

Police Aviation News

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Issue 288

April 2020



The Eagle has landed
Will it work in Wakefield?
Scan Eagle with the fleet
Travel Isolator
Odd Projects

EDITORIAL

I think it is fair to say that events are going further and faster than anyone had predicted just 30 days ago. Fortunately, despite the clear distraction of the virus, there is ordinary news out there.

Most, if not all, governments are guiding the Coronavirus/COVID-19 crisis by the seat of their political pants. Despite the probing questions by journalists who have time to read and digest everything at their own pace, most politicians lack the shrewd analytical mind of a genius and it shows. Inject forty different opinions into a policy making session and what comes out is at best unclear. No one knows where this will end so we can but hope that for us individually it is a good outcome.

Ask any emergency air support unit what planning they have made for a COVID-19 scenario and the answer is going to be none. It is new and unprecedented, and you can be sure the aeronautical rule books do not cater for it. What happens when a mission outside the rule book is called for? Operators flying Public Use/State Aircraft are going to be at a greater advantage than those that have signed up to the EASA or FAA rule book. Someone somewhere may well need to make a decision to overlook the rules (and hope they get away with it).

My recent comment that the “*shortage of cash flow may seriously effect philanthropy [air ambulances may need to rely a little more upon those reserves]*” has now come to the fore. All of the charity funded air ambulances [regardless of nation] have been driven to cease the majority of their face to face fundraising. Times are hard and there is no clear sign they are going to improve anytime soon. It is perhaps an unfortunate bit of timing that this edition contains several reports of various UK air ambulances starting to build expensive new facilities apparently designed to reduce the capital funds held by them. Whether the current state of emergency will slow the completion of these remains unclear.

Not many air ambulances will care to be transporting Coronavirus victims on the aircraft, indeed Public Health guidelines say the use of an air ambulance or response car is inappropriate, but it is the nature of their business that at times they will have no choice – imposing additional cleaning regimes on the airframes and putting the health and wellbeing of the air and medical crews at risk at a time when they are most needed.

Fortunately, *Police Aviation News* is in a position whereby the editorial staff ought to be safely self-isolating in order to put the news out there each month.

Bryn Elliott

LAW ENFORCEMENT INTERNATIONAL

PAVCON EUROPE: In mid-March, the PAvCon Europe police aviation conference event scheduled for 8-9-10 June 2020 at the Bundespolizei HQ in central Berlin, Germany was cancelled due to growing Coronavirus issues and the need for the Bundespolizei to meet the event and gathering guidelines of its government.

Although this decision is regrettable, fortunately the planning for PAvCon Europe 2020 was at a sufficiently early enough stage to ensure the losses, though significant, were minimised.

Meanwhile we are talking to a group in another part of Germany that may be able to undertake a PAvCon branded police aviation conference at the end of 2020 – always assuming that the pandemic has run its course by then. More later, and later may yet be the other end of a summer yet to come.

www.pavconeurope.eu

Next year the scheduled PAvCon Europe Conference is to take place at the Luxembourg Police air support unit on a date to be announced in May or June 2021.



COVER: – This image from a press briefing by Gama Aviation in Farnborough early in March was always intended. By chance it links two major stories in this issue, Air Ambulances in Scotland, the early March story, and later breaking news that the air support NPCC Review Body are looking at a Turnkey solution for future UK air support. Gama might well be interested if the price is right. [PAR]

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AUSTRALIA

QUEENSLAND: Last month POLAIR1 VH-NVI – one of two Queensland Police Messerschmitt-Bölkow-Blohm BO-105 CBS-5 helicopters – reached 10,000 hours of flying time.

Both of the Queensland police helicopters started off life in the late 1990s as rescue machines with the Bundespolizei. POLAIR1 rolled off the production line in 1997, initially starting life in Germany as D-HGST c/n 927 an orange rescue machine before a conversion in 2012 and becoming the first dedicated law enforcement rotary aircraft within the state of Queensland.



NETHERLANDS

POLICE: The upgrade of the police helicopter fleet by Babcock at Staverton continues with the completion and return to base of PH-PXB the Eurocopter EC135P2+ c/n 0784 at the end of February and the flying in of PH-PXC c/n 0795 to commence the upgrade from the start of March.

NEW ZEALAND

POLICE: The short-term trial of one of the three Bell 429 helicopters operated by the police over Christchurch went well. Aided by the helicopter police have seized guns, drugs and ammunition, and arrested nine people after targeting gang activities in Canterbury district.

The Eagle was introduced to Canterbury for a five-week trial from February 17 and attended 305 jobs and assisted with 210 arrests. Christchurch City Council had received in excess of 45 noise complaints before the trial ended on March 20. Although police maintain the helicopter had only been used when necessary and had not been deployed more than it normally would have been. Among the issues raised were complaints that the helicopter is being used inappropriately and disturbing people in the middle of the night. The police countered that by saying that it had actively avoided flying between 11pm and 3am to minimise the disruption.

Wherever possible the helicopter was staying above 1,500m [5,000 feet] to reduce noise, but sometimes this could not be avoided. An online survey, conducted by the local Member of Parliament and completed by more than 1400 people, showed a high level of support for the police helicopter. It showed that 53% of those replying thought it was reassuring and 21% were glad it was patrolling the city. In contrast 12% said the helicopter was really distressing and a further 12% viewed it as irritating.

Meanwhile the police are going to assess the effectiveness of the helicopter and balance that against the criticisms. There is said to be a resolve to keep an aircraft in Christchurch.

Ed: New Zealand have just three former Australian Army Bell 429s provided by a contractor. Although this limited availability trial was undertaken, any longer-term arrangement will either require the acquisition of additional helicopters or similar limited scope deployments.

PHILIPPINE

NATIONAL POLICE: The police lost a recently delivered Bell 429 last month in a serious crash that injured all eight people aboard including the PNP chief General Archie Francisco Gamboa and many of his ranking aides. Witnesses spoke of a cloud of dust enveloping the helicopter as it took off from the impounding area of the Highway Patrol Group (HPG) inside Laperal Compound, Barangay San Antonio, San Pedro City, Laguna Province and the aircraft got snagged by a power line before crashing and catching fire. The party had been visiting the site for an inspection.

Days after he survived the crash the 55-years old Gamboa reported back to work with one arm in a supportive cast and vowed to travel by land for now. He did not discount returning to a helicopter commute in the future. He expressed his firm support for the Bell 429 and replacing the example lost.

Meanwhile, PNP will shoulder the cost of repair of the damaged houses and vehicles affected by the helicopter crash.

UNITED KINGDOM

It has been a busy month in NPAS land but in truth there is just too much material for inclusion here – there is an international audience to consider without adding the many nano-thoughts from Wakefield into the mix.

NPAS: NPAS announced that its four new bespoke aeroplanes are being added to the existing national fleet of police helicopters to deliver a more responsive service to the 43 police forces of England and Wales. Flying out of a custom-built base at Doncaster Sheffield Airport, the fleet of new planes will travel the length and breadth of England and Wales and respond to the same range of tasks as the helicopters.





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With faster flying speeds and greater endurance times, the planes will increase attendance rates to some of the more remote areas of the country and help to keep more people safe from the air. Two of the four planes are already certificated to fly on task and have responded to 100 tasks across the UK in the last two months.

Ed: So, when is news actually news? As presented the headline and text presented by a series of 'safe' local news media publications faithfully reflects a straight paste of the NPAS words.

It is interesting to note that this official message to the press is very similar to that circulated in April 2019. It was not sent direct to PAN. The message a year ago was 'coming soon.' It is a sad fact that the much-denuded local press now fail to adequately coordinate past articles. The migratory journalistic staff were probably unaware of the previous write up.

Meanwhile, as we can see, NPAS social media feeds have been leading on the miracle of the Vulcanair P68R. The small fleet are here, there, anywhere and everywhere craft (subject to availability) solving the problems of the day. It may take 10 minutes to get in the air from its Doncaster base, have only a marginal block speed advantage over its rotary wing colleagues, but it has range and is dashing across England and Wales answering calls that a locally based helicopter might manage in 10 minutes - let's not let the truth get in the way. After many years of 'development' the four aircraft offer just two certified as operational.

NPAS continue to struggle to find sufficient pilots to service the needs of either rotary or fixed wing. On March 20 they were seeking as many as seven rotary wing pilots. Something to do with prospective applicants having the choice of who they work for. Perhaps the recent collapse of local UK airline FlyBe and the general downturn in airline activity will enable desperate pilots to at least fill the fixed wing vacancies.

*After many months I understand that the Cambridge proposals (various) are not making headway against the intransigence of the majority non-aviation membership of the West Yorkshire led NPAS Strategic Board. It seems all sorts of rescue options are on the table but all are being blocked in one way or another. Potentially because they attack the whole premise that West Yorkshire can even undertake running NPAS. See England & Wales below**.*



It seems that most of the actions undertaken are designed to erase the lessons of the past. They have successfully removed [i.e. sacked or made their life hell] the majority of the pre-NPAS knowledge and are set on erasing most of the pre-existing infrastructure. Spending tens of millions on several new buildings does not square too well with claiming that the organisation does not have any money to buy new airframes. Historically the air units that went before rented a corner of a local hangar to economise.

It's now rolling on towards a decade since a new England and Wales police helicopter was ordered or delivered so for the beleaguered NPAS press team the fixed wing are the heroes of the moment. Meanwhile the contracted operation favoured by Scotland appears to be reaping rewards in terms of availability and capability.

All well and good but it does not actually address the core problems of NPAS, egos are and have been the constant problem with NPAS, in addition to incompetence, an inefficient control system, ageing airframes and an inability to attract enough pilots to fly the mission. A tall order to put right.

ENGLAND & WALES:** In the first week of April the National Police Chiefs Council [NPCC] Review Team will be talking to industry about one of the threads related to the future of UK police aviation. In line with the current emergency this will be a telephone or video contact.

The Review Team are asking industry whether they are interested in providing a Turnkey solution to police air support. The extent of the participation is a broad question and could therefore be a contractor buying up and running the existing fleet or, more likely, buying and equipping a whole fleet of new airframes and equipment and spares to supply the customer with a system that places the onus of operational readiness on the contractor.

At the moment the questions are about assessment of industry enthusiasm and the likely costs. There are existing operations that give the idea of a Turnkey solution a boost. Police Scotland have such an operation in which a single airframe is provided and supported with spare aircraft pretty much on demand, The now defunct South & East Wales ASU based near Cardiff was being supported under a similar Turnkey operation until NPAS came along and pretty much turned unit availability on its head. It is clear that in both those single aircraft instances the plan worked. Both were set up by Bond, now part of Babcock.

Sensibly they are asking whether these successful single aircraft set ups can be scaled up. When you

start having to support multiple airframes at multiple bases [14] costs might go up (or down) exponentially because of the number of spare, role equipped, airframes needed to maintain the agreed readiness rate. They are looking at 96% per base which is way higher than they are currently experiencing.

Ed: Industry will be interested. The telephone conversations on April 2 are certain to include Babcock and Specialist Air Services based at Staverton and a recent conversation with Mark Gascoigne, MD Europe Air at Gama [see page 18 under Air Ambulance] shows they are also open to such a project. There may be others. With the world in financial meltdown, time alone will tell us whether there is enough money around to finance a ready made air fleet.

UNITED STATES

NATIONAL: The Airborne Public Safety Association has continued monitoring the evolving situation around the Coronavirus through the advice of public health and governmental authorities, and has told its members that on the basis of current information they have made the decision to temporarily suspend most events scheduled into April.

Among the events to be cancelled were the March 17-19 Pix4D Course in Spokane, Washington State, the March 31-April 2 Airborne Public Safety Accreditation Commission (APSAC) Meeting in Houston, Texas; and the April 7-9 Safety Seminar in Hunt Valley, Maryland. New dates for these events will be published on APSA website as soon as there is clarity when the health crisis will end. Registration for other future events, including the main APSA Conference scheduled for Houston in July remain open on the assumption it will go ahead. Further updates will be notified by direct mail, on the website and via social media. [DBS]

Meanwhile the Airborne Public Safety Foundation (APSF) is accepting award nominations for 2020 awards that would normally be presented at their event scheduled for Houston, Texas in July of this year. The awards are: -



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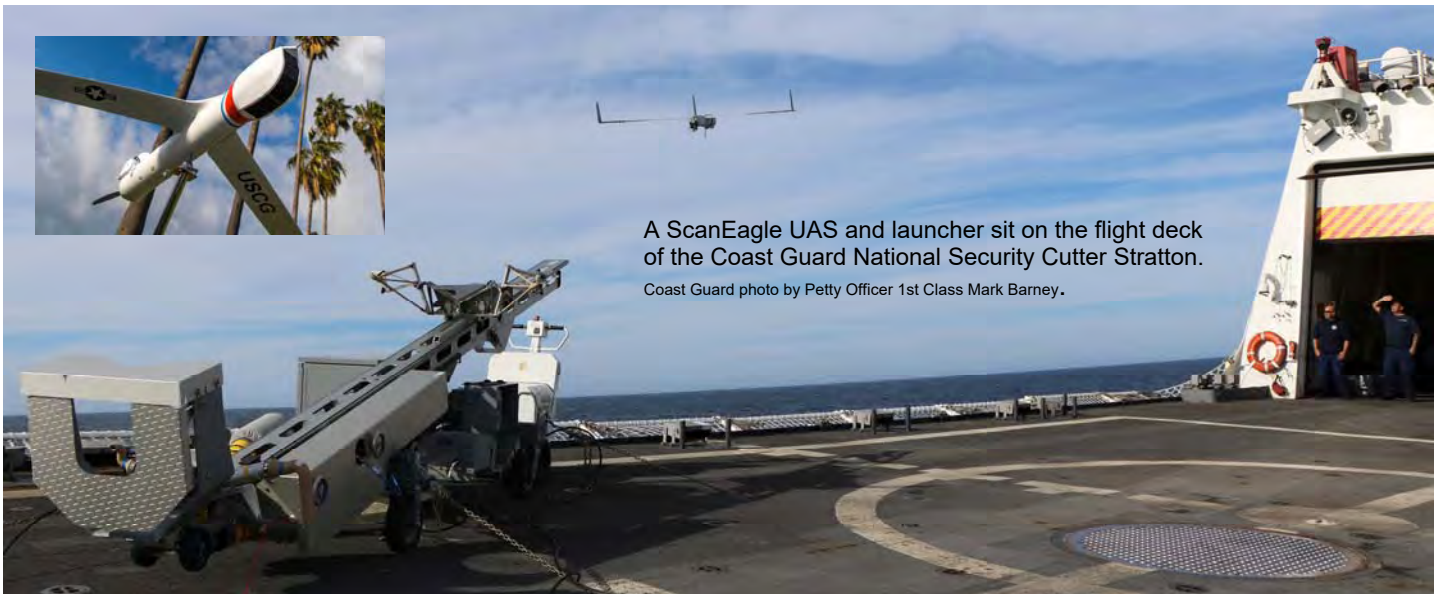
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 Technical Specialist Award
 Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) Award



A ScanEagle UAS and launcher sit on the flight deck of the Coast Guard National Security Cutter Stratton.

Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 1st Class Mark Barney.

Last month the US Coast Guard approved a full-rate production decision for its small unmanned aircraft systems (UAS), which frees the service to move forward to completing deployments of the systems aboard its fleet of National Security Cutters (NSCs). The winning system is the Boeing Insitu Scan Eagle fixed wing UAS.

Formulated in the late 1990s, the Integrated Deepwater System Program (Deepwater) was the 25-year plan to replace all or much USCG equipment – aircraft, ships, logistics and command and control systems. The \$24 billion project (which began with a price tag of \$17 billion) lost authorization in Fiscal Year 2012. Many of its elements survived but their connection with the ill-fated Deepwater was largely erased from the records.

Deepwater included the introduction of unmanned aircraft into the USCG fleet. The original plan was centered around a complex Bell tilt rotor design, but that project faltered at the prototype stage and the USCG looked elsewhere for something less sophisticated and expensive. In late May 2013, the USCG used an early example of the ScanEagle and used it to oversee an operation that led to the seizure of over 1,000 lb (450 kg) of cocaine from a fast boat in the eastern Pacific. That drug bust is said to have sealed the deal.

The past seven years have been employed in honing the requirement and making the best of the capabilities of the system.

MARYLAND: Last month marked the 50th Anniversary of the first civilian medevac mission flown by the Maryland State Police (MSP) and the commencement of an integrated emergency medical system whose members have helped saved tens of thousands of lives since.

Three weeks after the idea of the MSP taking on an air medical role, on March 19, 1970, at 11:20 a.m., Maryland State Police 'Helicopter 108,' a Bell 206 JetRanger crewed by pilot Corporal Gary Moore and medic Trooper First Class Paul Benson, reacted to a motor vehicle crash at the Baltimore Beltway and Falls Road. They picked up an injured patient they transported to the Center for the Study of Trauma, known today as the University of Maryland R Adams Cowley Shock Trauma Center. The patient lived.



©Maryland SP

The MSP claim that the mission marked the first time a civilian agency transported a critically injured trauma patient from a scene by medevac helicopter. They believed this had never before done in the USA outside of a military setting.

During the past 50 years, the members of the MSP Aviation Command have completed more than 180,000 missions and transported over 150,000 patients. They currently have a fleet of ten Leonardo AW139 helicopters that are assigned to seven sections located in Allegany, Frederick, Baltimore, Prince George's, St. Mary's, Talbot and Wicomico counties.

The Department replaced its fleet of Jet Rangers in the late 1980's, with the procurement of the AS365 Dauphin helicopters which provided additional enhancements for the fleet, such as increased speed, the added safety component of two engines and additional space to accommodate two patients. In 2013, the fleet transitioned to the AW139 helicopters.

A video tribute to the members of the Aviation Command and all those dedicated first responders who are part of Maryland's emergency response system has been produced by State Police Pilot Hae Kim. The video can be viewed at <https://youtu.be/mfY4loj7N2o>.

Ed: And before there are wails of 'we did it first' emanating from Europe, it is fair to say that the State Police in Austria and other snow-capped parts of Europe had been pulling skiers off the slopes for many years, Piper Cubs in the mid-1950s and later Bell 47Js. I see the claim by the MSP as specific to a HEMS type operation serving road accidents in the USA.



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AIR AMBULANCE

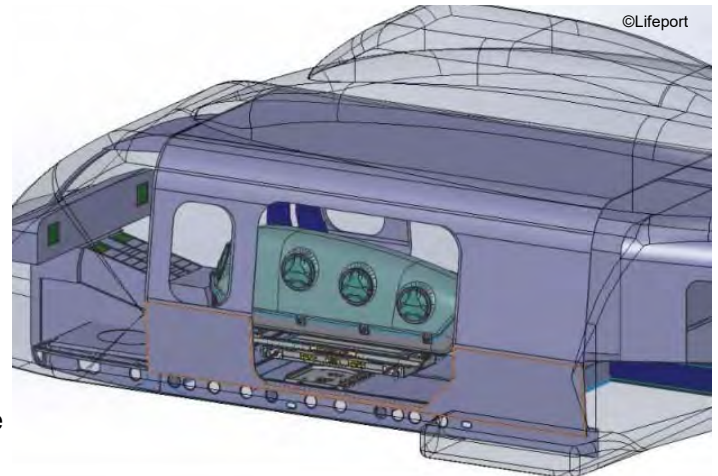
INTERNATIONAL: The current pandemic is exhibiting numerous differences in operating practice. Some nations are doing their best to avoid transporting infectious patients, in some cases because their roads are good, where others are going to great expense to ensure safe air transportation.

There is a wealth of experience but most of it is in the military field, if only because the most recent isolation activity has been related to the Ebola Virus Disease outbreak in west Africa. The numbers transported were relatively low and the Aircraft Transport Isolator (ATI) equipment employed large as befits the use of military transporters. Most of these ATI are soft skinned and developed from technology used over at least the past 50 years. Military certification is also an easier route.

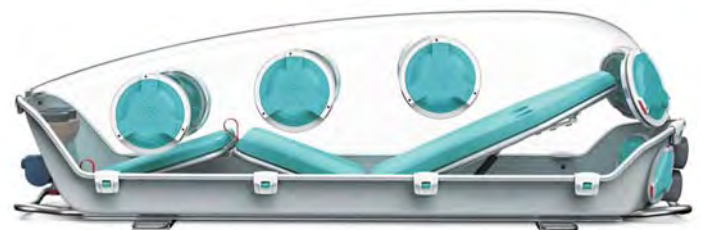
There may well be a long-term need but it is unclear whether the rigid ATI device in development at Lifeport LLC will get to market during the current emergency. The device is being developed for the AW139, a type with limited world market penetration in the HEMS role.

As Lifeport is based in North America it might be assumed that they see the initial market in their back yard, where the AW139 is common, and perhaps Australia.

The ATI equipment is a hard-top isolation pod originating from Epi Guard based in Oslo Norway, it is under-pressurised keeping it absolutely sealed but at the same time allowing patients to receive necessary treatment during transport. The EpiShuttle is NATO stock listed and CE-marked as a class one medical device. Further development at EpiGuard is funded by recently set up EU programme EIC Accelerator with €2,495,500 allotted from EU funds towards the predicted €3,565,000 total development budget. The EIC Accelerator fund has been allocated €164M to fund technology to assist with the fight against Corona-virus.



©Lifeport



EpiGuard EpiShuttle ©EpiGuard

Blessed with a good road and hospital network, the United Kingdom has declared that air transport is not appropriate for virus patients but the logistics of travel in Norway during winter do not allow the authorities the luxury of easy road travel so alternative arrangements are being made.

The Norwegian module, they call them 'infection control cubes' locally, is too large for insertion into some aircraft types – including the Babcock Beech King Air aircraft used by the air ambulance in Norway, and there are current plans to bring a Puma into use alongside military Sea King's to undertake transportation.

German EMS is also bringing new examples of the Epi Guard equipment into service to meet the new situation. In the coming weeks several DRF Luftrettung HEMS bases will be equipped with EpiShuttles – they currently cost about €40,000 each. These will cut the time spent on the disinfection of helicopters after missions with corona-infected patients. The EpiShuttles enable patients to be transported as if in an intensive care unit thanks to the rigid transparent cover and connections to a respiratory device. Clearly the rigid transparency is limiting their market, presumably only the H145 is large enough.

There are cheaper, less sophisticated, devices available that already serve the industry having been used most recently in moving such as Ebola patients in Africa. Similar in concept to the ATI favoured by the military they tend to be large and cheap but others are small enough to be used in such as the H135. I understand that these collapsible plastic tunnels are CE-marked as camping equipment but they are still extensively used. One such is the Ferno ISO Chamber – designed to protect medics from contamination with a battery operated blower unit that provides filtered suction for about 5 hours under normal conditions. The fully collapsible plastic tunnel provides several access ports and



©Ferno UK

is said to be both airframe agnostic and easy to clean. Overall these solutions, collapsible or rigid, are similar in operation. Which finds favour seems to depend on how deep the budget is and how severe the perceived need.

Ed: Life saving has clearly earned a premium price label. I have been unable to trace a price for the Ferno product. I have asked several UK charity air ambulances whether they have similar equipment but it was late last month so replies are lagging just yet.

MALTA

GOZO GENERAL: For many years the island nation of Malta GC has had a helicopter attached to the Vitals Global Healthcare (VGH) Gozo General Hospital, located in Gozo, the second largest island of the Maltese archipelago.

In the past this helicopter has included types such as the Mil Mi-8 and a Bell 412, the current type provided by Gulf Med Aviation Services. Now they have unveiled a newer air ambulance helicopter in the form of an Airbus Helicopter EC135 to act as the air ambulance link between the three islands. The latest helicopter was brought in by Steward Healthcare Malta.

The aircraft will eventually replace the current air ambulance on inter island flights, but for now, it is a welcome addition for staff and patients.



“Before we always had to rely on the Armed Forces of Malta when we needed a second air ambulance,” said Nadine Delicata, chief operating officer of Steward Healthcare Malta. “But sometimes they are busy with their own emergencies such as search and rescue.”

Delicata also said that despite the pressure facing the country’s healthcare system because of the coronavirus outbreak, the helicopter would not be used to transfer infected patients until staff were properly trained.

“For now, we are using a land ambulance and the Gozo to Malta ferry when needed and this is working very well.”

Until last year international transfers were undertaken by fixed wing operators including the airline Air Malta and a Beech King Air Operator Rescue Wings Malta Aeromedical Ltd. The latter operated from 2017 but were dissolved a year ago.

UNITED KINGDOM

NATIONAL: Public Health England guidance to Health Trusts has stated categorically that air ambulances and response cars are inappropriate for use in transporting suspected COVID-19 patients. There are devices designed to isolate contagious patients but it would appear that the base assumption is that the patients will not be carried. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the state of lock-down within society has reduced the number of HEMS call-outs to trauma significantly. [Rotorheads]

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AIR AMBULANCE SERVICE: The operator of both the Warwickshire & Northamptonshire [WNAA], the Derbyshire, Leicestershire & Rutland [DLRAA], and the Children's Air Ambulance [CAA] is to re-equip its standard air ambulance services with new helicopters early next year.

The Air Ambulance Service [TAAS] has launched a multi-million-pound investment project to buy two Leonardo AW109SPs – the world's fastest Helicopter Emergency Medical Service (HEMS) aircraft.

WNAA will continue to operate out of Coventry Airport and the DLRAA out of East Midlands Airport have dedicated paramedics and doctors on board who can perform surgical procedures – from chest surgery and caesareans to amputations – by the roadside.

The 24/7 WNAA service will reach its 40,000th mission milestone this spring. The Children's Air Ambulance – the first and only dedicated neonatal and paediatric helicopter emergency transfer service in the UK – has flown its 500th mission. It is noteworthy that where the CAA has upgraded to the AW169 the HEMS operation is sticking with the smaller 109 craft. www.theairambulance.org.uk

DORSET & SOMERSET: The operation went online for the very first time at 8.00am on 21st March 2000; 52 minutes later they were tasked to their first mission. Back then, the service, which is still based at Henstridge Airfield, operated during daylight hours in a Bölkow 105 helicopter and carried a crew of two paramedics and a pilot.

Twenty years on, the service has developed beyond recognition. Their 20th Anniversary sees them operating the most advanced air ambulance helicopter of its class in the world, delivering the highest possible standard of pre-hospital clinical care to the people of Dorset and Somerset for 19 hours a day.

The charity is marking their 20th Anniversary with a '20 Years By Your Side' initiative which aims to showcase just how far they have come over the years with thanks to public support. An area has been developed on their website which gives detailed information on the history of the charity, their key milestones, an insight into what happens when the air ambulance is tasked to an incident and a number of heartfelt stories from the patients who have needed their help.



The Dorset and Somerset AW169 ©DSAA

information on the history of the charity, their key milestones, an insight into what happens when the air ambulance is tasked to an incident and a number of heartfelt stories from the patients who have needed their help.

A commemorative edition of the charity's 'Beeline' magazine has also been produced. This is available to be viewed online via the charity's website, or supporters can sign up to receive a copy by post or email. All this information is available by visiting: www.dsairambulance.org.uk/20years

ESSEX & HERTFORDSHIRE: At North Weald work is well underway in building the forthcoming air ambulance base.

In mid-March when these images were taken the contractor had dug out most of the footings.

The location of the new build is directly across the taxiway from the existing hangar and therefore slightly offset from the new NPAS hangar. The now closed former east-west cross-runway lies behind it.



Excavations at North Weald ©PAR

GREAT NORTH: The planned move of the aircraft and crew from Teesside International Airport to the new base facility at nearby Eaglescliffe has been stalled by the Coronavirus. The charity has cancelled its community-based fundraising activities for the foreseeable future. This includes talks and collections and is likely to have a significant impact on income. The Eaglescliffe office is now closed to the public but fundraising team members are continuing to work from home in normal office hours.

LINCOLNSHIRE & NOTTINGHAMSHIRE: Work has also officially started on a new home for Lincolnshire and Nottinghamshire Air Ambulance on a new site off the A15 Sleaford Road at Waddington.

A turf-cutting ceremony marked the commencement of works at the end of February. The charity's helicopter is currently operating from RAF Waddington and the charity's headquarters is at Bracebridge Heath, Lincoln, so the move will see staff and crew come together under one roof and leave RAF Waddington where the support the charity had been fundamental to the success of the operations over the last 25 years.

The new headquarters, paid for by a capital grant of £1.82M from the Department of Health and Social Care, will have its own purpose-built hangar with space to enable on-site engineering, along with housing for the charity's critical care car benefitting from direct access on to the road network for faster response times. There will also be an enhanced training facility for the crew.



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The Lincs & Notts charity continues to move forward with its plans to operate a full 24-hour service. As part of a two-year trial, the life-saving Charity has been gradually increasing its operational hours to provide a 24-hour service, seven-days-a-week, which will enable the clinical crew on board the helicopter, or in the Critical Care Car, to give more people than ever the very best chance of survival.

Last month the critical care team responded to six incidents at night, including two road traffic collisions and three cardiac arrests using both road vehicles and the Leonardo AW169 helicopter.

MIDLAND: The HELP Appeal has funded 54 new aircrew flight helmets for Midlands Air Ambulance Charity. Previously, flight doctors and critical care paramedics with the charity would share the flight helmets which were several years old and due to be replaced or serviced.

Midland Air Ambulance operates three air ambulance helicopters based at Cosford airbase, near Shifnal Shropshire, Tatenhill airbase, near Burton-on-Trent Staffordshire and Strensham Services on the M5 in Worcestershire. The three aircraft each carry a crew comprising a pilot, two paramedics or flight doctors plus full life-support medical equipment.



Following extensive research by the Midlands Air Ambulance Charity into the most suitable type for air ambulance operations, it secured the entire funding needed from the HELP Appeal. The new helmets, which cost £1,800 each, are now being widely used by the team.

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NORTHERN IRELAND: Ireland has two charity air ambulance helicopters, one in the north has become well established and as we have read recently the one in Cork is newer and has financial issues.

In addition to the helicopters there is also a long-established fixed wing commercial air ambulance operator based in Belfast - Woodgate Aviation.

Woodgate Aviation have more than 20 years' experience operating air ambulances and providing air ambulance handling. They have had operations in support of the health authorities in both the Isle of Man [in the Irish Sea] and the Channel Islands close to France in the past. For its medevac service they use both the Beech King Air 200 and Piper PA31 Chieftain based at Belfast International Airport and Isle of Man which are equipped with a full Lifeport System. Whilst both aircraft can carry similar levels of equipment, the King Air is the preferred transfer method for emergency and urgent patient transfers. The King Air is pressurised and can fly at up to 35,000ft providing a safe and comfortable environment for the patient and medical crew. The aircraft can accommodate a patient and up to 4 passengers (medical team and/or relatives) depending on the clinical needs.

Woodgate has access to its own medical teams that are specifically qualified in Air Ambulance operations. Medical experience varies from Nurses to Anaesthetists. This allows them to assess each patient and supply the correct medical team for the transfer. All cases can be handled from infants upwards, including Intensive Care Patients.

Now Woodgate Aviation is marketing a 63-page book on its first 50 years of business. 'Woodgate Aviation – 50 Years in Northern Ireland' written by respected aviation expert, Guy Warner. From very humble beginnings, Woodgate Aviation has survived and prospered where others failed and is now recognised and respected in the UK & Irish aviation marketplace.

NORTH WEST: The charity air ambulance operates three helicopters that meet HEMS needs in the north-west of England from Stoke-on-Trent in the Midlands to the Scottish borders near Carlisle, taking in Merseyside and Greater Manchester. They have bases at Barton, Manchester and at Blackpool Airport. The latter has recently been upgraded from operating out of temporary buildings and sharing hangar space with other aircraft to a self-contained base hangar.

After two decades of making do in different structures the helicopter, response cars and crew spaces are in the same building. This allows the based EC135 to be maintained under cover in its own space.



SCOTLAND CHARITY: Motor manufacturer Suzuki has donated a Vitara SUV to Scotland's Charity Air Ambulance (SCAA).

The branded vehicle from the Japanese car maker will be used by charity staff and volunteers as they take their fundraising and life-saving message across the country. SCAA spokesman Nick Harvey said the Vitara SZ-T model would prove a real workhorse for the charity. With the imminent launch of a second helicopter resulting in the charity operating from its original base in Perth and a new base 80 miles north at Aberdeen airport, staff and volunteers find themselves travelling further and more often.



The Press Briefing ©PAR

SCOTLAND NHS: For many years now the broad UK air ambulance community has been primarily served by just two Staverton Airport based companies, Babcock [formerly Bond] and Specialist Air Services. There are niche operators, for instance Leeds based Multiflight serving Great North, Sloane looking after Warwickshire and Gama Aviation serving Scotland, but the primary go-to companies have been those at Staverton.

Now, after many years of more or less hiding in clear sight, Gama Aviation is intent on challenging all and sundry in the UK emergency services sector. At the moment they are chasing air ambulance contracts but they clearly have a fresh and open mind on all things.

Gama was originally simply the supplier of fixed wing aircraft to the Scottish Air ambulance, providing Beech King Air aircraft to the main contractor Bond. Gama had a working relationship with Bond in the late 1980s and joined them during the period of the first Scottish Air Ambulance contract awarded in 1993. At the time Gama Aviation was operating out of Fairoaks, Surrey, as a fixed wing operator which undertook air ambulance work throughout Europe and the Middle East using two LearJet, one Cessna Citation and three Beech King Air as well as undertaking general charter work. They have operated the fixed wing section of the contract since Bond handed it to them in October 1997. The partnership lasted through several renewals into the 21st Century.

How the contract was handled has evolved over the years and control of Scotland has now switched to Gama with Babcock supplying the helicopters.

From June this year Gama Aviation will have three fully EMS



Litter ©PAR

role equipped Airbus Helicopters H145 on strength to meet the requirements of Scottish Air Ambulance. The two customer aircraft will be finished in yellow but the maintenance spare G-GMAH is already on strength in the company corporate colours and was formally 'launched' early last month.

All of the aircraft will be based and maintained in Scotland but G-GMAH will be available to undertake promotional work and charters across the UK in pursuit of additional contracts.

The Chief Pilot of the new operation is Captain Andrew Lister. He has a strong background in both air ambulance and police work since ending a nine-year stint in the Royal Navy in 2001. Since the 'Navy he has been engaged in supporting both rotary & fixed-wing operations for the UK emergency services sector and gained significant experience in a commercial environment, having been a postholder for Safety, Ground & Flight Ops, Training, and Accountable Manager at Yorkshire Air Ambulance.

He knows the opposition that Gama wish to take on well, Andy worked for Specialist Aviation Services [SAS] at Staverton for nine years as a line pilot flying the Cheshire Police BN2 Islander as well as being engaged on other police and air ambulance contracts, flying the AS355 & MD902 throughout the UK.

He was flying the MD902 for Yorkshire Air Ambulance when they briefly transferred operator from SAS to Multiflight and then took an active part in the transition of the air ambulance to two owned H145s. Engaged to deliver an EASA AOC for the YAA, this included development of a fully-fledged SMS and was accomplished within nine months. Until last summer he was Chief Pilot and accountable manager with Yorkshire.



Capt. Andy Lister explains ©PAR

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Gama Aviation advertised his current post – Chief Pilot Rotary Operations - early last summer. He reports to the Director of Flight Operations – Europe Air Division and worked to build their new capability and bring the, already ordered, fleet of brand new H145 aircraft into service in support of the Scottish contract. His previous experience, and lessons learned, with setting up the Yorkshire operation made him the ideal candidate.

The customer requires that the Scottish Air Ambulance will use the H145 and also specifies many of the equipment options. They will be put to work on from June 1, 2020 – one at each of Glasgow and Inverness Airports. Gama are taking over the rotary operation from the current operator Babcock MCS Onshore with three years remaining on the Scottish contract. The H145 is already the second most popular EMS helicopter in the UK and by the summer the UK EMS fleet will number 13. The most popular is the EC135 with eighteen involved in medical flights.

The Airframe

The customer has specified the airframe and that it will have an Aerolite air medical interior, the Gama team working with Airbus Helicopters at Oxford and the customer have worked on the rest of the role fit specification. There are lots of detail changes as the airframe has evolved

The medical floor covers the area immediately to the rear of the pilots seats and extends to the rear opening clamshell doors. The portable stretcher fit is a design far lighter than those typically fitted to earlier models and slides into a minimalist floor mounting located on the right rear. Medical crew are provided with three seats on the left side and on forward to the right, the two forward seats have the ability to rotate to face rearwards.

With most HEMS operations now moving to 24/7 flight the airframe is fitted with a generous array of lights. In addition to a Trakka searchlight there are six belly-mounted multi-LED lights, particularly useful for off-airfield locations.



The specification includes the fixed elements of a hoist on the right side but there is no current intention to use a hoist in operations, the feature costs relatively little to put in place during manufacture but greatly enhances the resale value of the airframe when disposed of. Andy acknowledges that one of the lessons learned in Yorkshire was that the charity simply could not afford the time and effort in training to use such the rarely needed facility when the MCA already provides a well trained crew with the UK Coast Guard helicopters. Yorkshire has since sold off at least one of its hoists.

There is also a requirement for the fitting of floats and the skids are longer and have the fittings. Again the instances when the H145s will need to be equipped with these weighty additions are few and current thinking is that they are best left in store for special missions. The majority of operations do not exceed the ten minutes from land requirement.

Pilots

As we know, getting pilots to sign up is currently challenging. Most, if not all, operators have been obliged to offer financial inducements to improve the package on offer. Unexpectedly Andy Lister claims that it has been relatively easy to employ sufficient pilots and the reasoning has had a fair bit to do with it being a wholly new operation. Yes there has been a financial sweetener in the salary, but he also believes that Gama is still able to attract simply because they offer less baggage on the staff relations side. There is a further financial negative in that H145 pilots are rare and those with current NVG ratings are rarer still. All of the pilots he has employed will need to be trained up on type and progressively introduced to civil NVG flying.

Future projects

The main aim for the near future is to get customers from the air ambulance charities that have already shown interest in the newcomer and its fresh new approach. Other potential projects include serving the Wind Farm industry and corporate work to sit alongside their existing fixed wing jet fleet.

Gama already has interests in police aviation with its maintenance contract in support of the Vulcanair P-68R aircraft at Doncaster. Although at the time the question was asked there was no public domain suggestion that the police might want to devolve all or part of the rotary fleet to contractors in the manner Bond used to efficiently serve the St Athan, Wales police air unit (South & East Wales) and Babcock currently serve Scotland, Mark Gascoigne, MD Europe Air at Gama was clearly not disinterested in the concept. Certainly they have an open mind to new business whatever its shape and Gama probably have the financial muscle to bid on such a project. [see above item page 6, which emerged three weeks later].

At the time of the Gama presentation the company was located in Bay 3 at the Business Aviation Centre. Shortly they are moving further around the airfield to the north to 25 *Templer Avenue, Farnborough GU14 6FE* a fresh new site not far from where the famed *Black Sheds* used to be. The site is not on any maps yet.

WILTSHIRE: One of the first medical resources on scene at the March 2018 Novichok spy poisoning incident was the Bell 429 helicopter operated by the Wiltshire Air Ambulance.

As a result of its involvement the aircraft became contaminated and had to be withdrawn from service to receive a deep clean. Although the government of the time carried many of the costs associated with the policing and clean-up of Salisbury and Amesbury under its Terrorism Budget the air ambulance never received specific compensation for its loss of service.

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Wiltshire Air Ambulance has written to its local Members of Parliament to ask for their support in securing compensation from the Government. This relates to the extraordinary costs incurred after attending the Novichok incidents.

The helicopter was grounded and the charity's airbase was closed for two weeks as a precautionary measure to check for cross-contamination. There were a series of unutilised costs as a result, including pilots being unable to fly, paramedic cover costs and staff relocation.

The charity also incurred subsequent charges for medical screening, compensation for staff personal belongings and counselling in the wake of attending the incidents.

With the airbase in lock down, fund raising events had to be cancelled due to the lack of access to equipment including marquees and collection tins/buckets.

Although the charity has provided evidence of losses, totalling in excess of £100,000, they have been unable to secure any central or local Government grant funding specific to the Novichok incidents. They have been told by the government that there is no money left for compensation.

So far the six Wiltshire MPs including have jointly signed a letter urging the Home Secretary to resolve the matter.



The air ambulance has produced a short video looking back at its history to mark its 30th year of operation. Archive television footage, courtesy of ITV News and BBC Points West, illustrates the people and three types of helicopter used over the years - the Bolkow 105, MD 902 and the current Bell 429.

The idea for a joint emergency services helicopter originated in 1988 when a temporary Gazelle helicopter hired by Wiltshire Police to use for its summer solstice operation at Stonehenge was used to airlift a woman who was seriously injured in a road traffic collision. A full time joint air ambulance and police helicopter began operating on March 15th 1990, based at Wiltshire Police headquarters in Devizes. That arrangement came to an end in December 2014 with the establishment of NPAS. To view the history video, "Wiltshire Air Ambulance through the years," go to <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SWOkMMIGHXA>

UNITED STATES

ALASKA: Guardian Flight, a Global Medical Response (GMR) critical care air transport company, will open its first rotor wing base in Alaska at Kenai Municipal Airport this spring. The Airbus H125 helicopter will serve Alaska's Kenai Peninsula's hospitals including South Peninsula Hospital in Homer, Central Peninsula Hospital in Soldotna and Providence Seward Medical Center in Seward.

The Guardian Flight Kenai base will operate 24/7 with a crew of four pilots, four clinicians and two mechanics. This is Guardian Flight's first helicopter air medical base in the state and it will join eleven fixed wing medically equipped aircraft that provide flights across Alaska. These include Bombardier LearJet 45s operating bases in Anchorage, Fairbanks, Juneau and Ketchikan. Single examples of the Beechcraft King Air B200 aircraft operate from Dead Horse, Kotzebue, Fairbanks and Juneau with two such aircraft flying out of Anchorage A Cessna 208 Caravan is based in Dillingham.

FIRE



CANADA

BRITISH COLUMBIA: The first example of the Viking CL-415EAF “Enhanced Aerial Firefighter” has taken its maiden flight from Cascade Aerospace’s facility in Abbotsford, British Columbia. The enhanced aircraft is a development of the former Canadair/Bombardier CL-415 that is now owned and managed by Longview Aviation Services (LAS) of Calgary, Alberta, Canada, in cooperation with Viking Air Limited of Victoria, British Columbia.

This initial CL-415EAF is the first of six amphibious aerial firefighters ordered by launch customer Bridger Aerospace Group (Bridger Aerospace) of Bozeman, Montana and is scheduled for delivery in April in advance of the start of the 2020 North American wildfire season.

The Viking modification forms part of a staged approach to utilise the advancements made with the LAS converted aircraft as the basis for the proposed next-generation Viking CL-515 new-production aerial fire-fighting and multi-purpose amphibious aircraft.

SEARCH & RESCUE

BELGIUM

After operating the National SAR resources for many years the 40th Squadron based at Koksijde Air Base in Belgium is to move bases by 2023. The new base is located at Ostend-Bruges Airport.

The 40th Squadron is best known for operating the Sea King helicopter on SAR sorties across the southern North Sea and both sides of the English Channel. In early 2019 they completed a changeover from the Sea King Mark 48 to the NH-90 MTH. [Ian Turner]

NEW ZEALAND

NORTHLAND: The 40-year-old Sikorsky S-76A helicopter ZK-ISJ “Juliet” has retired after 23 years as part of the Northland Emergency Services Trust (NEST) rescue helicopter fleet. NEST is a charitable trust established to provide a dedicated emergency rescue helicopter service for the people of Northland. The Trust is supported by the generous contributions made by local sponsors, individuals, families, businesses and organisations.

Before serving as a rescue helicopter the Sikorsky had been owned by the King of Jordan and a later owner had flown it around the world on a 41 country, 73,000 km circumnavigation mostly undertaken at low level during 1994-5. It arrived in New Zealand from Australia in 1997.

The S-76A is currently in a hangar at Whangarei Airport while its future is decided. The rescue service operating from the base currently relies upon two newer ten years old Sikorsky C++ aircraft. [Air Med and Rescue/PAR]



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UNITED KINGDOM

BRISTOW: As reported last month, Bristow and Schiebel have now commenced unmanned search and rescue [SAR] trials. They are labelled as the first of their kind but some volunteer SAR groups in the UK have used small unmanned craft from beaches in the past.

Bristow is operating the S-100 system G-UASA from Caernarfon Airport in Wales, to fully evaluate its capabilities in the role. The trial is being led by Bristow and is complementary to the work being carried out by the Maritime and Coastguard Agency to develop the regulation under which UAVs can operate in a range of scenarios beyond visual line of sight – where the pilot cannot see the aircraft - and in unsegregated airspace, where other aircraft are operating.



Caernarfon offers a dynamic operational area, including mountainous and maritime environments, making it an ideal location to incorporate the unmanned aircraft technology into a complex airspace environment.

With the capability to travel 200 kilometres from its home base, the S-100 is flown by a pilot in a remote location using digital control and imaging technology to allow them to see through the eyes of its on-board cameras. [Bristow]

HM Coastguard Search and Rescue helicopter base at Sumburgh has surpassed a major milestone – completing 1,000 missions since the civilian service began operating in 2013. In 2019 alone, the base responded to 198 distress calls, culminating in 232 people rescued and 470 flying hours.

The 1,000th tasking saw the crew – Captain Roger Sherriff, Co-pilot Pete Richardson, winch operator Rob Glendinning and winchman Marty Davis – attend a medical evacuation from an offshore facility in the North Sea. [MCA]



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INDUSTRY

Early in March Challenger Aerospace Systems announced the acquisition of **AeroComputers, Inc.** Under the new name AeroComputers, Corp. a dedicated team of professionals will continue operations at the same Oxnard, California offices. The excellent products, customer service, and support for law enforcement agencies will continue with enhanced innovative solutions planned for Public Safety Aviation. AeroComputers, based in Oxnard, has been designing, building and marketing computer systems that manage tactical operations for public aircraft since 1993. With over 750 systems currently employed by over 250 law enforcement, fire, government and public safety agencies worldwide, AeroComputers is the industry leader in providing mission management systems that integrate high precision live video overlay (augmented reality), GPS-based moving maps, EO/IR sensor command, video processing, and mission telemetry collection and transmission. AeroComputers' complete suite of products includes mission management systems, real-time map/gimbal video integration, a range of ruggedized keyboards, and customized GIS and cartography services. www.challenger aerospace.com.

As mentioned elsewhere in this edition, sometimes it takes a while to get the product right for market. This applies to the BK117 which has finally morphed into the very capable H145 whilst still retaining 'Grandfather Rights' to ease its passage to market and can also be applied to the Russian **Kazan Ansat**. That, significantly newer, craft has been around for a very long time just waiting to enter service. Over the years – decades - the light helicopter has seen a massive investment with little return. It may have flown in 1999 and entered service in 2013 but mock ups were appearing at shows well before that. It has been difficult to divorce appearance from reality at times. In 2018 Russian Helicopters signed a contract to supply twenty Ansat helicopters to the Chinese Emergency and Disaster Relief Association but it was only recently that the Chinese officially approved the deal. The ongoing Corona virus will clearly further delay the plans.

Erickson Incorporated, the leading operator, maintainer, and manufacturer of utility aircraft, has announced FAA approval of its next-generation composite main rotor blades. After many years of manufacturing metal blades, Erickson has invested in the future of the S-64 rotorcraft by designing, certifying, and building composite main rotor blades that will bring many dramatic benefits. Erickson began the process of designing the new blades in 2008, working closely with the FAA and various industry partners. In 2013 Erickson collaborated with Helicopter Transport Services (HTS), so the blades could be utilized on CH-54 rotorcraft as well. To maintain close control of blade manufacture, Erickson built a composite manufacturing facility from scratch in 2015. After thousands of hours of design, testing, and analysis by Erickson's engineers and partners, the new composite main rotor blades are now approved by the FAA for the S-64E with an initial life that will increase as fatigue testing continues. Certification for the CH-54A is expected to follow quickly in the coming weeks, and certification for the S-64F and CH-54B is expected this summer.

The health of the commercial industry matters, without a broadly financed supplier there is little chance of security for other sectors. Therefore it is good news that Babcock has announced they have won a major new North Sea helicopter contract.

Babcock's Offshore business has secured a new five-year shared contract with three oil and gas operators for helicopter transport in the northern North Sea.

The contract will initially see Babcock operate over 100 helicopter flights each month from Sumburgh in Shetland, on behalf of CNR International, EnQuest and TAQA. Flights are expected to begin on 1 July 2020.

The shared aviation contract is a collaborative agreement between CNR International, EnQuest and TAQA that transports workers from Aberdeen Airport to the Shetland Islands. From there, passengers are either transported onward to offshore installations or continue their journeys to on-shore destinations on the Shetland Islands. Fixed-wing services between Aberdeen and Sumburgh will be provided by Loganair.



Sikorsky S-92

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Simply looking for a suitable Farnborough and TAG image I happened upon this shot taken across the tarmac at an earlier Farnborough Show ©PAR

Operated by TAG since 1997, the privately-owned and operated business aviation hub Farnborough Airport has been sold to **Macquarie Infrastructure and Real Assets**, which has invested in 12 commercial airports across Europe and Australia.

Macquarie, which also owns the US-based FBO chain Atlantic Aviation, greeted the takeover by saying it was “hard to overstate the importance of Farnborough”, which saw a record 30,729 aircraft movements last year.

The Hampshire facility is also home to 260,000sq ft of climate-controlled hangar space, more than 1m sq ft of ramp, an award-winning three-storey 52,000sq ft terminal and a hotel.

Movements are expected to have surpassed 32,000 in 2019, which could push the annual passenger figures past 100,000 for the first time. “With an agreed maximum of 50,000 movements, traffic still has considerable room to grow,” Macquarie added.

TAG won the right to operate the former military airfield, the birthplace of flight in the UK and site of the biennial Farnborough International Airshow, in 1997 and was granted a 99yr lease. It has invested more than £100m in the property. [BTN]

Wheels Up, the leading brand in private aviation, has acquired Gama Aviation LLC (doing business as Gama Aviation Signature), a leading private aviation services company that provides aircraft management, private jet charter, and ancillary support for its managed aircraft in the USA.

With the new radio system seemingly terminally delayed – lots of promises but no-one really knows when it will appear in service - three more UK police forces have jointly upgraded to **Sepura SC20 TETRA** radios, significantly improving their front line officers’ ability to communicate with colleagues.

Bedfordshire Police, Cambridgeshire Constabulary and Hertfordshire Constabulary made use of their joint purchasing power to equip officers from across all three forces with the new SC20 TETRA radios. In all over 1,900 radios were purchased across the three forces, to work alongside their existing Sepura radios. By using the SC20 TETRA radios, officers will benefit from powerful, robust radios with loud, clear audio, ensuring that critical voice communications can be clearly heard and understood, even in noisy environments.



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In addition the radios are applications ready, meaning that each force can in time develop bespoke applications to enable quick, secure access to critical data.

Ed: Meanwhile, along with many others, my old and closed former police station continues to host the supposed defunct AIRWAVE booster station and aerial on its roof. It is no surprise that it fails to sell on the open market when all that equipment has to stay in place until 2023 and counting.

Meanwhile over in *La La Land* Frequentis is seeking to support the UK Home Office and Emergency Services in the transition to the elusive **Emergency Services Network (ESN)**.

Frequentis will work with the Home Office to ensure that control room operators have access to a fully approved and easy to use interface into the new ESN for all their mission-critical communications.

The Frequentis multimedia communications platform, 3020 LifeX, is already being implemented for a number of police and emergency services organisations across the country and will be compatible with ESN when available.

Trakka Systems has announced the new and innovative TrakkaCam TC-300M maritime surveillance camera. The TC-300M is a compact high performance marinated multi sensor surveillance system that includes an all-digital architecture. Three models are available to meet any budget requirement and can be integrated with Maritime Radar and Automatic Identifications Systems (AIS). The TC-300M is available with TrakkaMaps TM-100 maritime charting, display and recording system and can be integrated with the TrakkaBeam TLX-M maritime searchlight for cross cuing of systems and a total surveillance solution package. Trakka recently delivered seventy plus TC-300M camera systems to a maritime customer in the Asia Pacific region.



There is some disagreement over whether a story emanating from New Zealand is the whole truth. It is claimed that the New Zealand Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) has inspected a maintenance organisation specialising in the repair and overhaul of **Rolls Royce/Allison 250** series turbine engines. and as a result has grounded many aircraft they have worked on.



The inspections are said to have revealed departures from Rolls Royce approved engine maintenance instructions that adversely affect the airworthiness of the engines. The primary issue relates to unauthorised drilling and grinding work done on safety-critical components within the engine compressor section.

Rolls Royce 250 series engines were primarily fitted to Bell Jet Ranger and Hughes 500 series helicopters but did have some other applications.

It is said that affected engines were found in Australia, Indonesia and Papua New Guinea.

The safety action is claimed to have grounded 21 helicopters in the region.

Higher-pressure cylinders for more gas and fewer changeovers in the UK air ambulance market has been a target for some time. Now, after a two-year effort, there is an agreement with the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) and aviation authorities to allow UK air ambulance helicopter to carry **300 BAR** cylinders. The first user is expected to be Yorkshire Air Ambulance, Wales, West Midlands and perhaps Devon Air Ambulance with their undoubtedly now delayed new H145 helicopter. Part of the problem was finance for the project, there was a reticence for air ambulances to pay the £12,000 cost associated with the testing and paperwork. In the end industry, **Airbus Helicopters** and Liverpool based **Open House Products**, sponsored the costs.



ACCIDENTS AND INCIDENTS

29 December 2019 Beechcraft King Air N481HC Air ambulance of Intermountain Life Flight, Salt Lake City, Utah, USA. The King Air suffered damage to a landing gear door and both props and engines when it landed at the public airport in Montecello, Utah. The aircraft made the landing in the dark. The pilot had checked weather and NOTAMS prior to departure from Salt Lake City and found nothing to be concerned with for the flight. Upon arrival over the airport it appeared winds were out of the north so the pilot overflew the runway before reversing course to land into what wind there was. As he flew over the runway he noted what appeared to be light snow on parts of the runway but could also see that the runway had been cleared. He continued the approach and touched down. As he touched down he found that the snow on the runway was in fact drifted snow of about two feet in depth. The snow acted on the landing gear to pull the airplane to the right and off the runway, it also was deep enough that both props contacted the snow causing damage to the props and engines. The airplane was pulled off the runway by the snow but stayed upright with no further damage.

It was later established that the runway had been cleared four days earlier after a snow storm but that the snow had subsequently drifted. No NOTAMS had been filed for the obstruction on the runway so the pilot had no way of knowing about the drifted snow. The airport does not have a tower/ATC and the airport manager had not visited the runway since it had been cleared.

4 March 2020 Bell 206L-1 LongRanger II N32AE Air ambulance operated by Air Evac EMS Inc., departed its base at Kirksville, Missouri, USA for Columbia experienced an emergency landing NW of Clark, Randolph County, Missouri. The landing was in a cornfield about 300 yards west of Highway 63 and just north of Route B in Randolph County nearby the Clark intersection due west of the town of Clark. The helicopter sustained minor damage and the four occupants onboard were not injured and another helicopter responded to the scene to continue the transport.

6 March 2020 Bell 429 Global Ranger RP-3086 Philippine National Police The Bell with eight aboard took off from the impounding area of the Highway Patrol Group (HPG) inside Laperal Compound, Barangay San Antonio, San Pedro City, Laguna to fly to Calamba City but clipped powerlines as it lifted and impacted the terrain a few metres away. The helicopter fell on its left side and sustained substantial damage and injuries were reported among the occupants. Here was damage to buildings and motor vehicles at the scene. The people on board were PNP chief Archie Francisco Gamboa, Major Generals Jovic Ramos, Comptroller, Mariel Magaway, an intelligence head; , Capt. Keventh Gayrama; an aide, a technician M/Sgt. Louie Sistona; pilot Lt. Col. Ruel Salazar and co-pilot Lt. Col. Rico Macawili. Witnesses spoke of a cloud of dust enveloping the helicopter as it took off and the aircraft got snagged by a power line before crashing and catching fire. Gamboa and Gayrama were the first ones to be discharged from the hospital as Magaway and Ramos, who were unconscious when pulled out of the burning helicopter, remained in a critical condition. [Media]



18 March 2020 Sikorsky/Erickson Air-Crane S-64F Helitanker N159AC, Fire fighting aircraft owned and operated by Erickson Aviation Services. A group of unidentified individuals entered an Erickson operating base in Chile and caused significant fire damage to the cockpit area of the Erickson owned helicopter parked there. No Erickson employees were hurt. [Face Book]



21 March 2020 Sikorsky UH-60M Blackhawk. Mexican Navy (Marina) machine operating on an anti-kidnapping law enforcement mission was trying to land in poor visibility when it crashed in a soccer field, one police officer was fatally injured while 10 sailors were injured. The Gulf state of Veracruz says that the aircraft crashed in the mountainous Zongolica area while supporting state officers in the rescue of kidnapping victims. It was taking off to move two kidnapping victims who had been rescued during an operation that resulted in the arrest of five suspects. The person killed was a Veracruz state police officer. It says the injured were eight sailors and two agents of militarized National Guard policing force. The injured are reported in stable condition. This accident was also reported as involving an Mil Mi-17.

SAFETY

On 15 December 2018 Agusta A109S I-EITC and air ambulance of the Portuguese Instituto Nacional de Emergência Médica (INEM) operated by Babcock International dropped off a patient in a Porto hospital and was returning to base at Macedo de Cavaleiros, Braganca in poor weather when it crashed into wooded high ground at Valongo near Porto killing the four crew of two pilots, a doctor and a nurse.

The body that investigates air accidents points out flaws to the sector regulator, in supervision, and to INEM and Babcock for the contractual breach between this public body and the company that operates the emergency medical helicopters.

The lack of sufficient supervision by the National Civil Aviation Authority (ANAC) and the contractual failures between INEM and Babcock are reflected in the final report of the Aircraft Accident and Railway Accident Prevention and Investigation Office (GPIAAF).

The current contract for the provision of the HEMS states that Babcock “should have installed an aircraft tracking system that would allow the monitoring and execution of missions in real time by the contractor [INEM]”.

“The said system was not installed on the aircraft by the operator, nor verified by the contractor,”

PAN has recently highlighted the lack of crash resistant fuel systems in types such as the AS350 and the progress underway to ensure all models of the type are upgraded. Other legacy designs have the same issues and there is news that a crash-resistant fuel system “to prevent fuel spill and detonation during hard landing” has been developed for the Russian KA-226T helicopter.

The KA-226T is said to be the first Russian helicopter to be fitted with a crash-resistant fuel system manufactured by Technodinamika Holdings.

The design work on the crash-resistant fuel tank was completed in 2017, drop tests have taken place but there are no reports on whether the system is certified. Certification in both Russia and India would be mandatory if the helicopter were to be sold in India.

The KA-226T has been selected to be manufactured in India in a joint venture between Hindustan Aeronautics Limited and Russian Helicopters but as yet there is no confirmation that this seemingly never ending process has reached a point where the deal has been signed.



UNMANNED

Schiebel, together with partner Nordic Unmanned, successfully completed a two-day test of its sniffer capability on board the CAMCOPTER® S-100 UAS in the shipping lane outside Griben, Denmark.

Although not a mainstream law enforcement activity these sorties do relate to enforcement. Ships operating in Europe’s busiest sea routes are permitted to emit exhaust fumes with a sulphur oxide content limited to no more than 0.1% under International Maritime Organisation (IMO) 2020 regulations. The proposal is for UAS equipped with a sulphur sniffer to fly through the ship’s exhaust plume to measure the sulphur emissions and uses its Automatic Identification System (AIS) to identify the ships. The S-100 performed two successful flights of about four hours during the trial and provided compliant measurements of sulphur emissions. The certified sniffer provides live readings of the sulphur level in the ship’s exhaust plume.

Schiebel has successfully completed the acceptance tests for the Royal Australian Navy (RAN) of its new Schiebel-designed heavy fuel S2 engine for its CAMCOPTER S-100 Unmanned Air System (UAS).

Building on 12 years of extensive experience developing engines for the CAMCOPTERS-100 system and the lessons learnt from extensive operations worldwide, Schiebel has engineered a new proprietary heavy fuel engine, the S2. Delivered as a next generation replacement for the current propulsion unit, the S2 further increases the overall capability of the system. The enhancements offered by the S2 engine will enable the RAN to continue to expand their test and evaluation programme, examining advanced Vertical Take-off and Landing (VTOL) UAS capabilities ahead of the Sea 129 Phase 5 Programme. This programme will select the future UAS capability for the RAN’s new Arafura Class Offshore Patrol Vessels

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(OPVs) as well as other ships.

A comprehensive series of test flight activities demonstrated both the endurance, and Maximum Take Off Weight (MTOW) – with multiple payloads – providing the evidence and assurance that the CAMCOPTER S-100 fulfils the requirements of the RAN.

Throughout the extensive tests, the CAMCOPTER S-100 system was equipped with a L3 Harris Wescam MX-10 real-time Electro-Optical/Infra-Red (EO/IR) camera, an Automatic Identification System (AIS), a L3 Harris Bandit transceiver and a Mode-S Automatic Dependent Surveillance Broadcast (ADS-B) transponder. This unique configuration provides the operators with the capability to locate and confirm the identity of vessels at sea, as well as transmitting the information in real time to users equipped with Rover™ remote video terminals.

The new lightweight heavy fuel engine is initially cleared for JP-5 (F-44) and Jet-A1 fuels with other fuel types to be approved in future. Of significant note, this new engine increases the operational performance and maintainability of the S-100 and has sufficient capacity to meet anticipated future market growth needs. [Schiebel].

Military grade UAS like the General Atomics MQ-9 are big and not normally a feature of this publication. Recent evidence suggests that might change. The US Homeland Security set-up uses them on the borders and recent stories about the use of Heron, Scheibel and Tekever UAS on sea border patrols in Europe also underline a possible measure of new thinking.

Late last month it was announced that General Atomics Aeronautical Systems, Inc. and the Air National Guard (ANG) have signed a contract for the supply of a Detect and Avoid System for two MQ-9 UAS. The manufacturer claims that their sense and avoid system has been extensively tested and exceeds the capabilities of systems on airliners, thereby allowing an equipped airframe to safely fly in non-segregated, controlled airspace.

The system consists of a General Atomics radar and processor, and a TCAS. For the ANG there will be an upgrade in the software to add a tactical weather mode, in addition to the air traffic surveillance capability. The avionics will be integrated into the new centreline avionics bay that will provide additional volume and have space for future upgrades. www.ga-asi.com.

General Atomics has teamed up with L3Harris Technologies to successfully integrate the WESCAM MX™-20 Electro-optical/Infrared (EO/IR) system onto a MQ-9 UAS. A series of test flights began on February 18th to demonstrate the MX-20-equipped MQ-9's ability to locate and track targets at long stand-off ranges. It is currently a military system designed to support the ISR and Precision Guided Munitions (PGM) missions. Field-proven through multiple deployments, the WESCAM MX-20 is equipped with high-sensitivity multi-spectral sensors for day, low-light and night missions. The WESCAM MX-20 operates with outstanding detection and recognition capabilities from ultra-high altitudes in the civilian sector.



PEOPLE

The troubled Emergency Services Network (ESN), one of the most technically advanced projects currently on the books of the Home Office is currently leaderless. After less than two years in post **Bryan Clark**, formerly director of digital and change at HM Prisons and Probation Service, has gone. He took over from Gordon Shipley, who spent five years as the programme's director. At the time he took over there were doubts expressed that it would be operational by December 2019 and they clearly got that bit right. Pending the identification of a new person to fit the role the caretaker Director is **Stephen Webb**, an accountant. Last year he was defending the rising costs of the system before parliament's Public Accounts

organised by



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Committee, in his position as senior responsible owner for the ESN. At that time, he stated that December 2022 was a “not-before date” rather than a hard deadline.

Already they were talking about a further year’s extension as a possibility. At that time there was a contingency fund of £714M based on assumptions that included the extension.

The ESN project was already a staggering £3.1 billion over-budget in 2017, and last summer the figures for completion of the project placed the cost at an eye-watering £9.3 billion.

In 2018 when Bryan Clark arrived in the programme Stephen Webb was in post as the director, law enforcement programmes at the Home Office.



It is reported that **Lynn Tilton** has stepped down as the CEO of MD Helicopters Inc. (MDHI) as of March 23. She remains the largest single shareholder and a major creditor of MDHI. The company is being run and managed by the existing senior leadership team.

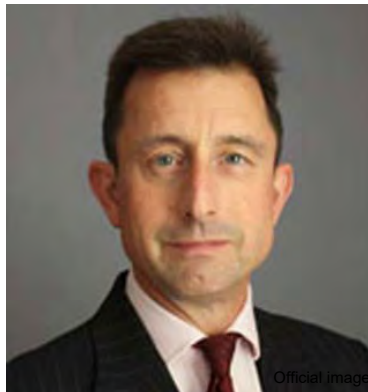
According to the Wall Street Journal Tilton “walked away” from her roles at MDHI and other companies after being ordered by a bankruptcy judge to sell them to pay off debts.

Tilton has been leading MDHI since Patriarch Partners acquired the troubled helicopter manufacturer in 2005.

Matt Parr, one of Her Majesty’s Inspector of Constabulary and probably best known within the industry for producing the damning report into the *National Police Air Service* is in the news again.

The senior police officer has brought a discrimination case against the Home Office after claiming he is paid less than a black female colleague because he is a white man.

Mr Parr, one of the five HM Inspectors of Constabulary who oversee the UK’s police forces, the author of last month’s damning report into Operation Midland, the highly flawed paedophile enquiry undertaken by the Metropolitan Police, says his £140,000-a-year salary is too low compared with that of a black female inspector who does the same job as him. He claims the gap between his remuneration and the £185,000 salary of **Wendy Williams** – the last inspector appointed before him – is due to gender and race-related reasons.



In a case that has been ongoing since 2018 the former navy submariner is suing the Home Secretary (Priti Patel) in a discrimination row that has already been before the courts. In reply the Home Office insist that his lower salary is down to a Home Office drive to reduce senior staff salaries.

The case has been to an employment tribunal but was passed to a more senior judge after the Home Office sought to hide details of pay negotiations with Ms Williams from the public. Lawyers said details of the negotiations were private and confidential and revealing them in open court would violate Ms Williams’ human right to privacy. Mr Justice Griffiths has rejected the argument and instead ordered the entire case to be heard in public – and the final judgment published in full. The judge said the principle of open justice trumped any right to confidentiality which Ms Williams had in relation to her pay negotiations. Setting out Mr Parr’s claim, the judge explained: ‘In 2018, (Mr Parr) began proceedings in the Employment Tribunal, claiming equal pay and, further or alternatively, alleging race and sex discrimination.

‘His named comparator is the HMI appointed before him, who is a woman of BME (black or ethnic minority) heritage. ‘The Home Secretary admits that he does “like work” within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010 and that he is paid less, but contends that the reason for the discrepancy in salaries, which are apparently individually negotiated for each HMI, is a pay policy which aims to reduce senior salaries.’ According to the Home Office, Mr Parr, a former Royal Navy rear admiral, was appointed in 2016 to oversee the National Crime Agency, London’s Metropolitan Police and other organisations. The previously appointed inspector was former chief crown prosecutor, Wendy Williams, in 2015, who is currently earning £185,000-a-year, according to the official government website. The case first went before a tribunal last June.



LETTER PAGE

At this time of uncertainty, with a virtual 'lock down' during the national response to the current COVID-19 pandemic the 'voluntary sector' is becoming ever more involved in supporting the NHS, the full time emergency services and other agencies.

The Government recommendation to 'stay at home' and to remain 2 metres apart brings with it significant challenges. Locally, Teesside Airport is closed to the public. Police air support and SAR helicopters belonging to HM Coastguard could quickly feel the impact of coronavirus if any of their essential staff have to self-isolate by staying at home.

Therefore, it seems the right time to remind you of what the Civil Air Patrol can, and cannot do! First, our aircraft, mostly light aeroplanes and autogyros, should not be regarded as a substitute for a police aircraft, or a Coastguard helicopter. We are strictly daylight hours, dawn to dusk and we fly only in weather conditions which are commensurate with visual flight rules; we need to see ahead of the aircraft and be able to see the ground. Nevertheless, we carry GPS navigation systems which permit high accuracy positional data, often in conjunction with digital Ordnance Survey mapping. We also carry digital cameras to record events taking place on the ground.

Radio communication continues to be a challenge with several different radio nets; aviation band radios in aircraft; marine band for ships, lifeboats and HM Coastguard, together with Airwave which is used by the police and the FRS. Nevertheless, mobile telephones work perfectly well in light aircraft and with 'WhatsApp' short text message, together with air to ground photographs can be transmitted in near real time from an aircraft in flight to a 'customer' on the ground.

Also, one of the great strengths of a light aircraft is that it can be operated by just one person, the pilot. These light aircraft can easily be manoeuvred on the ground, by hand or with a small motorised tug, to get them in and out of the hangar, they are flown by one person and the same person can refuel the aircraft after landing. This must be the ultimate in 'social distancing', especially when airborne some 2,000 feet above the ground!

So, if there is any reason to 'add value' to any pre-planned event with some air support, a search for a missing person perhaps, and if other aircraft, police or Coastguard, are not available then please contact (the local) Civil Contingencies Unit (CCU) duty officer. The COVID-19 pandemic is, according to the Prime Minister, a national emergency, so please 'think outside the box' and involve the Civil Air Patrol when other, full time air support services are unavailable, or are overwhelmed.

James A Cowan MBE

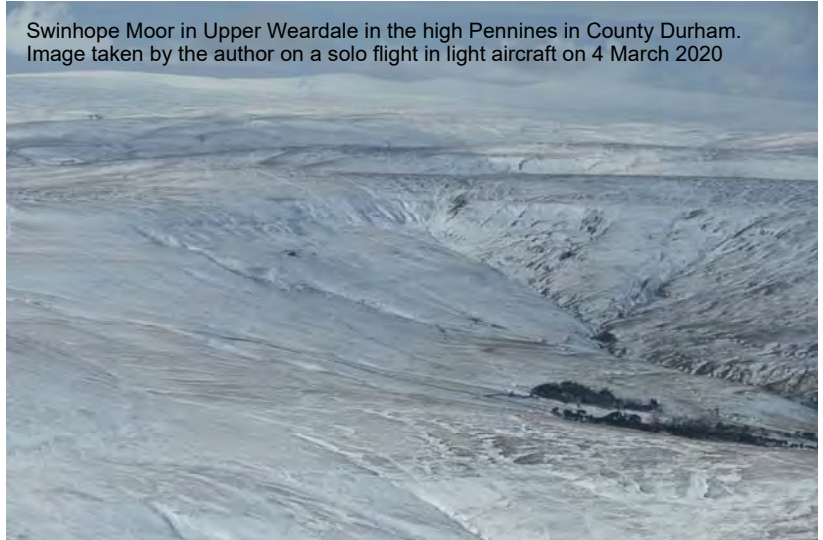
North East Civil Air Patrol

Ed: Which raises the question of what air support we will actually have when any of the crew members come down with the Coronavirus. Although it is not a major issue to reduce the crew size, at what point does the presence of the virus ground the aircraft and further at what point does the virus close the whole operation?

For years local Civil Contingencies Units have spent many hours, days, weeks, months planning for the worst-case scenario. Despite the numerous cups of tea consumed in the public good we can say that without any doubt that no-one planned for this one.

Some say that the government in China made the whole situation worse because they were too embarrassed to admit what hit Wuhan for way too long. The senior police (NPCC) may accept and cooperate with the lifeboats, air ambulances and many other volunteer bodies but they do not 'like' Civil Air Patrol for reasons that would not stand up in court. They, like the Chinese, would be so embarrassed to have to agree to call them in. So are the NPCC, ultimately the creators of NPAS, going to continue to shun this well-meaning offer? Too right they are.

Swinhope Moor in Upper Weardale in the high Pennines in County Durham.
Image taken by the author on a solo flight in light aircraft on 4 March 2020



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Composite image

MOVE ALONG THERE

The Coronavirus put paid to a whole raft of events this year and we have not seen the end of the cancellations. With 7,000 more airliners grounded semi-permanently this makes the 737MAX issue no more than a sideline.

Therefore we need to switch to a virtual Farnborough to fill the gap! Historians have the images that can plug the gaps that reality in 2020 is denying us. Step back ten years to Farnborough in 2010. That was the year that AgustaWestland had the temerity to market a helicopter project to be called the AW169 in police colours and additionally run an advert featuring it flying over London – thereby suggesting that its target market was the Metropolitan Police ASU.

The same event featured a Eurocopter EC135T2 registered G-POLA, the first of the now long series of helicopters to use POL* marks that it has just been announced has reached 10,000 flight hours. There were similarities between the two aircraft in that both featured a stylish checker pattern on the tail. Unfortunately, the AW team had not realised that the checker was a cheeky personal signature of David Lewis the head of the sales team at Eurocopter Oxford. He had managed to get it on most of the airframes he sold over the years, and for him the AW error was simply a bonus ball!



The BN Group was displaying three aircraft in the flight line static. The most obvious was G-CHEZ, the former Cheshire Police BN2B-20 piston engine aircraft with its nose mounted sensor turret. It had recently been replaced by a helicopter; it was the last piston twin fixed wing used by UK police until the P68s arrived in service this year. Truly a historic occasion.

Of potentially greater interest was a project that many saw as a pipe dream. A sleek advanced looking autogyro. At the time the PR suggested that the police 'may soon operate' this resurgence of the autogyro and the colour scheme worn suggested that policing may be the primary purpose of this craft. The craft restyled the autogyro into a thing of beauty as a Manned Airborne Surveillance (MAS) platform being developed by Gyrojet, a British company based in Derbyshire.

The two-seater Scorpion S3 autogyro being promoted by company founder and pilot Barry Jones looked good – if a little futuristic. Sadly, but no-one was really surprised, the project did not come to fruition and they pulled the plug in 2012

#

Thanks to Coronavirus the skies above us are clearer and quieter. Those living under the approach path of airports are in danger of sleepless nights when this is all over. At times it seems that it will not be long before the only aircraft in the skies will be the emergency services. That is not quite the case. Most passenger airliners were carriers of freight as a result the number of specialist Cargo aircraft was always an awkward balance for airlines. Now a relatively small number of former passenger aircraft are having to be converted into temporary freighters to make up for the admittedly depressed air cargo need.

BOOK REVIEW

Regular readers will recall that I gave a *world exclusive* on the new Haynes *Police Helicopter Operations Manual* in the January edition and that I expected a review copy in due course to fit in with an expected publication date in March. It arrived

The book compiled by former Metropolitan Police Air Support Unit inspector Richard Brandon ("Brains") is primarily an introduction to the workings of police aviation but it does that by providing a historical background – scene setting – before introducing aviation as a key element of law enforcement in the 21st century.

The book tells how NPAS has now brought all 43 forces in England and Wales together to deliver a borderless police aviation capability countrywide and takes an in-depth look London's MPS ASU. The latter may not be too popular in Wakefield, they spend a great deal of money erasing the words Metropolitan from the three EC145s so this book may not sit well on their bookshelf. The point is that Richard is writing about what he knows so he based it on his last unit and the wealth of images that have always been a feature of the Metropolitan Police.

The book also features a series of case studies of typical air support missions to showcase the police helicopters in action.

Richard Brandon, who entered air support policing in 2002 and was the head of the Met Police Air Support Unit between 2012 and 2015, describes the evolution of police aviation and reveals how the Metropolitan ASU operated. He also examines how police helicopters, including the Eurocopter EC135 and EC145, work whilst taking an in-depth look at the onboard surveillance equipment and systems. These include the Wescam MX15 camera, Skyforce Observer moving map, Video Management System, Vislink digital downlink, and Airwave digital police radios.

At the 'sharp end', the various roles of police helicopter crews are described in the book. These include the tactics they use on operational sorties – search, pursuit, public order and the use of infrared technology.

Calling upon his extensive police aviation experience gained whilst being in charge of the day-to-day workings of a helicopter unit, Richard steps behind the scenes to reveal what makes it all possible – crew recruitment, selection and training, helicopter maintenance, despatch and flight following.

Talking about the book, Richard said: "It has been a real honour to put together the Haynes *Police Helicopter Operations Manual*, and I hope that readers will consider me qualified to write it given my wealth of experience working in police aviation.

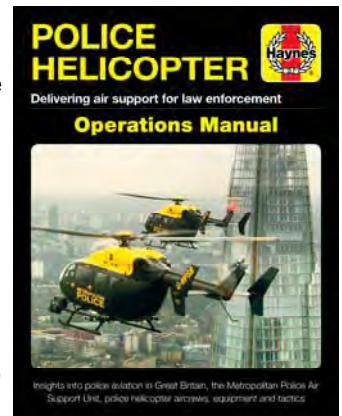
Throughout my time working in air support, I was always amazed by the response that we received when we opened the door to the public and showed them inside our role. I was fortunate to be involved with the filming of two series of Sky Cops for the BBC and pioneered the use of social media to engage with the public and explain what the police helicopter was doing. The interest the public had shown in air support was constantly building and as such, we were always inundated with questions about the helicopter and its equipment and crew, this left me feeling that there was a real opportunity for an informative book on this subject.

With that in mind, the manual is intended to provide accessible and unique insights into the vital role played by police aviation in modern law enforcement. The book certainly lifts the lid on police aviation, and I hope that it will inspire the next generation of police officers, police pilots and TFOs."

Richard concluded: "I would like to extend my sincere thanks to the great number of people who have helped and supported me in gathering the photos and information needed to tell the story of police aviation. I should add that this book is dedicated to the memory of the brave men and women who have lost their lives while delivering air support who we thank for their service."

The manual is supported by more than 200 photographs and illustrations, many of which are seen in print for the first time.

Police Helicopter Operations Manual joins three other manuals in the Haynes portfolio which cover emergency services. These include *Air Ambulance*, *Fire Fighter* and *Combat Medicine*.

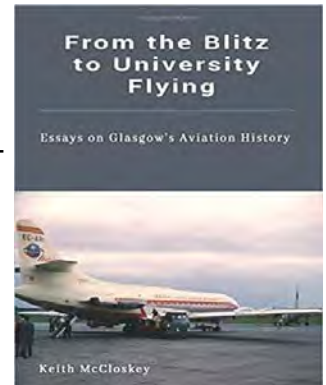


The *Police Helicopter Operations Manual* is priced at £25.00 in the UK and available from www.haynes.com. The book number is H6570. The ISBN is 9781785215704.

This book may be aimed at the wider enthusiast market as an introduction, but that should not serve to remove it from sitting in the library of anyone working in police air support. As I have said before, there are too few books on the subject of UK police aviation and much of the content of this book transcends international borders.

From the Blitz to University Flying by Keith McCloskey Amazon Paperback £13.00. Billed as a series of essays and reference works covering aspects of Glasgow's aviation history with a focus on Renfrew, Glasgow's first airport, it also covers other less researched areas such as the Luftwaffe attacks on upper Clydeside as well as rotary operations in Glasgow. With the latter it lays out a brief history of air ambulance and police operations using helicopters including a potted history of the two helipads in Glasgow. Precious little has been written and published on the emergency services, so this book does fill a gap.

The information, and many interesting and informative images, are there but it does fall into several traps in being difficult to follow the myriad of threads and providing endless tables of aircraft identities throughout the text rather than in the rear. That alone relegates it to the 'Reference Only' shelf. As a reference work it offers good value.



FUTURE EVENT

At the moment we face the possibility of not having any events this year so we may well only restart our lives in the New Year. A number of organisations have laid their faith in a turnaround in September, but the 1918 Spanish Flu lasted a full year.

In the first week of March the PRYSM Group announced today that it has acquired the rights to the Vertical Flight Expo & Conference (formerly Helitech International) from Reed Exhibitions Ltd. In its time the event has been the largest exhibition and conference in Europe dedicated to vertical products, parts, accessories and services. It brought together leading manufacturers, suppliers, buyers and engineers in the industry. The new event, scheduled for April 2021 is to be called Helitech World Expo and will be held in ExCel London Docklands, currently being converted into a massive 4,000 bed temporary hospital.

Ed: Even without an industry in severe financial shock over the Coronavirus they will have their work cut out. Last November the Vertical Flight Expo was held in very challenging circumstances – a mix of bad weather and low industry support. Nominally this was a bi-annual event with a European event being held on even years. At least the two former Helitech shows are not going head to head with similar dates.



PAVCon FUTURE

As you will know this year the PAVCon Europe scheduled for the centre of Berlin was called off on March 13. A planning meeting scheduled for Berlin on the 18/19th was cancelled and good job too for the German government closed the country's borders on the 17th!

The unexpected development was damaging financially to PAVCon Europe but it is expected that this situation will be turned around in time for a decision to be made on holding the next scheduled event in Luxembourg in 2021 at the end of this year.

That decision will of course reflect the extent of the damage to the industry as a whole by year end and whether the Coronavirus continues to extract its human and financial toll.

NOT COMING TOO SOON

With officialdom talking now of "six months" I think we can write off most items through until July and it remains to be seen what survives into next winter.

Most of the early [March-April] cancelled events were simply pushed forward to a now very crowded September. Whether they take place at that time remains to be seen.

Nineteen Group has reset late September for a series of its April UK events and co-located them all at the National Exhibition Centre [NEC] Birmingham alongside its Emergency Services Show. That venue, like ExCel in London, is currently serving as a giant temporary hospital.



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BREAKING NEWS

* As this issue closed for press it was learned that eight were killed as flames engulfed a plane taking off from the Ninoy Aquino International Airport, Philippines on March 29. The AIA Westwind business jet was on a medical evacuation mission to Haneda, Japan, was carrying 2 passengers and 6 crew members.

As the aircraft took off from Runway 24 it was engulfed in flames. Early reports suggest it was not a crash as such. The fire crews doused the fire but no-one survived. More details next month.

* At the end of March the Devon Air Ambulance (DAA) announced that they were ceasing air operations for the time being. On a temporary basis the DAA say they will be responding to patients solely by critical care car. As the confines of the aircraft make it impossible to maintain a 2 metre distance from the patient and other crew and they have no way of knowing whether a patient has coronavirus, this leaves them completely exposed within a small confined space. This is an unacceptable risk.

DAA, who operate two H135 helicopters from two bases in Devon will do their best to maintain the response service, albeit by road not air.

Now the four co-located events - The Security Event, The Fire Safety Event, The Health and Safety Event and The Facilities Event are to move to 22-23 September 2020 join the Emergency Services Show. The ESS dates were slightly altered to fit in.

All four of the events originally scheduled for the spring, had already reached twice the size of last year and had been receiving record-breaking pre-registration numbers, but the market has to settle and deal with unprecedented circumstances.

Free-of-charge passes now offer access to 5 industry leading events.

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<https://www.emergencyuk.com/>

The Security Event:

<https://www.thesecurityevent.co.uk/welcome>

The Fire Safety Event:

<https://www.firesafetyevent.com/>

The Health & Safety Event:

<https://www.healthandsafetyevent.com/welcome>

The Facilities Event:

<https://www.facilitiesevent.co.uk/>

Free of charge parking is available for attendees registered for The Security Event, click the link to register now:

<https://www.thesecurityevent.co.uk/free-passes-new-date>



UNDER THREAT

15-20 July 2020 APSCON The 50th APSCON Annual Conference & Exposition. Houston, Texas.

www.publicsafetyaviation.org



The NPAS helicopter unit based at Hurn [Bournemouth] Airport posted a series of images of the effects of the Coronavirus was having on its base airfield. Lines of temporarily parked British Airways aircraft are typical of many airfields.

©NPAS