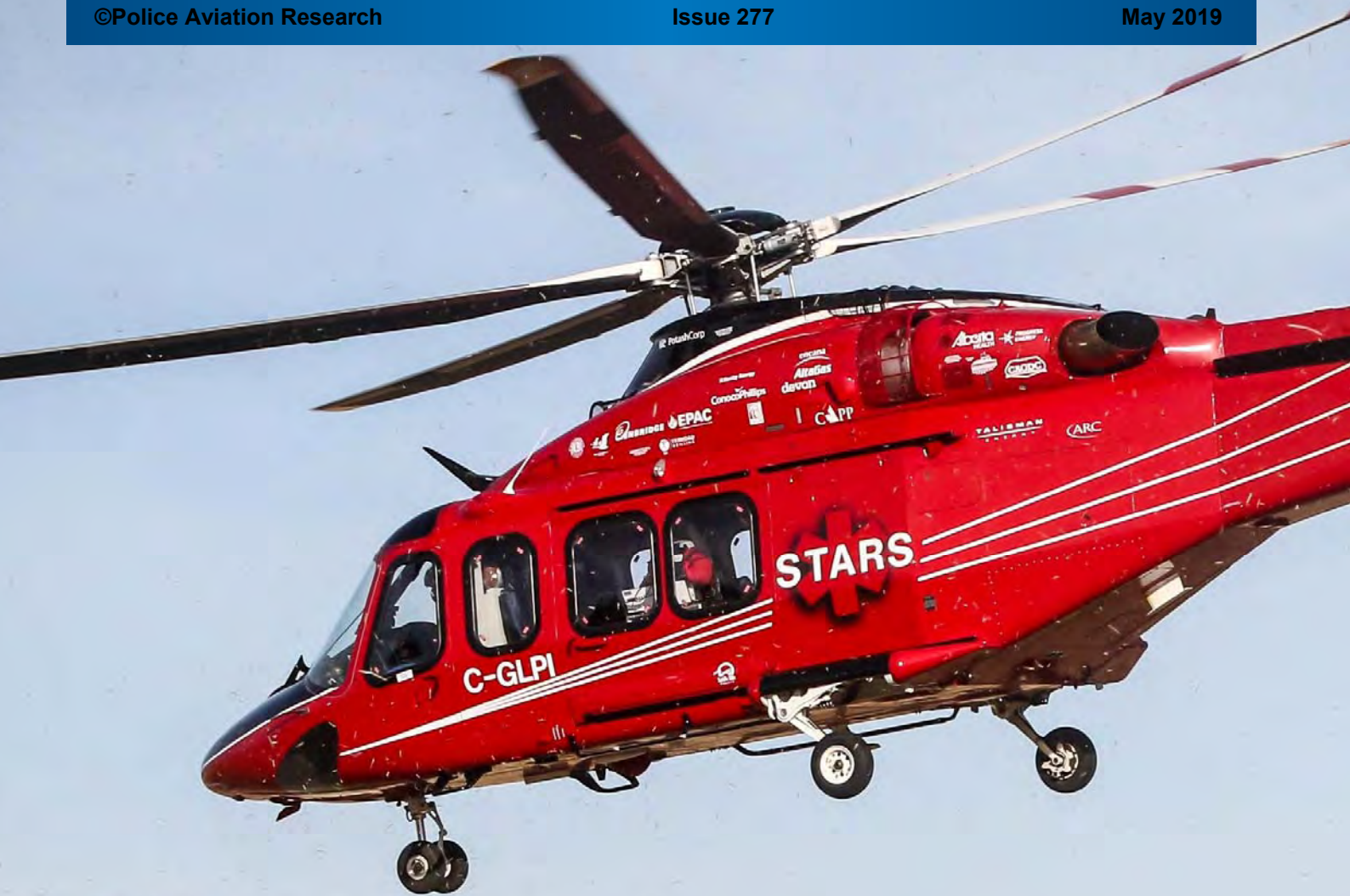


# Police Aviation News

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Issue 277

May 2019



## GHANA START UP

## STARS NEW FLEET

## MAGPAS AW169



## EDITORIAL

It has been well over a year now since someone within West Yorkshire Police wiped away accountability. Accountability in the form of continuing to ensure that the National Strategic Board Minutes are available for public scrutiny.

It may have been someone within the National Police Air Service who are based within the West Yorkshire Police HQ in Wakefield, but someone on a higher plain in this Yorkshire police force agreed that these documents would no longer be available for public scrutiny.



So where are they?

Check out the NPAS website, it says that 'It is essential that NPAS has robust governance arrangements in place. These arrangements are important to provide reassurance to our customers and the public that the service being delivered is fit for purpose and demonstrates value for money.'

'We work closely with the CAA to ensure that our decision-making structure, accountability and overall governance arrangements are fully focused on ensuring a safe operation at all times.'

The question is how do West Yorkshire Police and NPAS square their accountability statement with the removal of the Strategic Board Minutes from public view? A classic case of double-speak that rests with both police and politicians equally. The latter will ultimately face the ballot box the former, it seems from several demeaning recent events, produce dissention and infighting. Frankly, I am not assured.

It may be that this action is linked to the more controversial business of the day, NPAS's as yet unseen reaction to Matt Parr's damning report into NPAS "planes, drones and helicopters" and the ongoing saga of the fixed wing.

*Bryn Elliott*

## LAW ENFORCEMENT INTERNATIONAL

The Night Vision Awards selection committee has announced they are now taking nominations for the 2019 Night Vision Awards Show to be held in Omaha, Nebraska at the Airborne Public Safety Association's (APSA) annual APSCON conference. Entries will be accepted until June 3. The awards will be presented to recipients on Thursday, July 18 at an awards reception.

The Night Vision Awards are a biennial event with ceremonies hosted by Aviation Specialties Unlimited, Night Flight Concepts, Vertical Magazine and Rotorcraft Pro Magazine. The purpose of the awards is to promote operational leadership and excellence in the use of night vision, in North America, and around the world.

To submit a nomination for an award or to learn additional information about the awards, visit <https://www.nightvisionawards.com>

Any flight operation using any Night Vision systems is eligible for consideration. Operators must be present at APSCON to be eligible for entry for the awards. Nominators are asked to submit photos, videos, and stories about their use of Night Vision Systems along with their nomination form. Applicants, please email supporting materials to [scott@brandingiron.com](mailto:scott@brandingiron.com).

## GERMANY

**NORDRHEIN- WESTFALEN:** This police air unit based at Dusseldorf and Dortmund continues to acquire new examples of the Airbus Helicopters H145 and dispose of the older fleet. It has recently disposed of EC155 D-HNWN to a corporate operator in Ireland - registered recently as EI-XHI. The EC155B [c/n 6643] had been in service for around 15 years.



**COVER:** The Canadian air ambulance operator STARS started taking delivery of a fleet of new Airbus Helicopter H145 helicopters last month to supplement and eventually replace an existing fleet of eleven BK117 and AW139.

#

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# GHANA

ACCRA: A ground-breaking ceremony for the construction of a hangar for three police helicopters, was held last month.

The 514-metre square hangar located at the Police Training School in Tesano-Accra has the capacity to contain four helicopters at a time. The construction forms part of a Presidential promise to ensure maximum security within the country.

The aim of the government was to ensure that the police service of Ghana, measured up to globally held policing standards and in the wake of major deliveries of road vehicles and other equipment in 2017-18 the new hangar heralds the introduction of an aspect of policing that the country has never known. A number of police officers were under training as pilots and engineers to man the three helicopters.

Mr David Asante-Apeatu, Inspector General of Police (IGP), said although the Ghana Police Service put in a request for one helicopter “the service remains amazed with news on the procurement of not one, but three helicopters.”

*Editor: In 2013 Ghana Police Service special forces were evident when a Helipad was commissioned at the National Operations Centre at the Police Headquarters in Accra. This though was to facilitate access to air force Mil helicopters in riot control. The first of its kind for the service, the helipad was used for air lifting personnel. At that time, six years ago, a promise was made to get the police their own helicopters. What helicopters are being acquired is not currently known.*



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## KENYA

**NATIONAL POLICE:** Apparently it is not easy being a police officer pilot in Kenya. Those who are ready willing and educationally capable are relatively few. Losing a pilot to non-technical reasons is therefore likely to be a significant blow. Losing a precious aircraft because the pilot was not up to the mark is even more difficult

According to news coming out of Kenya, trainee pilot Tobias Ogeto, working with the National Police Service [NPS], has tendered his resignation with a letter accusing his bosses at the police service of nepotism or tribalism. The officer claims he has been denied promotion on tribal grounds, being the only one from his community working with NPS as a pilot.

Surprisingly, when the story broke the NPS put up a straight speaking spokesman Charles Owino who accused Ogeto of being a dangerous pilot who cannot be trusted with an aircraft. Further, it was stated, that there were no cases of tribalism or nepotism in the service and that the pilot had only resigned in protest to the disciplinary measures vested on him by his superiors.

The official line is that his fellow trainee pilots are also constables and none will be promoted until training is complete. None are complaining. He has done the “instrumentation rating” (which he claims he has never done) and has a certificate for it.

“We grounded him because of indiscipline. All the pilots he trained with are still waiting to be confirmed as police pilots and that is when we will write a letter recommending one to be promoted on merit. He is not a person you can allow to fly.

As if that were not enough *The Nation* newspaper is accusing the whole operation of going to pieces.

Readers may recall last summer the police in Kenya welcomed three new helicopters into service at the Wilson Airport. At the time there was confidence that the three Leonardo machines — two AW139s and one A119 — would help beat back a surging crime wave.



With a history of grounded aircraft, wrecks and a lack of capable pilots there were many positive statements made to promote the operation and its future worth. The claims that the operation would have eleven functional helicopters and two fixed-wing aircraft appeared likely to happen shortly. Contrary to the claims, *The Nation* states that there were alarm bells from the start, already Parliament had complained that the Interior ministry had procured them without approval. The committee on Security found the new arrivals while investigating other matters at Wilson Airport.

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In retrospect the newspaper states that it seems strange that during the launch of the new machines they used a different helicopter to take the people from the ministry and high-ranking police officers for a demonstration flight.

*The Nation* claims that ten months on from the launch event two of the aircraft have never left the ground and are just wasting away at the airport. It seems they have not been cleared to fly within Kenya's air-space. The Kenya Civil Aviation Authority (KCAA) is not saying why.

*The Nation* claims that the reason is that the police have not been able to secure insurance for the pair. No insurance means no certificate of airworthiness. Why the police bought aircraft that cannot be certified as airworthy is a mystery.

This development is just the latest in a string of mishaps and poor management decisions. Significant sums were paid to two companies for pilot training and yet neither company undertakes training. [The Nation]

## SINGAPORE

SINGAPORE: Most readers would never suspect it, but there are many commodities out there that they would not recognise as akin to elephant ivory or rhino horn in their level of illegality. Greatly appreciated in the far eastern markets are animal parts that might easily be overlooked as visually they might resemble a tasty snack.

An illegal shipment carrying nearly 13 tonnes of pangolin scales, worth S\$52.3M [£24M], was intercepted and seized by Singapore authorities on April 3. The Pangolin, or scaly anteater, is the only mammal in the world to be covered from head to toe in keratin scales. They are the most trafficked mammals in the world they inhabit tropical forests, dry woodlands and the savannah.



Armoured against most predators, but not man. A cash crop Pangolin

That had been the largest seizure of pangolin scales globally in five years, said the Singapore Customs and National Parks Board (NParks). Around 17,000 pangolins were killed to make up the shipment.



© Singapore Customs and NParks

The shipment was also carrying 177kg of cut up and carved elephant ivory, worth US\$88,500 (S\$120,000).

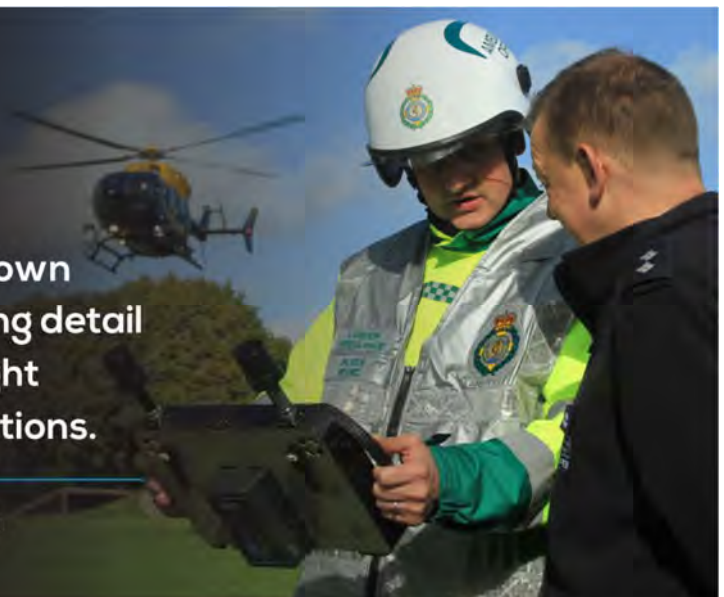
"That's heartbreaking from the conservation point of view because pangolin scales are just made of keratin - the same material as your hair - so scientifically there is no basis for its purported cure for illnesses," said Dr Adrian Loo, group director for wildlife management at NParks.

Although such interceptions are relatively rare, within a



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week a further massive shipment was discovered in a container from Nigeria bound for Vietnam listed as being 'cassia seeds.' This second batch weighed in at 12.7 tonnes and is believed to have been collected following the deaths of a further 21,000 pangolins. [Straits Times]

## UNITED KINGDOM

**MERSEYSIDE:** PAN only rarely covers day-to-day instances of crime stories especially news of a police chase that took place some six-months ago. This instance was brought to notice at the conclusion of a case and of a sentence being handed out.

The actual story is not really relevant though, I just happened to notice that the images in the story showed a clear disregard for getting the whole story right. Many times in the past organisations like NPAS have complained about Twitter images being used without the correct rights holder being acknowledged. It was not about money, simply acknowledging the truth.

In this instance images clearly taken from the NPAS police helicopter and in a police charging centre were wrongly marked © Liverpool Echo. It was pretty clear that the local Liverpool newspaper did not take the images and had therefore no rights to them. Indeed the Echo actually showed the image of the prisoner as coming from Merseyside Police so why the Mail changed it is a mystery. Whether this is simply an editorial slip, picture misappropriation or theft is a matter of personal perception.

As I have found in the past it will not be long before those newspapers will be charging fees and setting onerous and expensive rights over images they have never had the Copyright to simply because they have possession.

The story, for what it is worth is that last October police stopped a young man Kieran Murphy, 22 years, after a pursuit at up to 120mph on roads. It took four police cars to stop the stolen Volkswagen. Footage shot from a police helicopter shows driver Kieran Murphy, 22, being surrounded by the emergency vehicles on the A580 East Lancashire road, near St Helens.

They leap out and arrest him and the passengers, which included Louis Langfield who went on to punch 21-year-old Sam Cook eight seconds before he was stabbed to death at a Liverpool nightclub just 15 days later.

Murphy, was jailed for 22 months after stealing the Volkswagen Golf from a family home in Formby, near Liverpool, led police on the eight-mile chase. Despite being slowed by the police deliberately puncturing his tyres Murphy continued driving.

Steve Jones, National Police Air Service Assistant Operations Director in the north west, is quoted as saying 'One of our helicopter crews tracked the vehicle and were in contact with officers to guide them towards it.

A pursuit is a high risk situation and we're there to work with colleagues on the ground to help manage it effectively.

'That's exactly what happened here, as we supported Merseyside Police, and the vehicle was soon stopped safely.'

Murphy, has 15 previous convictions for 34 offences, was joined in the VW by Mark Bleasedale, Jordan McAleer, and Louis Langfield. <https://www.liverpooecho.co.uk/news/liverpool-news/dramatic-moment-120mph-police-chase-16108053>

*Ed: I asked NPAS media department and management for a comment on the copyright issues and there has been none. I guess I never expected one but it tends to underline my general critique of the effectiveness of the organisations media effort, so many missed opportunities..*





Fixed wing makeover. Seen here inside the Doncaster hangar the NPAS P68 aircraft have now received UK registration markings. ©NPAS

*As I have commented before there are no press releases coming out of NPAS, they seem to have migrated to a part of the Internet labelled 'find me if you can' and are now in a special place on the West Yorkshire Police web site. It is alright if you are expecting a bit of news but the whole thing is run like the Stazi these days. NPAS has its own promotional staff and I well remember them making a point that it was they who undertook the PR task when they wrested it away from the WYP Press Office. Unfortunately it seems that there has been a reversal of fortunes and yet again others now rule the PR roost and the long 'under development' website remains moribund. It is others who choose what they might want to send out when they find the time. As a general rule its nothing at all. I guess it is a service based on trust and that is a missing commodity. Wasted salaries.*

So in mid-month it was either Twitter or the WYP site to find that the still unready for service Vulcanair P68R fixed wings have had a sort of makeover.

UK registration markings have been added to National Police Air Service aeroplanes. This apparently overdue visual revision is the latest step towards the aircraft joining the NPAS fleet.

Accompanying the announcement the official text stated that 'In the months ahead, work will take place to achieve airworthiness and police operational certification before they can begin flying in support of police forces in England and Wales.'

'There will be four aeroplanes in total – two are now UK-registered, while two are due for delivery. They will be deployed from NPAS' Doncaster base.

*Ed: So, here we have a well tried and tested airframe that first flew over forty years ago that despite much work still fails to "achieve airworthiness and police operational certification."*

*It seems that back in 2013 Ollie Dismore was right to tell the NPAS board that NPAS could not consider adding four fixed wing aircraft to the fleet as this would not be practical in the short term owing to the long acquisition timescales. He was dead right on the long part! That little gem came from an old issue of the National Strategic Board Minutes – and underlines the worth of them when assessing NPAS.*

Meanwhile further south at North Weald the new NPAS London replacement base is taking shape. The structure appears to be very similar to Doncaster—the buildings being a mirror image. ©NWA Museum



## SCOTLAND:

Last month the enquiry into the fatal accident that overtook the crew of the Police Scotland EC135T2 over Glasgow opened. The enquiry will be reliant upon reviewing previously published documents and opinions, mostly already in the public domain.

At 22:22hrs on 29 November 2013, the pilot of the helicopter and two accompanying police officers died as they were returning to Glasgow City Heliport with low fuel levels. The helicopter crashed through the roof of Glasgow's Clutha bar killing ten people, the three crew and customers in the building. Thirty one people were also injured.

The enquiry is unlikely to produce any startling new information in the coming months but time will tell.

## UNITED STATES

**ALABAMA:** In Ozark, the Dale County Sheriffs Office has four aircraft including two examples of the venerable stalwart of many small US police air support units, the Bell OH-58 Kiowa. Until recently the second one, N262LE, remained in its ex-DoD drab green. Now the airframe has had a makeover and it is not just confined to the clearly visible paint black-silver and white scheme.

In early 2019 Arista Aviation, in Enterprise, AL gave a much needed facelift to one of the Dale County Sheriffs Office helicopters. The company mainly undertakes Bell Huey refurbishments for the US Government.

Dale County Sheriff, Wally Olsen says Arista Aviation offered this act of service to refurbish their Kiowa helicopter. Arista Aviation and the Dale County S.O. have an ongoing partnership to make sure their aircraft are in top shape both physically and aesthetically.

Sheriff Olsen says this facelift should last more than 10-15 years. [WTVY]



Smarter Bell OH58 for the Dale County Sheriff operation. Low tech air support of law enforcers. ©DCSO

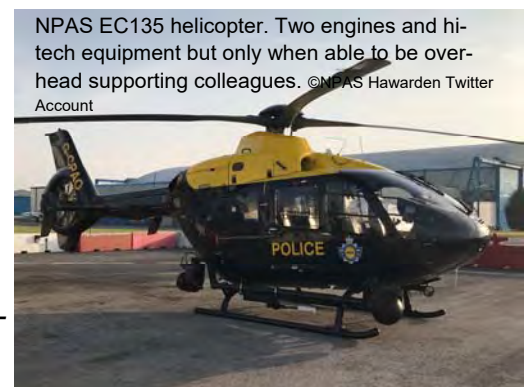
*Ed: The Dale County Sheriff's Office Aviation Unit was formed in the mid 1980's. In 2002, the Aviation Unit acquired an OH-58 from the U. S. Department of Defense. Over the next several months, the Vietnam-era helicopter was repainted and fitted with police equipment that includes a searchlight and Forward Looking Infra-Red (FLIR). The aircraft is also equipped with technology to locate Alzheimer's patients or "wanderers" as part of Project Lifesaver.*

*Over the years grant funds have enabled the Aviation Unit to acquire state of the art equipment to assist them in missions involving the aircraft. This equipment includes the FLIR, moving maps, a glass cockpit, microwave downlink, and night vision goggles.*

*Dale County encompasses 561 square miles, in area and population it is about the size of Kings Lynn and West Norfolk Borough, but half the area of Shropshire or Wiltshire. Under the jurisdiction of the Dale County Sheriff's Office are some 50,251 people in 18,878 households, a population density of 88 people per square mile. By comparison Wilshire has 141 per square mile. I only mention this because in the much criticised UK air support for Kings Lynn has always been virtually nothing and yet Dale County has four aircraft. It is all about mindset really Until the much delayed fixed wing provision gets on-line support for places like Kings Lynn can only come from Northampton or London [70 miles].*

*By chance the total land area of England is slightly more than 50,500 square miles. Alabama is only slightly larger at 50,700 square miles in size. The State is made up of 67 counties, each with an average population of 71,399, though Jefferson County has a population of 658,000 and Greene County 9,045. England has 48 counties And there the comparisons diverge wildly. Just 4.5 million people live in Alabama but well over 50 million inhabit England. There is also a massive divergence in police aviation.*

*In the US state, historically, only 32 air units existed, some only lasted a short time before withering and dying, but often they undertook mutual aid so the number of counties covered was patchy but greater than it seemed. In England, prior to NPAS being formed, every county had tried air support at some time and most still had access to it.*



NPAS EC135 helicopter. Two engines and hi-tech equipment but only when able to be overhead supporting colleagues. ©NPAS Hawarden Twitter Account



The US DoD have been offering US law enforcement free airframes, fixed wing and helicopters, for decades from their spare fleet. ©DOD



*Yes it was often less robust than it pretended to be [with maintenance downtime being carefully hidden from view] but it was high profile and generally perceived to work well. Today it is difficult to gauge the relative strengths of aircraft between England and Alabama because no-one has ever run a spot check survey on the latter and NPAS had their spot check when the HMICFRS report was undertaken. So NPAS know but dare not tell. In theory there are under 20 relatively modern well equipped [but often extremely tired] helicopters in the UK and perhaps as many as 50 often much older and less versatile craft in Alabama. The question may be whether those 50 Vietnam left-overs actually give a better service than the NPAS fleet. They certainly represent better value to the far smaller population.*



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CALIFORNIA: San Bernardino County Sheriff continues to modernise its fleet of Airbus Helicopters. Over the past two years they have been buying new H125 airframes to replace a fleet of AS350B3 helicopters that are a decade or more old.

The recently acquired H125s have been N833SB c/n 8435, N834SB c/n 8389, N835SB c/n 8221 and N836SB c/n 8233. They have already reserved the marks N837SB for a future purchase. Among the older B3s still thought to be in active service are N631SB c/n 3891, N632SB c/n 3894, N633SB c/n 3901 and N634SB c/n 3997.

Recently they sold one of their older AStar's to a UK private owner. The 13 years old Eurocopter AS350B3 AStar N636SB 4064 is now on the UK register as Squirrel G-TGGR. [PAN/Helihub]

NEW YORK: Erie County Sheriff's Office is busy researching the cost of providing body cameras to members of the sheriff's road patrol when compared with the cost of the SWAT team to full-time status or buying a new helicopter to update the existing fleet of a 50 years old Hughes OH6A [MD500] and an 2003 AS350B2.

It is expected that financing body cameras could likely become an issue in the county's 2020 capital budget in the face of higher priorities that require funding and could have a more tangible impact on public safety. Current estimates are that the cost of the equipment, data storage and personnel needed to organize and edit body camera footage could cost \$1M, with ongoing data storage and personnel costs. They have been unable to source grant funding to assist in the decisions. There have been no pressing instances of an operational need for the cameras which suggests that the other options are most likely.

Elsewhere in New York State the State Police Aviation Unit, based out of Saranac Lake, have added another Bell UH-1-A Huey helicopter N61SP to help serve the people of the North Country by providing a search and rescue mission airframe. The Huey dates from 1974 [74-22370].

According to the storyline, in 2018, State Police utilised four Huey helicopters for more than 250 flights to rescue stranded hikers and other injured citizens, re-stock lakes with fish, take water samples of various Adirondack lakes to monitor quality and pollution, and conduct wildlife surveys that track various tagged species, and fight fires.

The latest airframe was acquired through the Department of Defense 1033 Excess Property programme in July 2018, it was certified last September and flown to the SP Aviation Headquarters in Albany in November for a final role fit. It became operational last month.



An economic aerial resource  
the Bell Huey © NYSP

# AIR AMBULANCE INTERNATIONAL

ORBIS: Award winning private aviation travel company ConnectJets, and premier flight support solutions company, Flightworx, have thrown their support behind blindness prevention charity Orbis UK, to help raise awareness for their See My Future appeal. For three months, until 23rd June, all public donations to the appeal will be doubled by the UK government.



In many parts of the world, avoidable sight loss means children are dropping out of school. Issues such as refractive error, cataract and strabismus (severe squint) can all impede a child's ability to see the blackboard, their text books and their teachers. In some cases children are dropping out of school to care for an adult with sight-loss.

See My Future aims to raise £850,000 and the UK government will match every pound, up to £2M, which will help save the sight of thousands of children and adults around the world utilising the comprehensively equipped DC-10 Flying Eye Hospital. The state-of-the-art ophthalmic teaching hospital on board offers a training facility, operating theatre and recovery room.

All of the money matched by the UK government will go directly towards expanding Orbis's project in Nepal which screens and treats children with sight loss, enabling them to attend school and face a brighter future. All individual donations will support the charity's vital sight saving work across the world, wherever it is needed most.

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## CANADA

**STARS:** The air ambulance showed off its two new H145 helicopters last month and it is hoped that they will be equipped for service by this summer.

The two Airbus H145's are the first of a new fleet of nine helicopters the organization hopes to acquire, with \$91M of an estimated \$117M needed for the fleet already raised.

The air ambulance service currently has 11 aircraft in its fleet with two different types of helicopter in operation, the BK117 and AW139.

STARS says the conversion of the fleet will happen one base at a time, starting in Calgary. Pilots here have been trained. Medical crews will start training in the helicopters in May.

## ASIA PACIFIC

**HONG KONG:** In their recently published review of 2018, Asian Sky Group (ASG), a Hong Kong based business aviation consulting group, state that there were 267 EMS helicopters operating in the region and they represent just 6% of the total helicopter fleet.

The main fleets are in Japan, China and Australia and they account for 224 of the airframes. Once you add the next two largest countries in terms of fleet size, New Zealand and South Korea, that leaves less than 20 spread across the rest of the region to provide a very meagre service. ASG do not suggest much is about to change in the short term. They see continued growth and replacement programmes in the main players but little change elsewhere. Nonetheless in purely financial terms it is a rich market if the OEMs can provide the right product at the right time.

ASG note that there was a significant move towards Leonardo products – mainly the AW139 – in 2018, a trend that PAN has seen reflected in other regions and across other fields. In the short term Airbus have little to worry about in that they still hold 41% of the EMS market but as in other fields Leonardo are hot on their heels with 37% of the legacy fleet. If the latter continue to outsell the new Airbus products those percentages will soon slip.

The full 56-page report is freely available on their web site.



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# CHINA

**AIR AMBULANCE:** The country's air ambulance service includes 71 hospitals and pre-hospital medical institutions in 12 provinces and municipalities. China has set up pilot areas to provide enhanced air transport for critical patients and those with severe trauma in areas lacking medical resources.

The Civil Aviation Administration of China and the National Health Commission have forged an action plan to reduce the need to transfer patients via commercial scheduled airline and move instead to dedicated aircraft flights. The "air ambulance service" with continuous first aid aims to enhance the survival rate.

Last month a patient was transported for medical treatment by a jet ambulance from Urumqi to Beijing, more than 2,500 km away. The aircraft, a Falcon 2000LX, is the country's first civil aircraft for professional medical relief which is fully equipped with portable ventilators, ECG monitors and automatic stretchers. It can land at high altitude, on short runways, and hot areas.

Patients with critical conditions used to be transported by passenger flights, with 216 patients in Xinjiang transported in 2018. The method posed threats to the safety of patients and aircraft, as first-aid equipment was not properly secured in the cabin.

Across China a large number of helicopters are on-order with a view to expanding further the HEMS provision. The helicopters will be sourced from the West and Russia. A significant order for Ansat helicopters has been placed but there is no news on delivery dates for these.



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# SWITZERLAND



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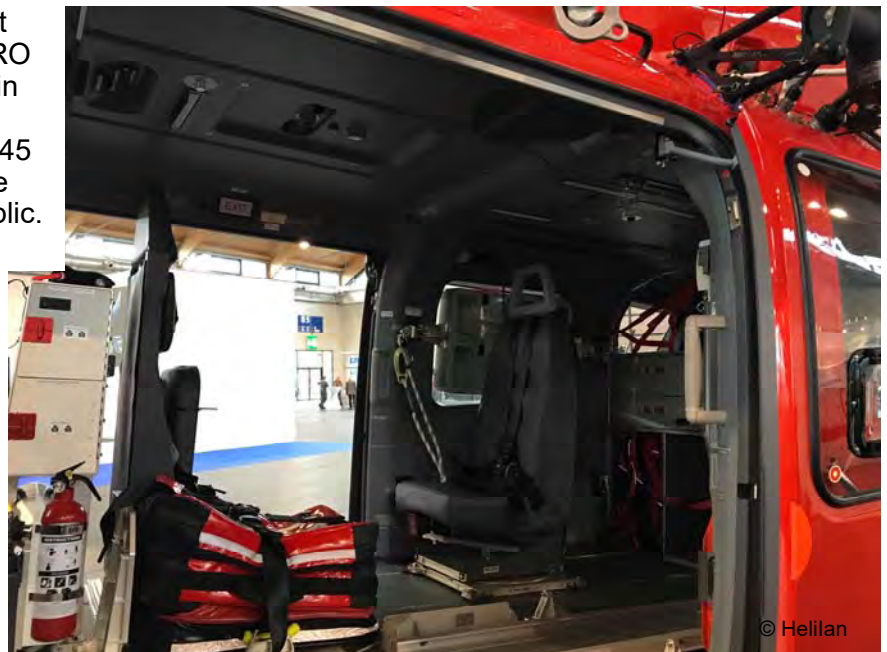


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A series of images taken by Ian Vincent Frain at the recent Friedrichshafen AERO event on the shore of Lake Constance in southern Germany. One of the latest Airbus Helicopters H145 for REGA and a German Federal Police EC155 were on display to an eager public.



© Helilan



© Helilan

## UNITED KINGDOM

**GREAT NORTH:** last month PAN mentioned the planning and flying issues surrounding the major infrastructure project being undertaken by and for the Great North Air Ambulance Service moving to Urray Nook, near Eaglescliffe, Stockton-on-Tees. This is in the south of County Durham.

This move will see the charity's back-office functions from Darlington and Newton Aycliffe relocating to the new site, with the critical care team and aircraft, currently based at nearby Durham Tees Valley Airport, moving later in the year. The works will cost £3.9M on top of an unspecified site cost.

Despite the significant financial scale of the project, rather than set in place a professional and paid maintenance service the charity has put out an appeal for people to work for them without remuneration to maintain the new site.

The charity bought the new site off Elementis Chromium. It features established lawns, hedging and shrubbery that need ongoing maintenance.

**MAGPAS:** Magpas Air Ambulance have taken delivery of their brand new Leonardo AW169 helicopter, which is set to become the prime Magpas airframe from May 1.



The independent charity see that the current MD902 helicopter has come to the end of its working life as an air ambulance but the type will continue to serve as a back up to the AW169. The new helicopter will enable the charity to fly further, faster, to a greater number of patients mainly located in Cambridgeshire, Peterborough, Bedfordshire, the East of England and beyond. They have dealt with calls from London to Yorkshire in the past, a wide ranging remit.

In financial terms Magpas Air Ambulance has had a chequered past and the published charity accounts from earlier years show little to support an ability to support the new helicopter. Magpas cite the ability of their communities and supporters in bringing in the finance. Presumably the next set off accounts will explain how they have turned around a series of massive losses into profit.

As a thank you gesture to its fundraisers and supporters, on April 24 Magpas organised a big community fly in and flew to four locations to say thank you. They flew from the operations base at RAF Wyton in Huntingdon to near Downham Market in Norfolk, moved to Parker's Piece in Cambridge, then onto Newmarket Academy and finally to Priory Country Park in Bedfordshire.

NORTHERN IRELAND: Some think it is wrong that the provision of air ambulances should be left to the vagaries of public fundraising others remain happy to leave the prime funding support to come from charity giving. On the face of it the charity system works well in the main parts of England and Wales but in other parts of the United Kingdom and other countries across the world it struggles or would be impossible.

The youngest charity helicopter, that based in Northern Ireland, was set up using governments funds and may have some way to go before it becomes self reliant. If some have their way, they may be heading more for a similar system to the main provisions prevailing in Scotland.

In County Fermanagh Councillors have agreed that there can no longer be a total reliance on fundraising to maintain the Northern Ireland Air Ambulance and that the Department of Health and Northern Ireland Ambulance Service must shoulder some of the costs.

In a later story the suggestion that the air ambulance is seen to be the answer to all evils in Northern Ireland is accentuated and the suggestion that there will be a long standing government funding stream is taking on an aura of certainty. The Department of Health have claimed that "additional investment" will be made to the Helicopter Emergency Medical Services (HEMS) as a result of the proposals to reshape stroke services in Northern Ireland.

As a new operation, currently the air ambulance does not fly at night and runs from 7am to 7pm but a Department of Health Spokesperson has said that this will change with more funding promised with £1M being suggested as a positive annual support to the charity fundraising. This money is intended to be spent on medical equipment, staff costs and medicines. The rest of the funding comes from the Air Ambulance Northern Ireland charity.

Meanwhile in the south of Ireland the new charity ambulance appears mired in red tape. The base is ready, the leased AW109 helicopter sits waiting for service but as yet the government has not completed and signed off on the paperwork. The Air Ambulance Service, located in Co. Cork, has issued a statement announcing that when the service goes live rests with the Minister of Health.

The Air Ambulance project comprises a partnership approach to both funding and service delivery between Irish Community Rapid Response (ICRR), the HSE NAS and the Department of Health. ICRR is satisfied that the requirements and specifications, which the charity has been tasked with, are in place. ICRR's responsibility is to provide and fund the air base, the pilots, engineers and ground staff. The HSE NAS is providing the paramedical staff and integrating the service with the other emergency health services. The Department of Health is providing policy and service oversight. [ICRR]

## UNITED STATES

OKLAHOMA: Officials at Air Methods Corp. have shut down four medical helicopter bases in Oklahoma due to financial burdens.

TEXAS: Air Medical Group Holdings (AMGH), a leading air medical transport company, has signed a purchase agreement to acquire Seven Bar Aviation, LLC, a privately-held air medical operator offering fixed and rotor wing services to a broad array of leading healthcare organisations throughout the USA. SevenBar Aviation will closely align with Med-Trans Corporation and the transaction is expected to close soon.

SevenBar Aviation has grown its geographic footprint significantly over the last seven decades and has a fleet of nine jet and turboprop airplanes, in addition to six helicopters. The company is headquartered in Dallas, Texas, with nearly 100 employees and currently has bases in New Mexico, Texas, Maine, Massachusetts, Virginia, and North Carolina.

Now in its 36th year in business, Med-Trans Corporation has grown into a leading provider of medical transport focused on establishing professional relationships with leading health systems, medical centers, and EMS agencies.







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# FIRE

## ITALY

**VIGILI DEL FUOCO:** Italy's National Fire Corps receives first two AW139 helicopters, the backbone of the Country's rescue and emergency response services. The helicopters will carry out search and medical rescue, firefighting and disaster relief with enhanced operational effectiveness from all national bases. The first AW139 of the National Fire Corps is now entering service with a view to the type replacing the long standing fleet of Agusta-Bell AB412 helicopters in the fleet.

With the delivery of the first two AW139 intermediate twin engine helicopters, Leonardo and the Italian National Fire Corps (Vigili del Fuoco, part of the Ministry of the Interior) announced a major step forward in strengthening their collaboration delivering advanced, more effective emergency response services in Italy.

The Italian National Fire Corps will receive a third AW139 this year under the €45M contract signed in 2018. The contract also includes integrated logistic support and training for pilots and technicians, and encompasses an option for 12 additional helicopters. The first two helicopters will be based in Rome Ciampino for National Fire Corps personnel training.



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# INDUSTRY

**FLIR Systems, Inc.** has announced the FLIR K1 handheld thermal imaging camera (TIC), FLIR's most affordable TIC for first responder officers and fire investigators. At \$599, the K1 detects heat and provides visibility through smoke and in total darkness to enhance situational awareness for use in wildland fire control, search and rescue missions, structure damage evaluation, and investigative work. The dual sensor K1 is powered by the FLIR Lepton thermal micro-camera, FLIR's smallest and lowest cost thermal camera core. The K1 uses FLIR's patented MSX® technology, which extracts high-contrast details from the images taken by an onboard visible light camera and superimposes them onto the thermal images. The K1 simultaneously captures thermal and visible images of a scene and stores up to 10,000 image sets to create post-scene reports, analysis, and evidence. A pistol grip design allows users to view the scene from their line of sight for improved safety and situational awareness. The spot thermometer easily identifies unseen hot and cold spots for instant troubleshooting. The K1 carries an IP67 rating for water resistance and can withstand a 2-metre drop onto concrete. An integrated, rechargeable battery lasts up to five hours on a single charge, and it also includes a 300-lumen flashlight that lends additional visibility of a scene. The FLIR K1 will be available for purchase this summer and demonstration units are now available for testing. [www.flir.com](http://www.flir.com).

Forget about all the millions that were wasted on the capability overloaded project to use the AW101 helicopter as the future Presidential Helicopter, the news is all about money saving! It is reported from the US GAO that the projected total costs for 23 new Sikorsky VH-92As, aircraft for the **Presidential Helicopter Replacement** programme, have declined \$230M from a previous estimate that takes no account of the money wasted on the Lockheed Martin VH-71 Kestrel variant of the Agusta-Westland AW101, around the \$4billion mark. Initial delivery of VH-92A presidential helicopters is scheduled to begin in FY2020 with production ending in FY2023. The presidential helicopters are based on the commercial Sikorsky S-92A, a twin-engined, medium-lift helicopter. The new helicopters will replace the current US Marine Corps (USMC) fleet of VH-3D and VH-60N aircraft. Projected total costs for 23 new Sikorsky VH-92As, aircraft for the Presidential Helicopter Replacement programme, have declined \$230 million from a previous estimate.


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#

Sikorsky attributes the savings to several factors, including stable requirements, a low number of design changes, and programme efficiencies, says the Government Accountability Office (GAO). Even if you discount the fact that the Sikorsky product is significantly smaller than the cancelled VH-71 there are snags even though there has been a reduction in pressure on the programme. The USN delayed some programme milestones by some months. Development problems include a problem with VH-92A aircraft's start procedures not meeting an undisclosed performance requirement. Someone has yet to overcome the problem of erosion of the grass on the White House lawn. The new project is significantly heavier than the in-service Sikorsky's and overcoming the problems connecting the aircraft's communication system to secure networks, due to changes in network security requirements. Nonetheless, the USN anticipates having a fix by January 2020, says the GAO. [Flight International]



The replacement helicopter blade experts based in the USA, Van Horn Aviation, suffered a severe setback in its testing programme last month.

Two people, including a Prescott university professor, were killed when a Bell 206 helicopter crashed about 25 miles outside of Phoenix, Arizona.

The Bell left Falcon Field Airport in Mesa and went down in a farm field on the Fort McDowell Indian Reservation, near Fountain Hills and burst into flames.

Tempe-based Van Horn Aviation identified the pilots as Rucie Moore, a contract experimental test pilot, and Stephen Estes, an engineer who had worked for the company for five years. Both men had contributed greatly to the design and development of recent rotor blade designs.

Initial NTSB comment states that the flight of the Bell was to "evaluate developmental main rotor blades that had been installed on the helicopter."

The report also stated that test flights consisted of multiple autorotations at maximum gross weight involving a simulated loss of engine power and that the accident flight was the last test flight of the main rotor blades before the certification process. From another source early reports cite 'Mast Bumping' as a potential cause.

Communications specialists, Spectra Group (UK), have received the highly prestigious Queen's Award for Enterprise in the Innovation category for their innovative system, SlingShot®.

SlingShot is a small, low powered and lightweight system that delivers game-changing capabilities to existing military and first responder radio networks. When connected to military or commercial UHF/VHF radios, SlingShot extends their range from Line of Sight to Beyond Line of Sight covering thousands of mile radius by utilising the Inmarsat I-4 commercial satellite network L-TAC Service. The system works by simply converting UHF or VHF radio frequency signals to the L-Band frequency used by the L-TAC Service and is the only product of its size that enables portable tactical beyond line-of-sight voice and data communications whilst on the move.

SlingShot's unique capability offers military, emergency and disaster-relief agencies the ability to reliably communicate in remote and harsh environments without the need to rely on existing communications infrastructure or deploy additional communications infrastructure. It also enables global interoperability between coalition forces and agencies using different radio systems, without the requirement, or need, to swap equipment and receive additional training.

Spectra's innovation stemmed from a realisation in 2012 that there was a previously unutilised capability

of the Inmarsat satellite that would have huge potential in both military and first responder sectors. Working closely with Inmarsat a working concept was developed and approved for use by the British military within weeks and production started in less than 9 months.

SlingShot is versatile enough to be used in aircraft, vehicles, maritime platforms and disembarked personnel. Spectra has since gone on to successfully market SlingShot globally providing a capability that has proved to be of critical importance and has undoubtedly contributed to the saving of lives.

With strong global sales and increasing recognition of SlingShot’s capabilities within the user community, Spectra Group opened a U.S. office in October 2018 and continue to expand their export footprint.

# ACCIDENTS & INCIDENTS

**1 April 2019 Airbus Helicopters H145 N144NE.** Air ambulance of Boston MedFlight, Bedford MA. The aircraft had been started-up for a transport request and was at idle on the base helipad. The transport paramedic in the cabin reported seeing smoke coming from the left forward overhead panel area and simultaneously noticed an electrical burning smell. The pilot initiated an emergency shut-down. It was determined that a wire from the No2 Shed Bus had chafed against a carbon fibre support beam and shorted.

[Concern]

**3 April 2019 Eurocopter EC145 F-ZBPP?** Securite Civile. Martinique based rescue helicopter “Dragon” undertaking double lift rescue of a sea swimmer flew into power lines, cutting them, with the crewman and rescued person still dangling below. The hoist line was cut but it is unclear whether this was set off in the aircraft or by the high voltage. The two survived landing in water. The bather (or JetSki) rescue operation was just offshore at Fond Bellemare in Schoelcher. At around 4 pm the helicopter lifted the pair from the water to nearby land. In so doing the nose of the helicopter struck the wires on the Route Nationale 2 between Schoelcher and Cas-Pilote on the North-Caribbean coast and resulted in an EDF high-voltage cable falling on the road at the roundabout La Colline district. The power cable caused traffic jams on the North Caribbean route with a diversion set up between the districts of La Démarche in Schoercher and Vétiver in Case-Pilote. No reports of injuries or damage to those in the air despite the unexpected drop to the earth of those on the hoist. [LeJournal]

**10 April 2019 Helicopter.** Iran Police helicopter transporting officers of the Border Guard to their post in the northwest crashed killing one and injuring several. The report says the crash took place in West Azerbaijan province, in the mountainous area of Dalamper, near the city of Urmia which is close to the border



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with Turkey. Eight people were injured in the crash. The chief of the Iranian police helicopter division, Gen. Hesseinali Mostajeran, said the crash was due to a technical glitch. [ISNA/Rueters]



**14 April 2019 Let 410 9N-AMH and two AS350 helicopters 9N-ALC and 9N-ALK.** A fixed wing aircraft collided with two parked helicopters near Mount Everest, leaving three people dead. The Summit Air twin was operating from Tenzing-Hillary Airport in Lukla when it swerved off the narrow runway and collided on take-off with the Manang Air AS350B3e and slightly damaged a Shree Airlines helicopter parked about 50 yards to one side. The dead include one of the pilots of the plane and two police officers who were near the parked helicopter. The co-pilot and a policeman Assistant Sub-Inspector Ram Bahadur Khadka, who was stationed at the helipad died at the crash site, the other police officer Assistant Sub-Inspector Rudra Bahadur Shrestha, who was injured in the incident and airlifted out, died at Grande Hospital in Kathmandu. The other pilot from the plane and the helicopter pilot are among the injured. Four of the passengers and a flight attendant on board the plane were said to be uninjured. [Katmandu Post/ASN]

*Ed: The officers were apparently part of the 24/7 security force protecting the airport. In 2010 The History Channel rated the single steeply sloping runway airport as the most dangerous airport in the world.*

**13 April 2019 MD Helicopters MD520N N.** Huntingdon Beach Police helicopter made a precautionary landing at John Wayne Airport. No damage or injuries reported. [OC Register].

**16 April 2019 Bell OH-58 N109PD.** Omaha Police Department, Nebraska helicopter made an emergency landing due to mechanical issues following take-off at its base at the Omaha North Airport. The crew was able to land in an open field northwest of the airport. The damage the helicopter suffered included a tail boom strike. Able-1 is a former DoD military operated 1971 Bell OH58 that was transferred to police operations in 1996. [media/PAR]

**18 April 2019 Airbus Helicopters EC135T2 OK-DSB.** Rescue helicopter of DSA acting as safety helicopter for motor racing at field near Most, Ústí nad Labem Region. There were four people in the helicopter when the pilot received information on the radio that the left engine was smoking. The helicopter was landed in a field without damage or injuries.

**20 April 2019 Helicopter** Air ambulance. The Fremont LifeNet medical helicopter was transporting a patient, possibly from Norfolk made emergency landing on a football field at Arlington High School, 9th St, Arlington, Nebraska. The patient on board was transferred to another helicopter. [Blair]

**23 April 2019 Kawasaki BK117 ZK-???** Rescue helicopter operated by Southern Lakes Helicopters based at Te Anau, New Zealand. Crew of three undertaking a medevac mission to a sick fishing boat crewman in the Auckland Islands 450km south of New Zealand crashed into the sea some 3km offshore while heading for Enderby island. The three crew wearing survival suits made it to land and were rescued.

[Media]

## FLIGHT SAFETY

It has not been a good month for the reputation of the aircraft industry – and because of the significant number of deaths involved Boeing has been suffering the most.

Boeing were hit by the double fatality crashes over the 737 MAX control problems relating to an angle of attack sensor issue and then very different reports surfaced that the company could be cutting corners at its Charleston, South Carolina, plant that builds the 787 Dreamliner.

Meanwhile over at Cirrus Aircraft the FAA has issued an emergency AD that has prompted the grounding of Cirrus SF50 Vision Jets. The problem there was that there was a need for the replacement of the aircraft's angle of attack sensors before operators could begin flying them again.

In the case of Cirrus three different incidents involving the SF50 occurring between November 2018 and April 2019 led to the publishing of FAA's AD last month.

All three incidents involved the stall warning and protection system (SWPS) or electronic stability and protection system (ESP) engaging when flight conditions were not approaching a stall.

The Cirrus problem seems to be a quality control issue where the Boeing was that the computers allegedly took over the flight and ignored the remedial efforts of the pilot.

## UNMANNED

Unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) – also known as drones – continue to transform the way public safety professionals tackle emergencies and disasters. To help expedite adoption and use of UAS by first responders, the non-profit Drone Responders Public Safety Alliance was unveiled on April 12 at the UAS Drones Disaster Conference in Miami to assist law enforcement, fire rescue, search teams, emergency management, and other stakeholders implement UAS technology and maximize its use for life-safety missions.

Led by Chief Charles Werner (ret.), Chairman of the National Council for Public Safety UAS and a nationally-recognized expert surrounding the use of drones by public safety organizations, the 'Alliance will forge partnerships with other organizations across government, industry, and academia to continue the adoption and evolution of UAS.

Drone Responders will focus primarily on three core missions of:

**PREPAREDNESS:** Providing shared education and training capabilities surrounding the development, implementation, management, and flight operations of public safety-related drone programs to help first responders standardize UAS as a tool for everyday missions.

**RESPONSE:** Developing and maintaining a global directory of UAS teams, remote pilots, assets, and capabilities that can be deployed when emergencies and disasters strike.

**RESILIENCE:** Deciphering and standardizing concepts, regulations, and procedures across like-minded organizations around the globe to develop consistent protocols for public safety and emergency management drone operations resulting in more resilient communities.

Drone Responders Public Safety Alliance will strive for standardization while effecting evolution within the public safety UAS realm via a series of three key objectives that support each the Drone Responders Public Safety Alliance core missions.

Drone Responders Public Safety Alliance will hold local training camps and clinics that provide detailed instruction to UAS field operations teams on specific functions and evolutions like search and rescue, damage assessment, HAZMAT response, news gathering and public information, aerial forensic analysis, and more. <http://droneresponders.org>

## PEOPLE

Although the date and form has not been officially announced West Yorkshire Police assigned the post of the NPAS Accountable Manager to **Chief Superintendent Scott Bisset** formerly the senior police officer in the city of Bradford.

As a result both Ollie Dismore the Temporary Accountable Manager and Paul Watts the Chief Pilot will progressively stand back from their temporary role from April 29. It will take time for Bisset to even start to understand his role. Whether he will actually begin to embrace the wider International interaction as Dismore has always tried to remains the big question on the horizon.

For the time being the situation in West Yorkshire remains without real form as it also works through also incorporates a new Chief Constable in the wake of the short notice retirement of the former incumbent.

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*Police Aviation News includes materials produced for it by Ian J Commin of Insight Design of North Burnham, Slough SL1 6DS. This includes the banner titles and the PAvCon logo. In addition from time to times images specifically altered by Insight Design and others but originally produced for McAlpine Helicopters [now Eurocopter UK], Oxford, will appear with permission of the original owner. In some cases it may not be possible to indicate the source of this material directly associated with the images used.*

The temporary chief is John Robins.

Scott is 44 years old married man and a Yorkshireman. He joined the Police in 1995 from Bradford University with a degree in History and Politics. He has wide operational experience in a variety of uniform and detective roles including experience as an authorised firearms officer.

**Phil Williams**, a salesman who many of you may recall as acting for the now defunct Britannia 2000 has joined the team at Helimedia, based at Staverton Airport, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire. UK. His role will be providing tactical surveillance and communications solutions as Business development manager. He will also be providing L3 WESCAM airborne camera systems, service support and training. Phil has a long record of working in the industry, previously with Thales UK as Domestic Intelligence Surveillance and Reconnaissance Sales Manager, he entered airborne ISR market with responsibility to grow Britannia2000 Airborne Systems only to have the company fail as he established additional key clients including Airbus, Thales UK, Babcock, Raytheon and Cobham.

This year Nova Systems UK, the operators of helicopters that undertake a range of trials for both the civil and military worlds has welcomed three new joiners so far this year. **Dain Thorne MBE** came from the engineering consultancy business after a distinguished career as an Air Engineer in the Royal Navy; **Richard Rogers** joined from the Royal Air Force where he has had a varied career including time as a Flight Test Engineer, Intelligence Analyst and Trials Officer. **Andy Watson** is more familiar and joined the company from a long career as a Police Officer, Helicopter Observer and, latterly, Project and Capability Management for the National Police Air Service (NPAS). You can meet up with him at this years PAVCon in Amsterdam.

After “thousands” of flights searching for suspected criminals and missing people, two veterans of UK police air support have retired.

**Martin Knowles** and **Andy Shanks** have flown their last flights from the National Police Air Service base in Birmingham, having clocked-up more than 50 years’ between them. Martin, 61, was base manager, having originally joined air support in 1991 when his passion for parachuting sparked an interest in applying to join the local police air support unit. Martin was regularly airborne as he also served as a Tactical Flight Officer, working with the pilot and using the helicopter’s state-of-the-art cameras and navigation tools.

Martin said: “The technology may have improved a lot over the years – we used to hang out of the helicopter window holding a camcorder in the early days – but the job hasn’t really changed. It’s about trying to find people at the end of the day. There were some fantastic jobs, some tragic jobs, but it was something I enjoyed immensely. It’s been a privilege to have been chauffeured around the sky by a lot of very skilled pilots. I know it sounds like a cliché, but air support makes a difference.”

Martin brought 28 years of service in police air support to a close in March, and an end to a career which began in 1976 as a police officer.

Andy Shanks, senior pilot, retired when he turned 60 on February 21. He joined police air support in 1995, having previously flown with the military and on oil rigs in the North Sea.

Andy said: “I have flown lots of different helicopters and seen police air support develop from being based within local forces into what it is today as the National Police Air Service. Between us, we would have flown thousands of flights over the years. I’ll miss the job, and the people, but I know I’m leaving the service in good hands – there’s an excellent team at the base in Birmingham.”

Ian Vause, Assistant Operations Director for NPAS, said: “Martin and Andy have been remarkable servants to the police for many years and we’re sad to see them go. They have played a major part in helping to keep communities safe and should be extremely proud of their work.” [NPAS Text]





## MOVE ALONG THERE

I probably had lots more important to do but still I decided to finally PDF the first two editions of PAN for posterity. Revisiting the Editorial of edition two written nearly a quarter of a century ago struck some chords with the situation that has returned in recent years.



The big news for this issue relates to news of the belated growth of police aviation in the eastern parts of Yorkshire. There has long been an unexplained lack of regular police flying in the area of the east coast from Cambridge to North Yorkshire. The high profile need for aircraft use in these areas has sadly been brought by the deaths of colleagues - PC David Haigh and PS David Winter by Barry Prudom in 1982 and SC Glen Goodman by the IRA in 1992 Both incidents required the import of aircraft to assist officers on the ground. This situation is due to change shortly. Rumoured for some weeks, the first of the paperwork has now been signed. Good luck.

My thinking is that if the situation was cause for concern in 1996 then surely it is of even greater concern today. In those days police across the country had rarely, if ever, experienced aviation but now those seeds planted and enjoyed back in the late 1990s and beyond by people who were my colleagues only weeks before have been snatched away.

## PAvCon Europe 2019

Since last month's edition of *Police Aviation News* I visited Amsterdam to undertake some small changes to the planning set up and finalise the layout of the location hangar.

Although the first part of the day went well the afternoon was marked by the venue letting me know they could not host the PAvCon in their hangar. Something to do with it being on an international airport! Well I told them that months ago but they said at Schiphol was that a problem! Wrong!

Anyway it is all repaired now and the event will be held with the Renaissance Hotel at Schiphol. Details on the website.

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## EVENT REPORT

### Rotorcraft Asia and Unmanned Asia, Changi Exhibition Centre, Singapore. 9-11 April 2019

#### Introduction

Growth was the target for the event and growth was evident. I arrived fully expecting to compare the show with such as the now defunct Helitech in Europe. I was very wrong. It is certainly far smaller than the European show both in terms of exhibitors and footfall but, on the positive side, it far exceeds the size of far older but amazingly surviving niche events such as the Dubai Helishow.

Lack Chet Lam the Managing Director of Experia Events, who also runs the Singapore Air Show at the same facility on even years, expressed his satisfaction with the modest growth of the young Rotorcraft event.

At the press rollout of the event the two co-located shows were compered by one expert from the rotorcraft industry, Max Buirski of Asian Air Group and Markus Scherer from the drone industry; he is Head of Consulting at Hong Kong's Ipsos Business Consulting.



The conversation was very much honed in on drones and their potential impact on the future employment of pilots. Generally it seems to be agreed that the technology of drones was decades from affecting the future employment of many pilots but even so it was clear that at this event the drone tail was clearly wagging, if not swamping, the main helicopter event. With the current dearth of pilots it may well be that drones will rescue the vertical lift industry but at Changi in 2019 the take-over was in place!

Scherer believes that in the immediate future the drone market is "not that big" and on being pressed thought that any semblance of a true working system was decades away even if the technology was proven in a shorter timescale.

Will the public accept travel in an unpiloted craft? That may well be a generational thing. It was generally agreed that in the same manner as the current generations fully accept two dimensional Metro systems without drivers, future people will accept computers in control of the three dimensional aviation world.

Although, one day before the opening, the hall was far from complete Experia arranged for a media tour around limited stands – many far from finished. Not everyone of the exhibitors fully embraced the concept in the manner Experia intended.

This was a pre-show tour and it was clear to all present that the venue was incomplete, so it was strange that welcoming staff on the Sikorsky stand requested that pictures were not taken. Wasted words, but I doubt any significant images were ever published. In the same vein Leonardo promised not to leak us any secrets in the open forum of unknown press attendees. As if we were expecting any.

The event attracted just one helicopter

#### And so to the opening day.

Anyone who has visited the Singapore Air Show during the first quarter of each even year will be aware that the inside, air conditioned, display space is completely taken up and that supplementary outside displays are therefore a required item.

The same large hall housing the Rotorcraft and Unmanned shows barely took up half the available space. Approaching one hundred exhibitors [as the event promoters would have it] actually equated to less than 80 spaces, with several exhibitors sharing spaces. If anyone thought that this was to be a Rotorcraft event with some drones would be disappointed. The manned rotorcraft section of the show turned out around 26 exhibitors the rest being either unmanned, optionally manned or other services including other air events and magazines. It was noteworthy that too many of the latter were unmanned for long periods – further

underlining the weakness of the claimed 100 exhibitors.

Surprisingly the event was shunned by some important players that have a major stake in Singapore and that includes Airbus Helicopters, PWC and Rolls Royce. True there was a large Airbus depiction of their air taxi and one of their staff, Derek Chang, appeared as a speaker in the conference programme but by any measure it must be disheartening for the organisers, Experia Events.

The attendees included **Bell, Boeing, Kaman, Leonardo** and **Sikorsky** so there was support from other large players. The event, slowly growing in a market that promises to be expanding was busy and attracting exhibitors and visitors from across the world, only deep post event analysis will clarify if the growth keeps the event financially sustainable.

**Axnes** from Norway already have customers in the region and are looking to expand interest in their communications equipment among the wider SAR community.

**Subaru**, Japan, have been working with Bell, Canada, on a new development of the venerable 412 helicopter as the 412EPX. Although it has been around a long while, the 412 has a large and loyal following. The military in Japan are a major target market but civil sales are being targeted. The military project currently remains the prime, focussed civil market sales are set for next year as a capability of effectively promoting the civil certification becomes a reality – FAA Certification of the EPX was gained last year.

Compared with the earlier 412EP the Subaru work has significantly improved the strength and efficiency of the transmission and that has resulted in performance improvement of around 10% overall.

The sales record of the former Russian designed Thommen searchlight now manufactured in the USA by **Luminator Aerospace** is starting to look rosier than was evident only months ago.

The original Russian product still outsold the much improved and westernised development that is on sale worldwide today but the gap is inexorably closing as the stigma of being of Russian origin dissipates. Often the customers are reticent for their identities to be public knowledge but the growing number of readily identifiable searchlights along the southern US border and in California tells another tale.

With the main part of the hall being occupied by drone power there is little surprise that one of the main exhibits was by one of the local 'stars' of the e-taxi dream - the **Volocopter**. With every breath there was talk of the future but across the hall there was a ready acknowledgement that battery technology was apparently way behind the dreams. Meanwhile lots of money is being spent on technology that is clearly waiting for technology to catch up.



The only manned Rotorcraft at the event—a Bell 505 © PAR



One of numerous model rotorcraft from Subaru © PAR



A great deal of hype but the electric technology lags behind the ideals at the moment. The Volocopter © PAR

Of the drone items that might have been expected there was little. Clear evidence of the recent story of inter-ship deliveries by drone in the waters lying off Singapore was not represented in the hall. Most material on the many drone industry stalls was evidence of a burgeoning local desire to develop more, bigger and better platforms rather than seeing them at work.

The organisers were happy with their efforts though. Small though Rotorcraft Asia 2019 and Unmanned Systems Asia 2019 might be, they believe received exceptional response and participation from the breadth of leading industry companies and experts, regulators and top executives, establishing the shows as marquee events, critical to propelling the region's growth in rotorcraft and unmanned systems.

The event hosted over 3,500 trade attendees from 62 countries, of which just over a quarter were from overseas. Commercially, the event facilitated some 370 strategic meetings between VIP buyers, visitors and exhibitors. These included public sector representatives from the Royal Brunei Technical Services, Ministry of National Defense of Cambodia, Fire and Rescue Department of Malaysia, Royal Malaysia Police, South Korea Defence Acquisition Program Administration and the Myanmar Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock & Irrigation. From the commercial side, participants included Aerohawk Air Sdn Bhd, BP Oil & Energy, Heliservices Ltd, Philjets Aero Services Inc., Pelita Air Service and the Royal Bhutan Helicopter Services. All these are important elements for any event but they can be held in a hall or hotel anywhere. There was little evidence that this was in any real sense a show in the accepted sense. As has been discussed before, a quiet show is not necessarily negative if the right potential customer attends it.

In what could be seen as a complete reversal of the name of the show the organisers saw the event as having a prime place in promoting Urban Mobility and the electric craft that still await viable power. That will be the Volocopter then.

The third edition of Rotorcraft Asia and Unmanned Systems Asia, will return on 30 March to 1 April 2021 at Changi Exhibition Centre.

## EVENTS

After PAVCon Europe the eyes focus on the mid July for the 15-20 July 2019 APSCON. The 49th Annual Conference & Exposition being held at the CHI Health Center, 455 N 10th St, Omaha, NE 68102, USA. The APSCON event in Omaha this year will continue to set the standard for excellence in the field of public safety aviation. Filled with education and training, APSA will again offer some of the best conference courses and classes in our industry, presented by the experts from our industry. The exhibition floor is a great venue to check out the latest, cutting-edge technology for public safety aviation, in addition to providing a great opportunity to visit with peers. Exhibitors will showcase their products and services to aviation unit decision-makers and end users, while creating an exceptional learning environment, in one central location. The event includes much loved social events sponsored by corporate supporters. [www.publicsafetyaviation.org](http://www.publicsafetyaviation.org)



The event uses the Hilton Omaha (located directly across the street and attached via a skywalk) at 1001 Cass Street, Omaha, NE 68102 +1 402-998-3400 Discount Rate: \$134/Night; (Single/Double), plus 18.16% room tax (current tax rate, subject to change) Discount Deadline: June 25, 2019. Check out the APSA website for the details. There is a Hotel Airport Courtesy Shuttle Available, on request (Omaha Eppley Field). A taxi would cost \$11 one way. Parking On-Site: \$15/Day Self-Parking/\$21/Day Valet The alternate/overflow hotel is the Marriott Downtown at the Capitol District at 222 North 10th Street, Omaha, NE 68102 +1 402-807-8000. This offers a similar Discount Rate: \$134/Night; (Single/Double), plus 18.16% room tax (current tax rate, subject to change) Discount Deadline: June 25, 2019. Check out the APSA website. Hotel Airport Courtesy Shuttle Available, on request taxi and parking as above.

### COMING SOON

18 Aug 2019 [Sunday] The 5th World Helicopter Day. This is the fifth year of the event with rolling open days around the globe. Call is out for event locations coming up for this year. The appeal is directed at individual company's and or organisations that might like to host an open day at their location then put details are on the website. Nil cost to be involved. Goal is to promote the industry in local communities around the world and achieve some PR both locally and internationally for what helicopters (and the people in the industry) do for society. Website: [World Helicopter Day - Celebrate Vertical Flight!](http://WorldHelicopterDay - Celebrate Vertical Flight!) FB: <https://www.facebook.com/pg/worldhelicopterday/> #worldhelicopterday

The event attracts some regular host locations across the world, in recent years three in Australia, four in the USA and Canada - which compares well with the three in the UK - and single events in South Africa and Serbia.

It is a growing event that is designed to be a low-cost window on to the rotary aircraft world.

**DIARY**

**13-15 June 2019 AeroExpo UK/Heli UK Expo**, Wycombe Air Park. 'The UK's Private Helicopter Owner and Pilot's Exhibition' The co-located events AeroExpo UK being the UK's premier General Aviation event, new initiatives will be introduced to coming events in the continuing effort to improve and enhance the overall experience. The Heli UK Expo Team will be hosting the 4th Heli Leaders Round Table Discussion next month. The discussion will serve as an opportunity to discuss the industry and current key challenges. Events are run by AvBuyer Events AvBuyer House, 34A High Street, Thames Ditton, Surrey KT7 0RY United Kingdom [office@heliukexpo.com](mailto:office@heliukexpo.com)

**25-27 June 2019 Coast Guard Capability**, Hilton Wembley, Lakeside Way, London. Coast Guard Capability 2019 provides a forum to help the modern coast guard achieve their missions. Modern coast guards are faced with increasingly varied and complex challenges covering a wide range of missions which demand specialist equipment and highly trained personnel. Focusing on the most important and challenging coast guard missions this conference aims to improve inter-agency and international cooperation as well as provide an opportunity to meet with industry leaders providing the next generation of specialist equipment. Join this forum to meet with international attendees, discuss current challenges and develop well-defined future propriety areas, as well as share case-studies and take part in the critical discussion for maritime organisations.  
<https://coastguardcapability.iqpc.com/>



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**IMPORTANT DATES**

2019	
<b>June 3</b>	Housing opens
<b>Sep. 10</b>	Registration opens
<b>Dec. 6</b>	Early-bird discount deadline for registration and education

2020	
<b>Jan. 2</b>	Hotel discount deadline
<b>Jan. 28</b>	Exhibit hall opens in Anaheim

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