

# Police Aviation News

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Issue 292

August 2020



## MIXED TRAFFIC

*Keeping the cooperation safe and efficient*

**Not quite business as usual**

**The other 125 - Drug Mule**

**Clandestine factory busted**

**2020 FLIR Awards**

# LAW ENFORCEMENT INTERNATIONAL

COLOGNE: We hope that the current COVID-19 situation will allow us to hold a half day Special Conference as part of upcoming European Rotors event in Cologne during November 2020.

The current plan includes presentations from 1400hrs to 1800hrs on Tuesday 10 November 2020. The session is planned to open with a Keynote speech from Col. Torsten Hallmann of the Bundespolizei based at Sanct Augustin followed by presentations from regular PAVCon Europe speakers from the Netherlands and Belgium. This will primarily be a European Rotors event with PAVCon input. [www.europeanrotors.eu](http://www.europeanrotors.eu)



## AUSTRALIA

WESTERN AUSTRALIA: In April 2019 the Western Australia (WA) police department announced that they would be getting an additional helicopter thanks to \$27M of new funding to replace the department's 28-year-old Kawasaki BK117B, Polair 61. At that time the decision on a make or model for the new helicopter was not determined. They also operated an AS365N3+ and three fixed-wing aircraft.

Last month it was announced that Airbus Helicopters has received an order from the Western Australia police for a single five-bladed H145 helicopter for airborne missions, making it the first Australian operator of the type. No indication of a delivery schedule has been made public, but the manufacturer has indicated an end-September timeline for Airbus Helicopters to begin deliveries of the certified five-bladed H145.

The H145 will be based in Perth, will offer capabilities for the WA police, including night vision goggle compatibility, as well as single-pilot and instrument flight rules over a search area of nearly 1 million square-miles.

The H145 will have a fully integrated on-board police mission system, alongside Airbus's Helionix avionics suite and a 4-axis autopilot system, which will significantly reduce crew workload.

The police BK117B, VH-WAH, first entered service in Japan in 1990, before it was delivered to the police force two years later. Apart from the two rotorcraft, the WA police also operates three Pilatus PC-12s, and one GippsAero GA8 Airvan.

## CANADA

RCMP: Often when a story is run, someone with intimate knowledge of it will later fill in some details that would have been really valuable in the original piece, but do not warrant a new article, or follow-up story.

The story about the police helicopter that hit a police drone in northern Canada in February but only got reported in June appeared bland but there are underlying questions. A report from the Canadian Transportation Safety Report (TSB) stated that both aircraft were involved in a "police operation" but what we didn't know until later is that they were employed over a flashpoint local protest against a controversial pipeline through territory claimed by indigenous peoples. The fact that the same operator oversaw both craft should have made operations safer, but it seems that supposition was wrong.



© RCMP

**COVER:** Mixed traffic. In the wake of the unplanned drone v helicopter incident in Canada earlier this year (page 2) a planned series of trials has been started by DASA/QinetiQ/ETPS in the UK aimed at drones and helicopters working together efficiently and safely. It may be a military programme but the lessons learned will eventually feed through to the civilian world. See page 28. (The cover image ©QinetiQ has been subject to Photoshop manipulation)

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The severity of the damage was understated originally. The drone was known to be destroyed but it was not appreciated that the damage to the helicopter was as bad as it turned out. The original story said the pilot felt a vibration and landed safely on a road with superficial damage to the main blades, the tail boom and tail rotor.

It was clearly more severe than the initial reports suggested in that the AS350 helicopter was deemed not airworthy and remained grounded in the snow and ice of a Canadian winter until it was possible to arrange for a larger helicopter to come along and lift the helicopter out.

This coming together of a ‘cheap’ \$100,000 drone and a real helicopter required tens, perhaps hundreds of thousands of dollars’ worth of retrieval costs and repairs. The drone was of course ‘reduced to spares’ scattered in the forest. [Russ Niles, AvWeb]

*Ed: Some people are realising that drones are not always the cheap option and that the costs associated with the February incident in Canada have migrated into the stratosphere are always a threat to operations.*

**COLOMBIA**

**NATIONAL POLICE:** Trakka has delivered a Total Surveillance Solution Package for the Colombian National Police to support the Directorate of Aviation, Halcon Group. The Total Surveillance Solutions Package is comprised of the TrakkaCam TC-300 Multi-sensor Camera System, TrakkaMap TM-100 Mission Management, Moving Map, and recording system, and the TrakkaBeam A800 Searchlight. The systems have been installed and are operational in multiple Latin American countries.

The Colombian National Police, Directorate of Aviation, Halcon Group, recently acquired two Total Surveillance Solutions Packages for their existing Bell 206 JetRanger helicopters, one of which has been operating over the cities of Bogotá and Bucaramanga since March 2020.

The National Police operate 104 aircraft of which 65 are a range of helicopters.



© Trakka

## ESTONIA

**AIR FORCE:** Late last month the country held its Victory Parade to mark the 101st anniversary of the Estonian Air Force. At the event it was announced that the Robinson R44 helicopters operated by them are to be retired.

Estonia was donated four R44 helicopters by the US Government in 2002. Two are Police specification and carry FLIR Systems' Ultra 8000 Thermal Imaging camera and loudspeakers. In 2012, two of the four helicopters were upgraded for night vision training by Rebtch and Night Flight Concepts. The other two are Clipper variants with floats, and it is one of these was the first to be retired.

The first has been donated to Lennundusmuuseum (the Estonian Aviation Museum) eight miles south of Tartu, and the other three are planned to be retired at the rate of one per year. Given a fleet of four, that suggests the last will be retired in 2023. The Police and Border Guard Aviation Group operate three civil registered Leonardo AW139 helicopters acquired a decade ago. [Helihub]

## MEXICO

**YUKATAN:** Trakka USA, LLC has announced the delivery of Trakka's Total Surveillance Solution Package in Yucatan, Mexico to support the operations of public security. The Total Surveillance Solutions Package is comprised of the TrakkaCam TC-300 Multi-sensor Camera System, TrakkaMap TM-100 Mission Management, Moving Map, and recording system, and the TrakkaBeam A800 Searchlight were for installation in a Bell 429 helicopter.

The Secretariat of Public Security in Yucatan, Mexico has been operating the Bell 429 helicopter integrated with the Total Surveillance Solutions Package for medical evacuations and SAR missions since February 2020.

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"We are extremely satisfied with the positive response from the Secretary of Public Safety. Trakka is proud to support our end-user in achieving the maximum performance of the Total Surveillance Solutions Package in their day-to-day operations," said Gerardo Castelblanco, BD-Latin America of Trakka Systems. [www.trakkasystems.com](http://www.trakkasystems.com).

*Ed: Primarily a police resource the Bell 429 has been used in the patient transfer role a few times since it entered service with the Yucatán Government in January 2020. (Gobierno de Mexico)*

Early July was marked by two instances of jet aircraft being used for drug running into Mexico.

On July 2 a burned out 1968 Grumman G-1159 Gulfstream IISP XB-NRX plane was found by Mexican law enforcement officers at Mapastepec, Mexico. The wreck was found on a grassed area and the authorities are happy that it had been used for transporting drugs prior to being destroyed. The plane was empty, and no occupants were found at the site.



There is some question over whether a military helicopter caused the demise of another light business jet a few days later. Sources state that gunnery from the armed forces helicopter caused the aircraft to make an emergency landing on the Chunhuhub-José María Morelos highway section, in the central-western region of Quintana Roo. The BAe 125 jet XB-RCM came down on the highway and the cockpit area was set on fire leading to the whole cabin area being consumed.

Other versions of the event suggest that the jet landed on the highway and that the occupants unloaded a shipment of drugs into a road vehicle and fled the scene, leaving the aircraft on fire. They abandoned the vehicle some kilometres along the road.

*Ed: As starkly illustrated by the Aviation Safety Network data the BAe/Hawker Siddeley 125 appears to be the type of choice for drug smuggling. All of the last nine examples of the 125 lost in 'accidents' have been drug related. It is not an unsafe type; the last air accident took place five years ago.*

*Of those involved in drug associated losses, on May 7 this year XB-RBF A Hawker Siddeley HS-125 / BAe-125 jet was destroyed on the ground by Venezuelan forces. The aircraft had landed at an illegal airstrip was engaged in a narcotic smuggling operation. On April 19 another, N700NW, crashed in a wooded area near Las Cruces, Petén, Guatemala. The aircraft was destroyed and two occupants were found dead at the scene. Some 762 kilos of cocaine were found. In early December last year an unidentified BAe-125-700A corporate jet wearing XP-PGP crashed after landing on an illegal airstrip near Retalhuleu, Guatemala. The aircraft was found in a farm field with false marks. The previous day another Bae 125 N949CL burned out after being set afire after landing on an illegal airstrip near San Andrés, Guatemala. The aircraft had likely been used on the trafficking of narcotics. On November 11, 2019 at Peten, Guatemala A*



BAe-125 corporate jet was found burnt on an illegal landing strip by law enforcement officers. It had been used for transporting drugs. Two months earlier, on September 2, XB-PTW a BAe-125-700A corporate jet crashed into trees and burst into flames near Nueva Cajolá in Guatemala. Its use on a drugs flight is presumed. On March 10 a HS-125-700 jet on fake marks sustained substantial damage in an apparent forced landing in a jungle area near San Pedro Peralta, Mexico. One of the two pilots was killed, the other sustained serious injuries. The aircraft was found to be carrying packages of cocaine. It was two years before that crash before the current run on 125 drug related losses started. On September 4, 2017 A BAe-125-700 corporate jet was destroyed when it crashed in the Hato Viejo area, Cojedes, Venezuela. Both occupants died. It was assumed that the aircraft was involved in drug trafficking.

## MOLDOVA

**POLICE:** The police in the country that lies in Eastern Europe between Romania and Ukraine have raided a factory where 'helicopters are being made' clandestinely.

The helicopter factory was in the eastern Criuleni district near the Dniester river in the east of the country of the former Warsaw Pact country. The Moldovan Prosecutor's Office for Combating Organised Crime and Special Cases and investigators from the Police General Inspectorate closed the clandestine factory producing copies of Soviet Kamov KA-26 helicopter.

"Over the past several months, the police documented the illegal activity of a well-organised group of people specialising in the production of helicopters," the Interior Ministry said in a press release. The secretly built helicopters were about to be exported illegally to former Soviet countries.

It was found that there were over ten helicopters on the production line, in various stages of completion. Most of the people suspected of being involved in the production and assembly process, including the organisers and heads of the illegal operation, are residents of Moldova's breakaway Transnistrian region.



© Facebook/media/Moldovan Police



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All the helicopters were produced without the necessary permits and documents of origin for the parts and equipment used. A criminal case for preparing to smuggle aircraft by two or more persons has been initiated by prosecutors.

*Ed: The Ka-26, a piston engine twin contra-rotating rotor helicopter entered production in 1969 with over 800 built. There are other variants, the latest being the Ka-226 which is about to enter service in India. All have the NATO designation "Hoodlum".*

*Although presented as a new build production line it would appear from the images published that the factory was refurbishing airframes from a stock parked near the factory.*

## NETHERLANDS

**POLICE:** Arriving at Staverton, Gloucestershire on July 13, 2020 via North Weald just after 11am was the next Dutch Police Leonardo AW139 PH-PXY for upgrade by Babcock. The helicopter made a refuelling stop at North Weald with Weald Aviation but do not appear to have made contact with either of the emergency services based there.

Also operating at Staverton in recent days is the latest Babcock completion of the Dutch police EC135 fleet, PH-PXC. It was flying its acceptance

trials in the week the AW139 arrived and departed on its return to service flight on July 17. [MJ]



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On post upgrade flight trials at Staverton EC135P2 PH-PXC © James Lloyds

## UNITED KINGDOM

**IN PARLIAMENT:** There have been comments in the UK Parliament focussing on the noise pollution created by NPAS helicopters over London. Lord Lexden, Deputy Chairman of Committees, Deputy Speaker in the House of Lords, asked the Government whether they have plans to reduce the noise made by police and ambulance helicopters circling over London during the weekends and to replace them with quieter drones.

The question was answered by Baroness Williams of Trafford, The Minister of State, Home Office. The decision of when to deploy helicopters over London is an operational matter for the police and the London Air Ambulance. The London Air Ambulance only operates during daylight hours due to operational reasons and this reduces noise during the hours of darkness.

NPAS provides aircraft, including helicopters, and in London, responds to requests for support predominately from the Metropolitan Police Service, British Transport Police and the City of London Police. NPAS deploys helicopters after completing a threat, harm and risk assessment; and only deploy them when necessary. In 2019 a total of 3727 calls for service were delivered to the Metropolitan Police Service or City of London Police, an average of 10 per day.

The existing fleet of aircraft are compliant with regulation [International Civil Aviation Authority, Chapter 8 and Annex 16] and are amongst the quietest within their category.

This appears to be a multi-faceted campaign against helicopter noise over the Capital as on June 18, Tony Devenish a Conservative Party member of the London Assembly complained of specific noise on May 31<sup>st</sup> and June 1<sup>st</sup>. His angle was that on those dates two helicopters remained in stationary flight over Pimlico for several hours and caused a lot of loud and unwelcome noise for residents.

A month later, on July 21, the Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan replied apologising and referring to representations made to Government and the CAA that the regime governing helicopter flights over London is not fit for purpose and offers little if any protection from helicopter noise. He is to continue to make the case to both Government and the CAA that the issue must be addressed. [Hansard]

*Ed: This brief surfaced in the Mail on Sunday media the reporters' questions were newly directed at the Metropolitan Police rather than NPAS. Clearly the research was a little awry. It also seemed that the researcher was assuming that a small quad rotor drone could undertake the same mission as the NPAS EC135 and EC145 helicopters. Still it seems that the night air ambulance noise cited by Lord Lexden was an illusion so the poor quality of the research for the complaint was consistent. One day it may put pressure on the Government to acquire new and quieter H145 helicopters for London,*



but these are not really 'money to spare' times.

It was not a good month for the Met though. Again according to the Mail group of papers it turns out that they are buying lots of new radios from a British based company with links to China and one of its officers was suspended after struggling with a knife wielding gentleman and ended up with his knee on the chaps throat while he was being handcuffed single handed. Bad timing when you have many fearful senior officers around—each more worried about the events in the USA where policing is very different. No doubt they will have wished the officer laid down his life for their pensions.

On a more positive note, it seems that the Commissioner has finally decided that officers on duty should not be getting down on one knee for BLM. It was always an easy call, clearly decisions are taken slowly in the London Police HQ!

NPAS looking for seven pilots, again! Retention continues to be a never-ending problem that the organisation has not resolved, and it continues to severely blight the availability of NPAS to provide a satisfactory service. For now, the new fixed wing aircraft are seemingly being used as the sticking plaster for the problem.

Ed: *Perhaps it is primarily a shortage of rotary wing pilots made worse by management failure to retain those in the service by being pleasant to them.*

The excess noise created by training up some recently employed pilots in the NPAS way led the North Weald base to issue a grovelling apology in late June. Some residents may have noticed an increase in police helicopter activity around the North Weald base.

Sergeant Steve Rowlett, Base Manager explained to the local media "We appreciate that there have been a lot of training flights taking place recently and I can assure you that amount of activity in and out of North Weald has been above what we would normally expect to experience through our normal police operations. This increase is due to the fact that we have recently recruited a number of highly experienced and qualified pilots who all need to be trained in the specifics of the type of helicopters we fly and this involves both day and night mandatory elements.

"The usual expectation is for our existing pilots to only undertake mandatory training that assess their proficiency and allows for practice of safety drills to comply with legal requirements every 6 months. We appreciate that whilst doing this training we may have caused noise and inconvenience especially at this time of year when doors and windows are open, people are out in their gardens more and also as it gets dark much later in the day having the need to extend the training into the later hours causes us to be more noticeable, I can assure you though that the training is essential in allowing us to continue to provide air support to our officers on the ground in order to reduce risk and harm to the public. Whether that be in looking for a reported missing person, tracking a stolen vehicle searching for a suspected burglar or responding to a terrorist incident.

"Where possible we have made efforts to displace the training to other airfields that are available to us, however with only a limited number of sites being suitable and even less currently open and operational we have had to operate locally but as I have already mentioned this current level of training is an exception to our normal practices and will not last for ever, we anticipate that by the beginning of September the number of training flights in the immediate area during the night will be less frequent, and the vast majority of flights will be for essential operational needs only. We are extremely grateful for the support of the residents of Epping Forest district and once social distancing measures allow we will look to accommodate a visit of the police facility at North Weald to various groups across the community which will hopefully allow us to offer a better understanding of our operations. Thank you."

Ed: *Well that is a first. In over 30 years of the Metropolitan Police operating out of Lippitts Hill I do not recall them issuing anything of a similar nature to the local populace and yet they regularly trained and flew far more operational and training hours than they do within NPAS. However, it has been suggested that the apologetic text was put out as a favour to the [local authority] landowners.*



© Facebook/Twitter

## UNITED STATES

**NATIONAL:** The 25<sup>th</sup> Annual FLIR Vision Awards was supposed to be held in conjunction with the Annual APSA event in Houston. That prestigious 50<sup>th</sup> event was to be held in Houston because that is where the first one was held. All the plans were killed off by COVID-19.

Faced with a no show APSA held some on-line training and the FLIR awards were also thrown on-line. Although the event is nominally open to an international audience a lack of international submissions has ensured that it remains very much an American event aimed at a home audience. The FLIR event recognises state and local law enforcement agencies for their tireless contributions to public safety through the powerful use of tactical airborne thermal imagery. The 25<sup>th</sup> FLIR Vision Awards – Livestream was held late in July.

The presentation of the Awards is tied into the grotesque Pig Pickin meal (personal opinion but I long since fell out with that as a dining treat) but that does not detract from the Vision Awards one bit.

So, no sponsored meal but the presenter Brian Spillane of FLIR Inc did cook a small pork joint in his back yard as he took us through the awards virtually and with a massive helping of humour.

Normally the event is sponsored by such as Aerocomputers, Dallas Avionics, Meeker Aviation, Paravion Technology and of course FLIR but this was very much a solo effort by Brian Spillane with help from his family friends and his dog. A very tongue in cheek presentation but serious in its content.

There were 100 submissions this year out of which six clips were selected as the prize winners. The Lifesaver Award went to Tulsa PD for footage taken on June 4, 2019; The Hot Pursuit Award went to a joint effort between the Washington State Patrol and King County Sheriff on February 21, 2020. There is a Fang Award, marking cooperation between helicopter and a K-9 unit (this time starring 'Jango') in Pima County Sheriff's neck of the woods; New this year is the Drone Award which was grasped by the Texas DPS for a short sequence that proved on some occasions that even these little craft do not need to be in the air too long to make a difference.

The main awards are the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> which also attract a donation to a winner nominated charity.

3<sup>rd</sup> was Hillsborough County Sheriff almost exactly a year ago on July 24, 2019, 2<sup>nd</sup> featured a multiple past winner of these awards the San Diego Police Department and they served up a car chase in the final days of 2018 that led to 6 suspects abandoning the car in all directions but not getting away from the eye in the sky. Lots of cops in the footage, it would be nice to see that many around here some time!



The winners were Prince Georges County Police Department who operate the MD520N. On January 8 this year the crew found men on a roof retrieving previously discarded guns and led to another mass meeting of police officers and a classic surrender played out on the doorsteps of an ordinary neighbourhood house.

In the end it is one hour of harmless entertainment that can probably still be sourced for a while on-line. If you are still stuck working from home, it may make a change from endless reruns of "Peppa the Pig": -

Check out [www.flir.com/visionawards](http://www.flir.com/visionawards)

*Ed: The whole world was invited to these FLIR Vision Awards but no one called by with a foreign submission. They are called FLIR Awards but they are open to the footage from all gimbals. At times the submission of footage is just difficult from the UK and Europe, politics more than anything else. When you consider the footage that went into the highly successful television programme Police Camera Action years ago and earned a significant sum for the support of air support it makes you wonder why a financially pressed NPAS are just giving the footage away. For some the 'for profit' element is untenable. I know that in the past West Yorkshire Police were among that group and they run NPAS.*



**FEDERAL:** Another eight Bell OH-58 Kiowa helicopters have been released to potential onward employment with Public Use operators. In Louisiana the military camp at Fort Polk retired its fleet of OH-58s in exchange for examples of the newer UH-72 Lakota.

All the released airworthy airframes have racked up around 50 years' service. The oldest in the Polk fleet was built in 1968. Among those on show at the stand-down in early July were 0-16696, 0-16162 and 0-15061. [KALB]

Although three of the birds will be cannibalized for parts, eight will be offered for police work. One — tail No. O-16696, the oldest operational aircraft in the Army's inventory — will remain at the JRTC and Fort Polk and set up as a static display, giving newly arriving soldiers and their families a glimpse of 5th Aviation history.

**CALIFORNIA:** A cost cutting exercise has led to the new police chief for East Bay Parks, Anthony Ciaburro, to unilaterally suspend the Volunteer Flight Paramedic Programme (VFPP) after it had been in place for 40 years.

The chief stated that over several years there has been a decrease in flight paramedic availability and a reduction in the number of flight hours provided. However, firefighting capabilities and the ability to respond to fires quickly have become a more significant part of the mission.

He went on to point out that the General Manager and the Board of Directors support enhancing the Air Support Unit's (ASU) firefighting capabilities. Over the last few years, the number of wildland fires, their intensity, their impact on the Park District, and the threat to civilians both within the District and surrounding areas has become a priority. The reallocation of the unit's time will help focus on the primary missions of law enforcement and firefighting.



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He went on to acknowledge that the VFPP has been a part of the ASU's Mission for many years and has provided an additional service to the community. The Park District embraces volunteering and is grateful for the thousands of hours that the volunteer flight paramedics have provided to the Air Support Unit and to Alameda and Contra Costa Counties communities.

The intent to procure a more capable airframe to meet the perceived firefighting mission has led the department to actively investigate the financing of enhanced capability aircraft that may differ significantly from the two AS350 airframes currently operated.

**KENTUCKY:** Wysong Enterprises Inc., has worked on more than 20 aircraft during twelve weeks of the COVID-19 pandemic to keep essential law enforcement and air medical aircraft in operation. The work performed on aircraft included large-scale overhauls, completions, routine maintenance and repairs, and inspections.

Recently Wysong completed a MD 530 for the Kentucky State Police Department. The team installed a Churchill mapping system, Macro Blue display, an MX-10 EO/IR System, a Trakka Beam Light, and ASU NVG Cockpit Modification. © Wysong



Wysong, based in Blountville, Tennessee, has undertaken work on more than a dozen air medical projects, six law enforcement, and five government service aircraft. Wysong is a full-service helicopter facility providing completions, customization, refurbishment, and maintenance service. Contact Paul Schreuder Wysong Enterprises, Inc. at +1 423-325-6900, <http://www.wysongusa.com>. [Wysong]

**TENNESSEE:** The state line works well in the USA, with different rules on each side. In some states you can grow your own hash and in others you cannot, the amount allowed for 'personal use' in some areas is large – in others miniscule. Much of the finance for US air support used to be bolstered by cash for seeking out marijuana patches. Now it is less clear.

Under Federal law the use and possession of cannabis is illegal. At state level policies regarding the

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medical and recreational use of cannabis vary greatly, and in many states conflict significantly with federal law. The recreational use is legalised in eleven states (Alaska, California, Colorado, Illinois, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Nevada, Oregon, Vermont, Washington), plus the District of Columbia.

In late June members of the Governor’s Task Force on Marijuana Eradication in Tennessee conducted a helicopter flyover of DeKalb County and found several patches. Around 400 plants were found and seized during the operation. No arrests were made.

Founded in 1983, the Governor’s Task Force on Marijuana Eradication (GTFME) is a partnership between TBI, the Tennessee Highway Patrol, and the Tennessee National Guard. Throughout the year, the Task Force seeks out marijuana grow operations and arrests individuals who knowingly participate in this illegal activity.

**VIRGINIA:** The Fairfax County helicopter unit have temporarily left the home they have used for the last 35 years and moved into Manassas Regional Airport for the next 18-24 months while the facilities at West Ox Road, Fairfax are redeveloped. The Regional Airport is 15 miles to the south west of the base, five miles southwest of the centre of Manassas, and 30 miles from Washington DC. It is the largest regional airport in Virginia.

The last flight by the Bell 429 out of West Ox Road was flown by Mike Mountjoy the most senior pilot that has been in the division for 31 years. He retired and came back as a civilian pilot.



Fly out from West Ox Road to a temporary base by one of the Bell 429s the unit operates. © FairfaxCSO

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# AIR AMBULANCE

## GREECE

**MINISTRY OF HEALTH:** Textron Aviation has sold two Beechcraft King Air 350C medivac aircraft for use by Greece's ministry of health. Norwegian charter operator Sundt Air will acquire the 350Cs and deliver them to Greece's health ministry, which will place the aircraft in service by mid-2021.

The aircraft will be owned by the country's Ministry of Health but the, Greek air force will oversee the King Airs' maintenance and operation, and the aircraft will be based in Athens. The turboprops are being acquired to perform missions involving disaster relief, medical rescue and hospital transfers, will be outfitted with cargo doors, patient oxygen systems and be capable of carrying a Spectrum Aeromed two stretcher system up to a range of 2,692nm (4,986km).

## GERMANY

**DRF:** After a field test DRF Luftrettung have released details of the potential risk from released droplets by infectious patients for the helicopter crew? Do pathogens spread from the cabin into the cockpit? These questions are not only highly relevant during the coronavirus pandemic: transporting patients with highly infectious diseases like influenza, tuberculosis or meningococcus is also playing an increasingly great role at DRF Luftrettung. Back in the autumn of 2019, DRF Luftrettung addressed this topic and started a first scientifically accompanied field test in cooperation with the German consulting centre for hospital epidemiology and infection control (BZH) in Freiburg. The press release on these finding is lengthy so interested parties would be better served reading it direct on the DRF website.

[www.drf-luftrettung.de](http://www.drf-luftrettung.de)



## HONDURAS

**AIR FORCE:** In mid-June 2020 twenty members of the Honduran Air Force graduated from a Basic Aeromedical Evacuation training course provided by Joint Task Force- Bravo. The three-week academic training course included the participation of 13 nurses and seven doctors stationed at different Honduran Air Force bases, who connected with their JTF-Bravo counterpart from the 1st Battalion, 228th Aviation Regiment through video chat.

The original plan, formulated late in 2019, did not include reliance on an on-line element but the emergence of COVID-19 resulted in the course being entirely online with participants connecting from the cities of Tegucigalpa, La Ceiba, Comayagua and San Pedro Sula.

With current medical conditions in the country deteriorating due to the ongoing pandemic and with parts of Honduras still under development with difficult access, this training is of significant importance and the first program of its kind, laying the foundation for a sustainable and continuous aeromedical training program

Hondurans conduct approximately eight aeromedical evacuations per week [Maria Pinel/Task Force Bravo]

## PAKISTAN

**BALUCHISTAN PROVINCE:** The Balochistan High Court (BHC) has barred the provincial government of one of the four provinces of Pakistan from purchasing an air ambulance, which was approved in the annual budget for 2020-21.

The court passed the order while hearing a case pertaining to the condition of the district headquarters hospital in Turbat. The Turbat hospital is used for poor people living in the remote part of the province. The court also issued a notice to the civil aviation authority to produce a logbook about the use of the planes and helicopters by the Balochistan government in the past one year.



The action in court is designed to ensure that the government focus its health spending on the supply of medicines, equipment, staffing and sanitary provisions for the hospital.

The court order bars the Balochistan government from purchasing any type of air ambulance and in this regard had also stops further spending related to air traffic and the training of pilots. The unnecessary use of the helicopter has been banned. [Dawn]

*Ed: The lack of medical facilities in the region is an ongoing issue. There are claims that even basic medical needs are not being met and that results in a high mortality rate due to nominally survivable road accidents and high infant mortality and childbirth rates. In every 100,000 childbirths the mothers are likely to die in 850 cases. Local people wishing to avail themselves of hospital treatment are required to seek permission prior to travel to the ill-equipped hospitals from local officials and that is not always granted. Ambulances of all kinds are a rarity.*

*The court has been overseeing the hospital for some months now. In January the Chief Justice suspended the Medical Superintendent at Turbat Hospital after finding the place dirty, with insufficient staff, broken equipment.*

*Police in Pakistan have arrested dozens of doctors and medical staff protesting a lack of personal protective equipment (PPE) in their fight against the Covid-19 pandemic.*

*The demonstrations took place in the city of Quetta in Pakistan's southwestern province of Balochistan. Senior police official Razzaq Cheema confirmed the arrests to CNN.*

## SWEDEN

SVENSKT AMBULANSFLYG: Sporting the national colours of Sweden – blue and yellow – first of a fleet of PC-24 air ambulances took to the sky in July. The flight comes less than a year after the agreement between the Kommunalförbundet Svenskt Ambulansflyg (KSA) and Pilatus was signed.

As an air ambulance service organisation, KSA will provide medical assistance and access to aeromedical care to everyone living in Sweden. The full KSA fleet will comprise six PC-24s, all aircraft are scheduled for delivery in 2021.

Following flight tests of the base airframe it will be transferred to Aerolite AG, the specialist Swiss company appointed to oversee the installation of the medevac interior.





## UNITED KINGDOM

**CHANNEL ISLANDS:** In mid-July Gama Aviation announced that it had been awarded air ambulance contracts by the Government of Guernsey and the Government of Jersey. The operations commenced from July 20.

The contracts have an initial term of five years with options to extend by up to five years. Operating Beechcraft King Air B200 aircraft, the Group will provide 24hour availability 365 days a year between the Channel Islands and UK mainland health services, providing a critical lifeline for the citizens of the islands. Gama Aviation will additionally provide medical teams to provide clinical services for the Guernsey operation. The award comes shortly after Gama Aviation's commencement of helicopter emergency services ("HEMS") operations in Scotland, augmenting its fixed wing operations for the Scottish Ambulance Service.

Neil Medley, Group COO at Gama Aviation, said: "We are delighted to have been awarded these important contracts by the Government of Guernsey and the Government of Jersey. Given our focus on special mission service provision, our existing aviation facilities in Jersey and our Beechcraft Authorised Service Centre in Bournemouth, we are ideally placed to deliver a long and successful partnership with each Bailiwick."

Marwan Khalek, Group CEO at Gama Aviation, said: "The award of these prestigious contracts represents another major milestone in our strategic ambition to grow our special mission business."

Gama Aviation provides special mission services to law enforcement, defence, air ambulance and other government services. The Group has recently announced new contract wins with the RAF, Joint Helicopter Command and the Home Office testing of Transmitting Portable Electronic Devices on several Emergency Services aircraft in-line with its delivery of the new Emergency Services Network (ESN). <https://www.gamaaviation.com/>.





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**AS9100 - EASA Part 21.G and 21.0 - EASA Part 145 - UK MOD DAOS Approved - FAA Repair Station**



Ed: As revealed earlier this year just before the COVID19 lockdown took hold Gama Aviation are intent on shaking the foundations of the industry where they can. Founded in 1983 on the simple principle of delivering its clients' missions with passion and dedication, Gama Aviation Plc seems to be on-course to at least tread on some toes.

This new contract is a direct replacement for the July 2013 contract gained by Capital Air Charter based in Exeter. That contract was for three years but lasted seven. At that time the contract was worth approximately £1M per annum for Jersey, and £500,000 a year for Guernsey. Gama has taken over two aircraft and has TUPE'd across some of the Capital staff roles particularly those in the medical capability. TUPE stands for the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations and its purpose is to protect employees if an employee moves with the job.

Associated with this announcement is the alleged demise of Capital Air Ambulance after over 34 years of trading. All is not as it seems though. No official announcement has been made and they are known to still be flying a month after operations allegedly ceased on 24 June. Capital was set up in 1986.

They are part of the Rigby Group's aviation division comprising British International Helicopters (BIH), Patriot Aviation, and Capital Air Ambulance, the UK's largest air ambulance service. Rigby Group are also in the airport business. They own Regional & City Airports severely hit by COVID-19 and the collapse of the feeder airline FlyBe, Bournemouth Airport, Coventry Airport, Exeter Airport and Norwich Airport, they also operate Blackpool Airport and Solent Airport Daedalus on behalf of their owners and operate XLR Executive Jet Centres at Birmingham, Bournemouth, Exeter and Liverpool airports. Some defensive survival moves might be expected due to COVID and perhaps downsizing the air ambulance operation is simply part of that.

Capital Air Ambulance provided aircraft and medical assistance and repatriation flight services with a fleet of King Air and Lear Jet aircraft. Some of the King Air aircraft have departed, two to Gama in late July, and the Lear Jet G-UJET was sold to Malta in early June. That leaves Capital with three aircraft in their name and apparently operating the Channel Islands service until Gama take it over fully – potentially in September.

Two former Capital King Air aircraft G-XVIP and G-YVIP were now registered to Gama in July and based at Bournemouth, Hurn, Airport. This leaves three G- KVIP, G-WVIP and G-ZVIP at Exeter.

The signs of life after alleged death come from the RAF. On July 16 [three weeks after the company supposedly ceased trading] RAF Odiham's airfield was utilised by Capital Air Ambulance for a non-COVID urgent patient transfer from Guernsey to mainland UK as part of an ongoing commitment to Military Aid To Civil Authorities (MACA). The aircraft was met by a road ambulance for patient transfer to University Hospital Southampton (UHS) for critical care.



[← Back to all news](#)

## RAF ODIHAM NEWS

Southampton Airport (SOU) is operating a limited schedule due to the contraction of air travel due to Covid-19 and therefore, any urgent aeromedical evacuations outside of the SOU opening times requires a suitable airfield near to Southampton Hospital.

RAF Odiham has held 24/7 standby for urgent OOH transfers of patients from the Channel Islands since the beginning of COVID restrictions. The Station provides operational and technical support to the movement facilitating the transfer of the patients from the aircraft to land ambulance.



**HELICOPTER LINKS**  
The online yellow pages of the helicopter industry<sup>SM</sup>



**CIVIL AIR PATROL:** A time-sensitive lifesaving drug treatment was transported across the UK in a well-coordinated relay for a patient who was shielding in their home. The life-saving drugs were taken by motorcycle from the Royal South Hampshire Hospital to Bournemouth International Airport by Chris Hobson of SERV Wessex Blood Bikes. They were then flown by Civil Air Patrol pilot, Stephen Griggs in his Piper PA-28 Arrow to RAF Cranwell in Lincolnshire. Thanks to a strong tailwind the flight took just one hour and saved critical time. For the third part of the relay the drugs were taken to Grantham by Anne Skelcher of Lincolnshire Emergency Blood Bikes, a total journey time of just 3 hours and 40 minutes.

The strategic alliance between the UK Civil Air Patrol and the British Blood Bikes despatch riders delivering urgent, lifesaving drugs over hundreds of miles has now become a well-established service. Nevertheless, each flight is unique for the recipient of the 'door to door' delivery and each flight takes a great deal of planning and coordination by the management teams of the respective charities.

After the flight, UK Civil Air Patrol pilot, Stephen Griggs said, *"This flight, to transport life-saving drugs, was only possible because of the well-coordinated teamwork. I'm also very grateful for the air traffic control service from the radar controllers at Boscombe Down, at RAF Benson, at East Midlands Airport and at RAF Cranwell who, together expedited this flight. Also, special thanks to the Royal Air Force for granting permission to land at the military airfield."*

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has provided many challenges, not least for the NHS. For its part the UK Civil Air Patrol has risen to this challenge with the provision, to the NHS, of an express air transport delivery service in conjunction with the British Blood Bike despatch riders.

These single-pilot air transport flights, which are fully compliant with the rules for 'social distancing' have delivered a wide range of time critical cargoes including parts for medical ventilators, coronavirus test kits, medical samples, medicines and personal protective equipment throughout the United Kingdom, from the Channel Islands in the south to the Outer Hebrides in the north.

The two most recent flights have carried time critical bacterial treatments from the University of Birmingham Microbiome Treatment Centre (MTC) to the Royal Cornwall Hospital in Truro, Cornwall. After a collection from Birmingham at 08:00 hours, by Julian Green of the Midland Freewheelers Blood Bikes, there was a window of just 4 hours and 30 minutes to deliver the drugs to the Royal Cornwall Hospital. Flying his Piper PA-28 from Halfpenny Green Airport, Civil Air Patrol pilot, Oliver Hogan landed at Perranporth airfield at 10:55 hours from where John Green of the Cornwall Blood Bikes rushed the medicines to the hospital to easily meet the deadline for delivery. This flight was coordinated at Halfpenny Green by UK Civil Air Patrol chief executive, Jeff Smith and the airport operations manager, Brian Rawlings, and at Perranporth by Civil Air Patrol pilot, Carl Beardmore.



Blood Biker, Julian Green with Oliver Hogan, Jeff Smith and Brian Rawlings. © CAP

In an earlier flight, following a very similar route, UK Civil Air Patrol pilot, Roger Bell flew his Beech Bonanza, with the very appropriate registration, G-HOPE, from Halfpenny Green to Newquay Airport, the former RAF St Mawgan, to deliver a further batch of the bacterial treatment from the University of Birmingham MCT to the Royal Cornwall Hospital. This flight took just 1 hour and 11 minutes.



UK Civil Air Patrol chief executive, Jeff Smith with pilot Roger Bell and Midland Freewheelers Blood Bike rider Duncan Gleig. © CAP

Following these two rapid air transport flights to support the NHS, flown in conjunction with British Blood Bike despatch riders, commonly referred to as the 'Pony Express', the chief executive of the UK Civil Air Patrol in England and Wales, said, *"These two flights have opened up a new chapter in the development of the Civil Air Patrol in the United Kingdom. These very successful time critical flights, delivering drugs with a finite shelf life, means that the whole of the United Kingdom is now within the delivery range of the University of Birmingham Microbiome Treatment Centre. Without doubt, this is a real game changer for the NHS and for the University of Birmingham MCT. Very well done to all those who were involved in these lifesaving missions."*





© DAAT

**DEVON:** The current health situation forced the Devon Air Ambulance Trust to undertake a low-key acceptance when their new Airbus Helicopter H145 G-DAAS, arrived on a visit prior to delivery. Nonetheless they were able to report that loud cheers went up around the air ambulance airbase at Exeter airport the H145 flew down the runway and settled onto the helipad –it was the first time this new generation aircraft had landed in Devon. As with most airports these days there was not a great deal else operating.

The first visit was part of a training flight from the Airbus Helicopters UK facility in Oxfordshire, where the aircraft was based for pre-operational training. The DAAT formally accepted the H145 in June and since then its pilots have been undertaking extensive training, part of a three-week training programme which includes classroom-based theory, 'visual' and 'instrument' flight training.

Throughout the training period the air ambulance remained operational from 7am to 2am, 19 hours a day using the existing fleet of H135 helicopters. The new aircraft is due into service during the autumn.

**MIDLANDS:** The charity air ambulance has revealed that while its callouts have increased during the pandemic, its income has plunged by £5M. They cover the entire West Midlands region and operate three Airbus helicopters from three bases at an annual cost of £9M funded almost entirely by public donations. Despite losing income, the three air ambulances have been busier than ever - attending a third more callouts or "missions" in recent months than it usually does.

The £5M shortfall in its fund-raising income is due to the cancellation of its money-spinning events such as open days and collection tin and bucket donations. It has other income streams including bank interest, bequests and occasional government funding but the missing funds are significant. There are plans for face-to-face fundraisers, but they will be dependent upon the progress of the COVID-19 outbreak. The next is Sunday September 13 when the Strensham Airbase Open Day might take place.

As part of the RAC's continued partnership with Midlands Air Ambulance Charity, the company has launched a new affinity scheme, offering anyone associated with the charity a discount on breakdown cover when bought through a dedicated website.

#

## UNITED STATES

**ALABAMA:** AirMed International, a global critical care air medical transport company based in Birmingham, Alabama, has joined the International Assistance Group (IAG) as an Accredited Service Provider. Paris-based IAG is the world's largest alliance of independent assistance companies and accredited providers covering a wide range of travel services to include roadside, medical, travel assistance, and security services.

The International Assistance Group is a global alliance of more than 140 independent travel assistance companies. It delivers first-rate roadside, medical, travel, corporate, security services, and home assistance to business and leisure travellers, as well as expatriate workers and corporations.

AirMed International operates a fleet of medically equipped jets and turboprops customized to undertake medical missions all over the world efficiently. With more than 18,000 missions in 150 countries on six continents, AirMed offers professional medical care and bedside-to-bedside transportation with some of the most experienced air medical crews in the industry.

**MINNESOTA:** EMS operator Life Link III, based in the upper-midwest United States, has placed an order for one IFR-certified AW119 single engine helicopter with a future option for a second aircraft. The aircraft will be added to an existing fleet of ten AW119Kx helicopters delivering in-flight critical care and transporting patients in Minnesota and Wisconsin with over 21,000 total flight hours amassed. Delivery from the AW119 final assembly line in Philadelphia is expected in the third quarter of 2021.

The contract marks the first sale for the FAA certified IFR capable AW119 in the civil market and for emergency medical service roles. The type is the first single engine helicopter in decades to fully meet current IFR requirements without compromise, allowing pilots to operate the aircraft safely in low visibility and



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**OHIO:** A city programme that covered emergency helicopter transportation costs for Cleveland residents is ending due to budget cuts necessitated by the economic downturn caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Cutting the Life Force helicopter programme will save the city \$135,000. The programme was available through the AirMedCare Network and ends in October.

The Life Force 1 air medical services helicopter is based at Cleveland's Regional Jetport and was part of a scheme that provided out-of-pocket expenses to residents who are transported by the Life Force helicopter in Bradley County. In addition, the programme discounted flight bills for Cleveland residents who were uninsured at the time of flight and when the pickup was in Bradley County.



© Facebook/Twitter

**PENNSYLVANIA:** Lehigh Valley Health Network introduced a new helicopter to its fleet. Air Methods are supplying the H145 N959AC aircraft to enhance the capability of the fleet of four emergency response helicopters. The others are H135s.

The new aircraft will be stationed at the Hazleton Regional Airport outside the City of Hazleton serving all Luzerne, Schuylkill, Monroe and Carbon counties in northeastern Pennsylvania. The additional internal size of the new type of helicopter will enhance the service capabilities of the neonatal intensive care unit and those who may require short term life support.

Due to the ongoing pandemic the Lehigh Valley Health Network (LVHN) introduced the helicopter at a virtual event at Hazleton Regional Airport. [LVHN.org/medevac](http://LVHN.org/medevac).

**TENNESSEE:** Hospital Wing, a Memphis-based air ambulance service that has assisted the West Tennessee region for more than 30 years and has completed more than 40,000 flight hours sent its H130T2 to be worked on during the pandemic. The air ambulance was short-handed and had some other inspections going on, so outsourced the work to Wysong Enterprises Inc. They were able to get the aircraft back to the operator quickly. <http://www.wysongusa.com>.

# FIRE

## AUSTRALIA

With the new bush fire season just around the corner renewed concern is being voiced over the lack of fire fighting capability in Australia.

A firefighting expert has told the Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements that climate change is like a nuclear-powered enemy, making current firefighting practices "insufficient".

Greg Mullins is the former head of Fire and Rescue NSW and part of a group which said it tried to warn about the situation last year.

Last month he told the commission he was concerned about the way the fire season was changing. Previously the fire season would play out sequentially across Australia from north to south, but now many areas were burning at once.

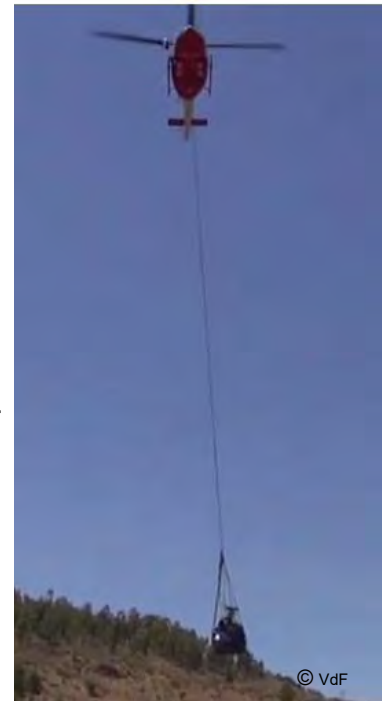
"We had a situation in 2019-20 where Queensland was burning, NSW was burning, Victoria was burning, South Australia was burning and we had fires starting to kick off in Tasmania and some in Western Australia," he said.

Last year the bushfire season began with the worst September in recorded history, with 55 homes destroyed. Some areas of the country had only just shrugged off winter when 130 bushfires ripped through southern Queensland and northern NSW in one day.

Numbers of volunteer firefighters across Australia continues to decline, last year it was assessed that at least 7,000 have left brigades over five years. Climate change has resulted in state bushfire seasons overlapping. In the past states and territories were able to lend each other resources but that is becoming more difficult. Some 140 aircraft and helicopters were leased in as a national resource so that when the fires were damped down with the arrival of the wet season in Queensland those same aircraft could be lent to Western Australia during their season. In the same manner Tasmania borrows from Victoria.

## ITALY

VIGILI DEL FUOCO: Italy's fire service, the Vigili del Fuoco, posted footage on July 1 showing an emergency services helicopter being used to retrieve the airframe of another helicopter that had crashed in Collesano, Sicily. The crashed helicopter, an Airbus Helicopters AS350B3e I-MLTA AS350B3e went down in June. The pilot and a second man were injured, but not seriously after the rotor blades of the helicopter touched the side of a mountain during the embarkation of a person whilst in the hover. The pilot lost control. The helicopter rolled down, caught fire and sustained substantial damage.



## UNITED STATES

CALIFORNIA: Southern California Edison is deploying contracted helicopters in the Santa Barbara area to survey their equipment during peak fire season. They will be inspecting their equipment all throughout Santa Barbara to ensure that they are working properly and looking for structural damage that might lead to an ignition.

In the recent past utility suppliers were being accused of not maintaining the clearances of their overhead electricity supplies from surrounding vegetation and that was leading to sparks and ignition of wildfires.

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# SEARCH & RESCUE

## EUROPE

**MARITIME SAFETY AGENCY:** The Finnish Border Guard will operate the Camcopter® S-100 for maritime surveillance purposes. The Remotely Piloted Aircraft System (RPAS) service is offered by the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA) and will also extend to Estonia and Sweden.

The S-100 will support the Finnish authorities in carrying out Coast Guard functions, such as search and rescue, monitoring and surveillance, ship and port security, vessel traffic, environmental protection and response, ship casualty assistance, as well as accident and disaster response. The RPAS will execute these tasks equipped with an L3 Wescam Electro-Optical / Infra-Red (EO/IR) camera gimbal, an Overwatch Imaging PT-8 Oceanwatch, a Becker Avionics BD406 Emergency Beacon Locator and an Automatic Identification System (AIS) receiver.

EMSA awarded the multi-year maritime surveillance contract for a VTOL RPAS to Schiebel in November 2018. In execution of this contract, Schiebel provides simultaneous maritime surveillance services to several EU member states and EU bodies. Currently, the S-100 is operational in the Republic of Croatia supporting the Maritime Safety Directorate of the Ministry of Sea, Transport and Infrastructure of the Republic of Croatia.

*Ed: Founded in 1951, the Vienna-based Schiebel Group focuses on the development, testing and production of state-of-the-art mine detection equipment and the S-100 UAS. With headquarters in Vienna (Austria), Schiebel maintains production facilities in Wiener Neustadt (Austria) and Abu Dhabi (UAE), as well as offices in Washington, DC (USA) and Shoalhaven (Australia).*



## NORWAY

Atlas Aerospace, a manufacturer of autonomous unmanned aerial systems (UAS) operating in the U.S., U.K. and EU, announced it has been chosen as a UAS provider for the Norwegian People's Aid (NPAID) Search and Rescue (SAR) Mid-Troms unit, due to its unique capabilities in extreme conditions.

The NPAID Mid-Troms unit is a volunteer SAR unit operating in northern Norway specialising in first response and lifesaving operations in extreme Arctic environments. The unit covers a region of Arctic Norway famous for its sparsely populated mountain ranges and Fjords. The NPAID team ensures the safety of tourists in the region, especially as adventure tourism continues to increase.

The team selected Atlas Aerospace as its UAS provider and uses the AtlasPRO tri-rotor in its missions in extreme Arctic conditions. The AtlasPRO drone can operate autonomously, enabling the operator to focus solely on search and rescue. The unit offer flight durations of around 45 minutes, a battery recharge time of one-hour and a capability of operating in 80kph (50mph).



Atlas' MESH communication capabilities allow users to operate several UAVs in tandem from one control station, enabling hours of consistent surveillance over a point of interest in a BVLOS scenario. This provides comprehensive situational awareness for team members on the ground using multi-stream capabilities to numerous smart devices. These capabilities result in greater cost-effectiveness for defence and SAR units across the globe.

Later this year, Atlas and NPAID Mid-Troms are scheduled to reveal a new product that will change the paradigm of avalanche SAR operations and will enable UAS capabilities that have never been used before.

## UNITED KINGDOM

**CHANNEL CROSSINGS:** More than 3,300 migrants are known to have made their way across the English Channel this year. The attractiveness of the target country says it all, the huge number of migrants trying to reach the UK is down to "British law and way of life" migrants would rather live secretly and without state aid in the UK than claim asylum in France. Although Britain has left the European Union for a whole range of reasons, it is being besieged by a tide of Migrants who do not like it there either! People of all nations are voting with their feet, paddles and oars.

Although the numbers are dwarfed by the number of migrants crossing into Europe from the Middle East and Africa the British Government is struggling to keep down the number of boat people crossing that final water barrier from mainland Europe to Britain. So far there has been no disaster in one of the busiest shipping lanes in the world, but it cannot be too long before one of the little boats is run down by an unseeing super tanker.

The weather varies in a typical English summer and that affects the rate of arrivals, in mid-July, Sunday, 12 July to Saturday, 18 July conditions were good for small boats and as this edition closes another warm and calm period is in place. Based on reports from the BBC, in just 7 days 516 migrants succeeded in entering the UK from France, almost as many as for the whole of 2018! The only effective deterrent is apparently poor weather.

There simply are not enough resources to deter the migrants. The UK has a handful of boats for patrol along its nominal 12,000km coastline where Italy, with a significantly short coastline has more than a hundred craft. Even the number of aircraft assigned to patrol is negligible, offers of volunteer patrols are generally dismissed. Even if an air patrol found something of interest where would they find a sea vessel to investigate it?



On a more positive note, prospects have been very good if you sell inflatable boats with outboard engines. Over 40 boats have been used for this one-way journey and they are being stockpiled by the British authorities! At some stage in the future they will be entered into a government surplus sale and no doubt recycled through to those arranging for the current cross channel traffic.

## INDUSTRY

The latest product from **Meeker Aviation**, an international engineering solutions company with equipment on most modern police aircraft, has finalised its certification submission. The data package for the 50lb payload wing mount for the Cessna 172/182 and 206 was submitted to the FAA at the end of June and should result in the grant of the STC around now. Meeker will seek to submit the EASA paperwork immediately afterwards.

The Airfilm Camera Systems Wing Strut Utility Mount (AFWM) fastens to the strut near the wing attach



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point of the Cessna (Textron Aviation Inc.) models 172, 180, 182, and 206 to provide a means for attaching an external payload of up to 50 lbs with a frontal area of 1.0 ft<sup>2</sup>. Typical payloads could include, but are not limited to, cameras, sensors, speakers, and lights. The AFWM Wing Strut Utility Mount can be installed on the upper and lower sections of the left-hand wing strut and be installed on the upper section only of the right-hand wing strut. The mount can be installed on both wing struts simultaneously, when installed in the approved locations.

A miniature version of the AFWM wing mount (AFWM-172M, AFWM-180M, AFWM-182M, and AFWM-206M) fastens to the wing strut of Cessna Aircraft and provides a mean for attaching an external payload of up to 10lbs and a frontal area of 0.5 ft<sup>2</sup>. The AFWM Mini Wing Strut Mount can be installed anywhere the larger AFWM Wing Strut Mount can be installed. The Mini Wing Strut Mount can be installed simultaneously on both wing struts and opposite of an AFWM Wing Strut Mount, when installed in the approved locations.

The AFWM Wing Strut Mount and AFWM Mini Strut Mounts are fabricated from 6061-T6 aluminium and attach with a hinged connection to the aircraft wing strut with AN Hex Bolts, AN960 Washers and AN365 Locking Nuts.

After installation the operator will need to calculate weight and balance for Installed items and check for proper loading of aircraft. Antenna, lights, and additional installed equipment may need to be relocated to provide clearance for the camera mount system.



**Airbus Helicopters'** multi-role twin engine H160 has been granted its type certificate by the European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA). The company is expecting FAA certification to follow shortly prior to first delivery to an undisclosed US customer later this year.



Airbus Helicopters relied on three prototypes, the first serial aircraft, and two additional test craft, the dynamic helicopter zero and the system helicopter zero, to develop and certify the aircraft and continues to mature the aircraft ahead of entry into service. The helicopters have flown over 1,500 hours both for flight tests and demo flights so that customers can experience first-hand the innovation and added value the H160 will bring to their missions.

Designed as a multi-role helicopter able to perform a wide range of missions such as offshore transportation, emergency medical services, private and business aviation, and public services, the H160 integrates Airbus Helicopters' latest technological innovations. These include breakthrough safety features with Helionix's accrued pilot assistance and automated features as well as flight envelop protection.

The helicopter also provides passengers with superior comfort thanks to the sound-reducing Blue Edge blades and superb external visibility that benefits both passengers and pilots.

**Diamond Aircraft Industries** GmbH and GeoFly GmbH recently signed a contract for the brand new DA62 SurveyStar. The contract was signed on June 16, 2020 at GeoFly's home base in Magdeburg (Germany).

Both companies will further collaborate in marketing the latest version of Diamond's successful Special Mission Aircraft, the DA62 SurveyStar, in the European Survey Industry. Delivery and start of operations are scheduled before the end of the year.

The initial configuration will include a multi sensor setup for simultaneous data acquisition. The universal nose mount will carry an airborne LiDAR system, while the 20-inch hatch will be equipped with the latest Large Format Camera System from Vexcel in combination with Somag's GSM4000 and an IGI Flight Management System. Depending on the final mission profile, the aircraft will be capable to perform mapping missions up to five (5) hours.

Mission Profile: GeoFly's newest mission aircraft will be used for projects which requires very low and slow flying, as well for any typical medium height projects. The DA62 SurveyStar is meant to combine the advantages of a turbine aircraft (long maintenance interval & jet-fuel) with a far better efficiency than regular piston aircraft. It will increase the overall mission efficiency with respect to costs and maintenance downtimes on survey flights within low and medium altitude.

The coronavirus pandemic is undoing decades of progress in poverty reduction as millions of people's livelihoods are threatened in the world's poorest countries. Since 1990, more than a billion people around the world have escaped extreme poverty, but nearly 100m people could become unable to fulfil their basic needs this year as they pay the price of living in areas with inadequate welfare systems. It is also predicted that acute hunger could double in 2020, affecting 260m people.

People who have worked hard to build businesses and improve their living standards face a potentially catastrophic loss of livelihood. They must wait until the pandemic ebbs to see whether their incomes will return. Most countries do not provide assistance to overcome the ravages of COVID-19 and some areas where aid is offered face the additional danger of corrupt officials siphoning off part of that aid.

The city of Hamburg, Germany, represented by the Ministry of the Interior and Sport, selected **Frequentis** to install a new communication system for both the police and fire services. Frequentis will deliver its multimedia communication system, 3020 LifeX™, enabling uniform communication across telephone and digital radio, as well as preparing them for the future integration and use of multimedia contact, including text, webchat and social media calling and messaging.

Hamburg is the second largest city in Germany, after Berlin, and home to approximately 1.8 million inhabitants, with its metropolitan region home to over five million. More than one million incoming calls must be handled by the control centres of fire services and police. The control room renewal project (in German Projekt ERneuerung LEitstellen - PERLE) will provide the two emergency services with a modern technical control room solution, in order to meet the organisations current and future requirements, as well as increase safety for citizens of and visitors to Hamburg.

The technology for Hamburg Fire and Police will be in two central data centres and in two control centres, accommodating more than 220 workstations. The Frequentis communication system will integrate with the customer's computer aided dispatch solution and the geographical information system, enabling geolocation and thus assisting operators with efficient call handling and resource allocation.

**Aviation Specialties Unlimited**, (ASU) was awarded the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Flight Standards Operations Inspectors and Aircraft Certification Pilots night vision goggle (NVG) contract while operating fixed-wing aircraft. ASU will provide both initial training and recurrent training to FAA beginning July 1, 2020. ASU initially began training the FAA in 2017, when they were awarded the first fixed-wing training contract. ASU first started training FAA pilots on helicopters in 2007.

ASU's training takes place in Boise, Idaho, in the high desert mountains and in remote areas where low-light conditions and challenging terrain make it ideal for training. ASU has trained pilots and crews from around the world that fly in extreme conditions for unique missions. For initial NVG flight training, FAA pilots and inspectors will receive eight hours of classroom training, 1.5 hours of daytime flight training, and 5.5 hours of NVG flight training. ASU will also conduct recurrent training at its Boise site.



A DHC-4T Turbo Caribou owned by Flightworks departs for a test flight after a night vision imaging system modification at the Aviation Specialties Unlimited headquarters in Boise, Idaho. Retrofitted with powerful and reliable Pratt & Whitney PT-6-67T turboprop engines that are easily maintained in austere environments, this Turbo Caribou is an exceptional STOL (Short Take-off & Landing) aircraft. © Aviation Specialties Unlimited by Sarah Pokorney



**RUAG MRO International's** aircraft painting facility in Oberpfaffenhofen near Munich has recently been equipped with a new combined painting and drying shop. After a two-week test phase in June, the facility is now operating.

The shop consists of a paint spraying booth and a drying booth directly adjacent to it and offers sufficient space for painting larger aircraft components such as elevators and rudders, flaps or cabin components. The paint shop is state-of-the-art in terms of environmental protection, energy consumption and occupational safety, and exceeds requirements in these areas.

**3DX-Ray** has announced a contract for the supply of ThreatScan®-LS1 flat screen scanner to a European Counter-Terrorist Unit.

The flexibility of ThreatScan®-LS1 flat screen scanner allows counter terror officers to rapidly examine and assess threats and suspect items on site, such as bags, laptops, furniture and even enables them to locate and identify hidden cameras and surveillance equipment.

Each system consists of a portable X-ray generator, a detection panel and an operator's workstation running 3DX-Rays market-leading image processing software, together with a customer-specific range of ancillary equipment.

ThreatScan® is lightweight, incredibly thin, has a large imaging area of 600 x 460mm, enabling bags and objects to be scanned in one scan. This system can penetrate up to 34mm steel at 120kV while producing high quality, sub-millimetre resolution images.

ThreatScan® can be used to inspect suspect bags and packages in mass transit areas, such as rail and bus stations, shopping malls, airports, stadia and sports arenas. It is also best suited for general security inspection by first responders such as Police, Military and Private and Government Security agencies.

**Enterprise Control Systems Ltd (ECS)** has received a significant contract from Chess Dynamics Ltd for the manufacture and supply of multiple ECS C-UAS RF Inhibition Systems. The ECS C-UAS defeat capability will be supplied as a part of the Chess Dynamics Air Guard C-UAS capability that has been selected for air base and critical infrastructure protection for an international customer.

CEO Marc Haysey comments, "I am pleased to be able to report the continuing international endorsement of the ECS C-UAS defeat capability. This award sees our widely deployed C-UAS defeat endorsed by a major multi-national user deployed on current military operations as a key component of their critical C-UAS capability. It extends further the already significant international deployment of this ECS capability achieved over the previous 4 years."

ECS is a privately owned specialist RF engineering company that focuses on the design and manufacture of data links and of RF inhibition (jammer) systems for C-IED (Counter Improvised Explosive Devices) and C-UAS (Counter Unmanned Air Systems) for defence and security customers world-wide.



## ACCIDENTS AND INCIDENTS

**4 July 2020 Eurocopter EC145 N263MH** MetroHealth System., Was operating an ambulance flight when the rotor blade caught slit construction fence during takeoff in Wooster, Ohio. The helicopter crashed as a result. The pilot and three passengers were not injured

**7 July 2020 Bell UH-1H N623PB.** Firefighting helicopter operated by Airwest based in Glendale, California, crashed 10 miles west of Payson, east of Phoenix, Arizona, USA under unknown circumstances while working on the Polles Fire, Tont National Forest. The helicopter was performing long-line cargo delivery operations in support of fire suppression ops under contract to the US Forest Service and not carrying any passengers at the time but the sole occupant, the pilot Bryan Boatman, aged 37 was killed. [Media/ASN]

**8 July 2020 Sikorsky S-70** Gendarmerie General Command in Bingöl, Eastern Anatolia, Turkey made an emergency landing due to the technical failure. The helicopter came down in steeply sloping forest land suffering substantial damage to the main rotors and tail boom, but the cabin integrity was maintained. The airframe was upright but embedded in a narrow gully. No casualties were reported among the ten aboard [Gendarmerie Command].

**9 July 2020 Beechcraft B200 King Air VH-FDO** Royal Flying Doctor Service. While flying into Cairns Airport, Queensland, Australia the King Air undershot the approach whilst a displaced threshold was in operation. The aircraft collided with temporary lights. [ASN]

**11 July 2020 Sikorsky CU-60A Black Hawk N60CU.** UC Helitanker 1 LLC., based in Los Angeles, California. Helicopter departed Minden-Douglas County Airport, NV. During an aerial fire-fighting flight north-east of Minden, Nevada, the snorkel tube hit the fuselage of the aircraft. The helicopter sustained minor damage and the two occupants onboard were not injured during the incident.

**15 July 2020 Beechcraft B300 King Air 350i EM-809.** Turkish Police. Surveillance aircraft impacted Mount Artos as it was returning to Van-Ferit Melen Airport in Turkey following a mission. The crash site was 30km from the airport. All 7 on board were killed

**16 July 2020 Eurocopter AS350B2 [PR-SMW SPI illustrated]** Polícia Militar do Estado de São Paulo A police officer fell from one of the "Águia" helicopters during a routine training exercise of São Paulo Military Police. The officer died at the Regional Hospital de Presidente Prudente.

## UNMANNED

On June 19 over the army ranges on Salisbury Plain, Wiltshire, a demonstration took place of a manned helicopter and a semi-autonomous drone, working together to identify potential targets in a designated area. An operator on board the helicopter was able to switch between monitoring the images sent back by the drone's cameras and allowing it to operate independently, searching for and identifying potential targets itself, only alerting the operator when a decision was required.

The work, funded by Army HQ Research and Experimentation using the Defence and Security Accelerator (DASA) competition framework, will be delivered by Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl) to the British Army in September as part of the Army Warfighting Experiment 2019. The success of the demonstration was particularly impressive given it was delivered during a period of significant constraints due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Improvements in robotics and autonomous system technologies, combined with both the need to improve military effect during a period of fiscal constraint, and a desire to keep people out of harm's way, has led armed forces to the conclusion that teams comprising both humans and machines are an essential part of how militaries must operate in the future. As part of that process many countries are investing in a better understanding of how that combination works best and how to ensure such teams can be used safely and with assurance in live environments.

There have been several demonstrations of airborne manned/unmanned teams in other countries but the UK's first successful demonstration is notable in that the entire process was controlled through a point and click interface on a portable tablet on board a standard H125 helicopter. This indicates that very little modification is required to a host aircraft to make an airborne manned/unmanned team work effectively. It suggests how easy it could be to build such a team around any manned aircraft.

In addition, the manned/unmanned team was created using a range of different technologies from different suppliers. To date, most demonstrations have used products from a single company, so they are designed from the outset to work together as a connected system. This may offer faster and lower cost to capability.

The demonstration involved the successful passing of control between different human operators securely and effectively throughout the trial. This ensures an unmanned drone can be controlled by the person best





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Schiebel Pacific and Raytheon Australia have teamed up for the LAND129 Phase 3 Tactical Unmanned Aerial System (TUAS) project for the Australian Army.

The companies will deliver a solution that provides a highly capable, low risk offering that is intended to establish an enduring sovereign TUAS capability.

Schiebel Pacific has extensive experience in working with the Australian Defence Force (ADF) and local industry. The Royal Australian Navy operates several systems at 822X Squadron, Nowra, New South Wales.

The Vertical Take Off and Landing (VTOL) UAS CAMCOPTER® S-100 is a proven and reliable TUAS for Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) missions. With its small footprint and ability to operate from confined areas, it needs no prepared area or supporting equipment for take-off and landing and it can be set up and ready in 20 minutes. The S-100 operates day and night for up to 8 hours. The UAV has globally collected more than 100,000 flight hours so far.

## PEOPLE

There has not been an announcement as such but the gap between Oliver Dismore and NPAS is growing. A few months ago, there were automatic e-mail messages that he was temporarily working with the NPCC Aviation Programme until March 2020. The time came and went, and later messages read that he is now the lead on the police BVLOS Drone Project.

In November the NPAS Press Office confirmed that the Director of Operations post was split between the Chief Pilot [Paul Watts] and an unidentified Chief Inspector. The latter has never been confirmed [mainly thanks to the continuing lack of Strategic Board minutes]. Slightly confusing and leading to PAN erroneously calling him Chief Inspector Pitkin. I understand it is a similar name.

## MOVE ALONG THERE

A multi-million-pound Royal Navy radar system has been delayed by three months after Leonardo Helicopters workers left a helicopter out in the rain.

A spokesman for the Yeovil company has said it "regrets the incident", which saw flight tests of the £269M Crowsnest kit put back as the Merlin was unsafe to fly.

Investigators said the helicopter, loaned to contractor Leonardo for trials in Boscombe, had been deemed



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unsafe to fly because engineers forgot to treat it with weather-proof paint.

It was found that Leonardo also failed to carry out any maintenance on the aircraft, according to a recent National Audit Office (NAO) report.

Speaking to *The Sun*, a UK tabloid newspaper, a source commented that Merlin (EH101) helicopters can cope with bad weather but are not designed to live outside.

The helicopter was based at the Boscombe Down test facility in Wiltshire undergoing EMC (Electronic Magnetic Compatibility) trials which need to take place outside for technical reasons.

Leonardo did not assume responsibility as it should have done, for applying all-weather protection during these trials (in most cases, when the aircraft is in operation, this is managed by the operator).

Stuck at home for weeks [nay months] on end results in a tendency to watch items that I might not normally and among them were the 'lunch break' broadcasts of the British Society of Magazine Editors. Often interesting stuff, it must be said but there was one such broadcast that had me confused.

In the wake of Black Lives Matter disturbances there were five editors who were addressing the question of diversity in the magazine industry. The drift was that the industry either was too 'white' or was perceived to be.

Generally, the group seem to side with a general lack of opportunity for non-whites in the industry. Everyone has their opinions but to the onlooker it was strange. I was looking at five people and, although I do not know [or normally even seek to analyse] their ethnic make-up I thought I was looking at four of the five that appeared to be in a position to claim a black heritage. So if ethnicity of all kinds makes up a reputed less than 20% of the UK population how come I was looking at a saturation level of 80% of the discussion panel who were apparently saying that there was no opportunity in the industry?.

The panel consisted of Busola Evans, Associate Editor and Supplements Editor of Living etc and Homes & Gardens, Amit Katwala, Senior Editor of Wired, Sam McClary, Editor of Estates Gazette, and Andrea Thompson, Editor-in-Chief of Marie Claire, led by Maria Pieri, 2020 BSME Chair and Editorial Director of National Geographic Traveller (UK).

Perhaps their conclusion was primarily to cause discussion – in that it did not fail. Personally, as a traveller around many of the worlds aviation events I have noticed that ethnicity among the journalists tends to reflect the region. The Singapore Air Show for instance tends to be full of people of Chinese background, there are lots of Arabians in Dubai, French at Paris, and the HAI Heli-Expo is pretty jammed out with Americans. It would seem that this particular exercise proved that white is not really a problem after all.

## FUTURE EVENT

Who knows where this pandemic will take us? Just months ago many of us thought we could look forward to the likes of the Farnborough Air Show, trip across to the joys of Las Vegas for the Commercial UAV Expo—but we were wrong.

Will the same fate take away the events grimly clutching on to a magic turnaround by November? Heaven forbid this madness still going on next March!


The Convention Center is waiting and so is the hotel, in the hope that we will all meet again at the 2021 HAI Heli-Expo in March 2021. But will we?

The date is set at March 23-25, 2021 and shortly the virtual doors to booking your hotel will be on-line.

Next year the HAI Heli-Expo is in New Orleans, USA and in The New Orleans Ernest N. Morial Convention Center. They have been cleaning it and have announced they have achieved GBAC STAR™ accreditation through the Global BioRisk Advisory Council, a division of ISSA, the worldwide cleaning industry association, augmenting the Center's early initiatives to prepare for new standards driven by the pandem-



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ic. The program certifies that the facility is implementing the industry’s highest standards of cleaning, disinfection, and infectious disease prevention for infectious agents such as COVID-19 and is the leading standard of prepared facilities. Will it be enough? So clearly someone is a little worried already even though the HAI event is 7 months away.



Meanwhile over the other side of the Atlantic Ocean the Nineteen Group did cancel and yet again reset their previously reset exhibitions and conferences held over from April. Not unexpectedly the plan to run the shows at the National Exhibition Centre [NEC] Birmingham alongside its existing Emergency Services Show was abandoned.

Now the co-located events - The Security Event, The Fire Safety Event, The Health and Safety Event and The Facilities Event are to move to April 2021.

The National Business Aviation Association (NBAA) has cancelled its annual business aviation convention and exhibition (NBAA-BACE), due to take place in Orlando later this year, due to ongoing coronavirus concerns and travel restrictions. It was scheduled to take place in Orlando, Florida on October 6-8.

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The new air ambulance hangar and offices continue to take shape at North Weald Airfield in Essex. The building is close to the NPAS base there.

### BACK PAGE NEWSVIEW

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On the other side of the UK, in Wales, the NPAS base at St. Asaph has born witness to the demise of the Boeing 747. In the background is one of the Virgin Atlantic fleet arriving at St. Asaph for parting out.



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