

Police Aviation News

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UK POLICE MEMORIAL DEDICATED

EDITORIAL

In the past I have pointed out that those you do not take heed of their past put themselves in danger of making the same mistakes again. It is daunting to see how often that advice is being ignored.

In the past month the Editor has contacted several important organisations affected by the situation in Wakefield and have even directly complained to NPAS in an effort to overcome the ongoing air of secrecy surrounding their past and present operations. Time will tell whether this will have any positive outcome. Meanwhile the UK Home Office, and by default the Government of the day, seem to have a plan that promotes offshore police aviation rather than its own.

The troubles at NPAS are way beyond money but, far from ensuring that resources are available for UK police aviation money continues to be exported to France to bolster their apparently inadequate reaction to stemming the ongoing wave of migrants boating their way to England. In addition to significant sums sent to France last November [which clearly failed to work] a sum of £55M has been set aside to boost French border activity, including air patrols, into the future. That is significantly more than it cost to run NPAS for a whole year. Not that I am advocating that money would in any way resolve the 'Wakefield Problem.' They would probably use it to buy a new hangar somewhere, anywhere.

Bryn Elliott

LAW ENFORCEMENT

AUSTRALIA

VICTORIA: A campaign to save “the first Victoria Police helicopter” has started after a news story started on News Channel 7. The Aero-spatale SA356C1 Dauphin 2 VH-PVF entered service in 1979 and was sold off in 2001. Many thought it had been scrapped but it has now turned up largely intact and there are hopes that it can be gifted to a museum for preservation.

The current owner of the airframe is a former police officer, Mark Whorlow, from the air support unit. He purchased and put it in store and hopes that money can be raised by a GoFundMe fundraiser to enable it to be donated to the Moorabbin air museum.



Ex-officer Mark Whorlow and his former mount

Ed: As early as 1956 the Victoria Police had had a demonstration of a helicopter (VH-THA a Hiller owned by TAA) and there were other demonstrations and regular fixed wing use from 1975. In March 1973 Victoria Police tested the specially equipped Bell 206B VH-AHV for a ten-day trial on general police duties. That was perhaps the first true police helicopter use. In May 1978 a meeting between the Premier of Victoria State and the Police Chief resulted in the announcement that a Bolkow BO105 would be bought for police use. That was blocked after protests by other manufacturers and instead an open tender was issued for a helicopter. In late 1978 the decision was announced and contracts for the supply of VH-PVF signed early in 1979. By October that year the \$1.3M helicopter was in service over Melbourne. It was the first police owned asset.

With what has happened to NPAS in the UK it may be relevant to point out that in 1996 Victoria Police turned over the airframe ownership and engineering to Lloyd Helicopters with the intention that this would free capital for fleet renewals. The Air Wing was not cash starved however it was a government decision to upgrade and privatise expensive state resources, (Government outsourcing project etc i.e. gas, electricity etc) Lloyd's were required to build a brand new hangar and ops/base [1999] for VicPol and provide the changeover fleet. In 1998 the police ASU personnel were in negotiations with Lloyd helicopters and Vic Pol command and the Metropolitan Ambulance Service (Victoria) to create a framework to submit to Lloyd Helicopters to enable them to see what aircraft meet the role. Unit is fairly unique in that it is 24 hour Single pilot IFR performing POL / SAR / EMS Operating annual 3,000 hrs.

In 2011 they moved base to share with Ambulance Victoria. Two of Victoria's five Air MICA ambulance aircraft are hangared there and Victoria Police crew one of them. In 2020 they exchanged their fleet for three Leonardo AW139.

COVER IMAGE: The new UK National Police Memorial was opened at the National Arboretum in Staffordshire last month. The National Memorial Arboretum is a British site of national remembrance at Alrewas, near Lichfield, Staffordshire. Located in the centre of England, its objective is to provide an area of park and woodland dedicated to honour the fallen, recognise service and sacrifice, and foster pride in the British Armed Forces and civilian community. The police memorial is the latest of many. [Composite image. David Howell main image]

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GERMANY

BUNDESPOLIZEI: A new tender document has been issued setting out the requirements of the forthcoming replacement for the federal police transport element – the AS332L1 Puma and EC155. It is assumed that one type will replace both.

The Interior Ministry based in Brühler Straße 3, Bonn 53119 has been using the European Tender facility to set out the specifications and additional documents for the acquisition of a new transport helicopter (Transporthubschrauber) for service at the main Federal police bases at Sankt Augustin, Fuhlendorf, Gifhorn, Blumberg, Fuldata, und Ober-schleißheim.

They are seeking a 10-year Framework agreement with a single operator/contractor to oversee the new acquisition. The tenderer has to indicate in the tender any share of the contract it may intend to subcontract to third parties and any proposed subcontractor, as well as the subject-matter of the subcontracts for which they are proposed.

The document is mainly in German so interpretation may be flawed but it appears that the order includes the construction and delivery of 39 transport helicopters (THS) as a fixed order quantity and a further 5 THS as an optional (variable) quantity with a delivery quantity of 5 or 6 helicopters per year.

The notice sets out the minimum requirement in detail, including the ability to carry at least 2,500 kg of cargo in the cabin or 3,000 kg as an underslung load, achieve 300 NM range at an altitude of 4,000 ft under ISA with 2,000 kg payload in the cabin.

The helicopter must be configured for GAT (general air traffic), VFR (visual flight rules), IFR (instrument flight rules), NVIS (night vision systems) in European airspace under both VFR and IMC conditions. The level of equipment for the latter must include IFR Cat I - with the capability of automatic LPV approaches and a full de-icing system, FIPS. The document specifically prohibits the option of delivery of airframes without the full specification being met. This focusses specifically on the ability of the type to have a Full Icing Protection System (FIPS) on delivery. Delivery to flight in icing conditions or proposals to expand the capability of the de-icing system later.

At the other end of the scale there is a requirement for the helicopter to be equipped with sand filters for the engines for use in air containing sand and dust. Accommodation is seating for 2 pilots and cabin seating for 16 passengers. A single winch should be installed. [2021/S 129-344072]

Ed: It is a large document, and the above are just a few salient points on the airframe, other detail direc-



There are not that many options for replacing the Puma derived fleet operating with the Bundespolizei. Nothing does Puma as well as a Puma. ©PAR

tions relate to the expected performance and the worth of the bidder.

In view of the high-profile problems experienced by the UK National Police Aviation Service [NPAS] with the protracted delivery into service of its fixed-wing Vulcanair P68R over extending its icing capability and the similar issues over the Leonardo AW189 for the Bristow UK SAR FIPS it would seem a sensible addition to the requirement.

The airframes most likely to be submitted by manufacturers to meet this requirement are the Bell 525, the Leonardo AW149, the Airbus H175 and possibly even a Puma variant,

The front runners are Leonardo and Airbus. The AW149 can have FIPS if required by the customer [currently the RAF Puma replacement] but clearly it will need to be fully developed and certified to meet the Bundespolizei requirement. The H175 currently is a joint Chinese project and Airbus are trying hard to persuade everyone that the Chinese content is low and can meet the RAF requirement. They will need to set up a UK production line.

Bell is pushing the 525, as exhibited by their recent promotional antics in Berlin. They were somewhat wasted in that the Bundespolizei did not know the 525 was just 100 metres from their HQ. Definitely an uphill struggle for them. The last 'most likely' bidder may be Sikorsky. It is suggested that they might forward a bid with the S70i from Poland.

KENYA

NATIONAL: The late 2020 plan to place all government air resources under the air force as the National Air Support Department [NASD] continue to be mired in controversy.

Pilots and engineers formerly with the now disbanded Kenya Police Air Wing have resigned and moved on to other employment. According to news reports the primary cause is that they wanted to paint the police helicopters in new colours and change the leadership structure. Police have apparently resisted this move and demanded to be shown an executive order that has allowed the new move. It seems that seven months after the shakeup that produced the NASD no documentation has been created.

Three police pilots and three technicians have quit to join a private company in Kiev, Ukraine, leaving their former employer in limbo. The officers disagreed with the management of the police air wing and the new bosses from the military on the way forward after the unit was put under the Kenya Defence Forces. They were some of the few able to handle the Mil Mi17 helicopters operated by the police.

Thanks in part to the lack of clear direction no-one knows who is supposed to provide funds for training, fuelling the fleet and other operations. The only blueprint for the NASD operation is the words of President Kenyatta when he launched the project. No-one has written up the project.

The NASD comprises key government ministries, departments and agencies such as KDF, Kenya Police Air Wing, Kenya Electricity Transmission Company, Kenya Wildlife Service, Kenya Forest Service, Kenya Pipeline Company. Brig Chrispin Odhiambo of the Kenya Air Force and formerly of the National Defence College is the new commandant of the outfit. [The Star]

NEW ZEALAND

AIRWORK: For 28 years, veteran *Aerospatiale AS355F1 Ecureuil 2* helicopter operated as ZK-HKG – c/n 5267 for the New Zealand Police under a contract operated by Airwork (NZ) Ltd. Now decommissioned, the helicopter has become an exhibit of the Museum of Transport and Technology's (MOTAT) Aviation Collection in Auckland.

Flying with the air support unit as Police 1 the helicopter was deployed to assist local police during several high-profile incidents including the 2011 Christchurch earthquakes, and almost a decade later, the 2019 Christchurch terror attack, playing a vital role in tracking and apprehending the shooter. It was decommissioned in 2019 when the fleet was replaced by Bell 429 helicopters.

Police 1 was unveiled at MOTAT's Aviation Display Hall on 30 June having spent three months in MOTAT's Aviation Workshop, being reassembled as a safe exhibit by a team of engineers and trained aviation volunteers.



A secondary AS355 Squirrel helicopter, Police 2 has also been gifted to MOTAT and will be unveiled to the public at a later date.

MOTAT Curatorial Research Manager, Belinda Nevin says, "MOTAT is delighted to be acquiring the Airwork helicopters. They represent a significant part of recent transport history"

"MOTAT is proud to be the kaitiaki of these items and their stories for the years to come". Kaitiaki is a New Zealand Māori term used for the concept of guardianship, for the sky, the sea, and the land.

Police 1 is joining an aviation collection in the MOTAT Aviation Display Hall at 200 Meola Road, Western Springs. The collection of recreational, military and commercial aircraft includes the de Havilland Mosquito, Solent and Sunderland Flying Boats a Lancaster bomber and the modern Douglas A4 Skyhawk. [Airwork/MOTAT]

SPAIN

LAW ENFORCEMENT: The Council of Ministers in Spain has approved a significant purchase with Airbus, including 40 helicopters and three A330 tanker aircraft. The helicopters consist of 18 H135s for each of the Spanish Interior and Defence Ministries, and 4 H160s for the Interior Ministry. The Interior Ministry H135 acquisition will replace the Bo105 and BK117 fleets, some of which date back to delivery in 1973. There are currently eight 105s and nine 117s in operation with the Spanish Policia, Guardia Civil and the Spanish Customs (Aduanera).

The Interior Ministry budget for these helicopters is spread across the years 2021-25, and totals €222M (£190M/US\$261) for the aircraft and €39M set aside for "implementation." What the latter amount covers is not explained. The agreement between the Spanish Government and Airbus also provides options for a further 23 H135 helicopters. [Helihub]



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UNITED KINGDOM

POLICE MEMORIAL: On July 28 a new Police Memorial was officially unveiled to honour all of the 4,000 police personnel who died in the line of duty in peace and war. It is at the national memorial arboretum in Staffordshire in the heart of England. It took seven years to raise the £4.5M needed for it to be built.

The memorial is much bigger than the one on The Mall in central London, allowing families across the country to access a place of peace and space and to take time to reflect and find solace at a location away from the bustle in London.

The Memorial consist of four distinct strands: A physical memorial inscribed with the names of officers and staff placed within a beautifully landscaped remembrance garden; A digital memorial that uses the latest technology for honour and tribute that can be accessed from across the world; An education programme – for use by schools and colleges - that tells the story of policing and its place in today's society, with an acknowledgement to those officers and staff who have died on a specific day; A Memorial fund that will support the families of officers and staff in the future.

Whilst the memorial is dedicated to a broader spectrum of men and women, the seven police officers and staff killed in UK police aviation accidents are:

- ◇ 1985 May 15. PC Gerald W Spencer Hampshire Police Edgely Optica
- ◇ 1985 May 15. Police Photographer Malcolm Wiltshire Hampshire Police Edgely Optica
- ◇ 1990 January 24. Sgt. Malcolm Herd Strathclyde Police Bell 206
- ◇ 1998 October 10. PC Stuart Ross Warwickshire Police (East Midlands ASU) AS355N
- ◇ 2013 November 29. PC Kirsty Nelis Police Scotland EC135T2
- ◇ 2013 November 29. PC Tony Collins Police Scotland EC135T2
- ◇ 2013 November 29. Capt. Peter Traill Police Scotland EC135T2

Former Northampton PC Tom Coyne was working on the unit at the time of the 1998 East Midlands ASU crash, he is now the base manager at Husbands Bosworth. It was the successor colleagues of PC Stuart Ross who picked up the honour of undertaking the solo aircraft flyover at the new Memorial when it was dedicated in the presence of His Royal Highness Prince Charles, Prince of Wales, the Prime Minister The Rt Hon Boris Johnson MP, and the Home Secretary The Rt Hon Pritti Patel MP.

Featured as the dedication programme moved forward were items on the place of NPAS within policing today and Airbus Helicopters, Oxford, who currently provide maintenance for the NPAS helicopter fleet. They donated in excess of £100,000 to the Memorial fund. Other corporations including BP and Tesco donated large sums towards the Memorial.

The dedication ceremony opened with EC135P2 G-SUFK assigned to the NPAS base at Husbands Bosworth, Leicestershire, flying to the Memorial and bowing before returning to base – the location of the crash that took PC Ross' life 22 years ago

There is a postscript to this I chanced upon via Twitter. The first aircraft of X-Ray-One of the Royal Cayman Islands Police was originally the EC135T1 G-EMAS of East Midlands Air Support at Husbands Bosworth. When in UK service it carried the name of Stuart Ross. Later it became VP-CPS and the name was removed. Damaged in RCIP service and replaced by to H145 helicopters the unit have the tail in their hangar. It is their intention to re add Stuart's name. Stuarts widow was at a dedication ceremony held by Warwickshire Police a few days ago.



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PC Stuart Ross died 1998

NORFOLK: As the level of air support across much of England and Wales diminishes local remedial action in the form of drones takes a firmer grip.



The success of police drones in spotting cannabis factories and finding missing people in Norfolk means the county's newly elected police and crime commissioner is keen to spend his limited police resources on them rather than being hamstrung by both NPAS availability and the CAA requirements relating to in line of sight. He is hoping aviation rules will be changed so drones can be used more widely.

Giles Orpen-Smellie [left] told a meeting of Norfolk Police and Crime Panel on July 13, he hoped police forces might be permitted to operate drones beyond the current 'line of sight' regulations.

He also said he would attempt to divert money the force currently pays for the use of the National Police Air Service's helicopter, to drones. He revealed to the meeting that West Yorkshire police has served notice to quit the service.

The temporary chief constable Paul Sanford has gone on record to say that drones were now a more reliable than the helicopter, only called up twice in the past two months, and that drones were significantly cheaper.

Norfolk police currently has 22 fully trained drone operators and 20 drones, although eight of those are only used for training.

Ed: The Norfolk PCC has a military background. The son of a soldier, he followed his father into the Parachute Regiment and served for 34 years.

The nearest NPAS resources to Norfolk are a helicopter at North Weald, around 80 miles, another at Husbands Bosworth and the fixed wing at Doncaster nearer 100 miles. None fits within a 20-minute reaction profile promised by NPAS and do not fit in with the original plan that launched NPAS.

This is what happens when the best resource, manned police aviation, consistently fails to meet the needs of its customers. Although Norfolk was never an intensive user of helicopters before NPAS came along it is clear that even a modest level of need is not being met, the aircraft are simply too far away.

Drones are not a direct replacement for manned aircraft, as tragically demonstrated on several occasions in the past year, but in the absence of the best option drones are better than nothing.

LONDON: Unexpectedly a local town councillor in Epping near North Weald has set out his support for the Metropolitan Police helicopter to the Lippitts Hill air base. He says that keeping the current base in North Weald is "madness".

Epping Town councillors expressed disappointment Epping Forest District Council had not consulted with them before the district council wrote the letter of objection to Scotland Yard [see last month].

Epping Forest District wants to see the air service remain at North Weald Airfield for financial reasons – they have a 25-year lease to keep police helicopters on site – the town council meeting heard councillor Hugh Pegrum (he is also the Deputy Lieutenant of Essex) say that a base at Lippitts Hill would mean that helicopters flying into London would no longer fly over Epping. The town is on a direct route to London from the North Weald base, assurances that they would fly over the M11 Motorway were not honoured.

[EFG]

Ed: If 'The Met' do go to Lippitts Hill it will mean that the remaining helicopter at North Weald [the former Essex EC135T1] will be in the wrong place. The Boreham base further east by Chelmsford had to close due to gravel extraction. This had long been known. It would actually have been sensible to retain the base at Wattisham in Suffolk where the facilities were first class, well established and in a prime position (as indicated in the original NPAS plan!). Apparently, this would be seen to have had a detrimental effect on air support in Kent but would have greatly improved support in the counties of Norfolk and Suffolk. At the time the NPAS management team included a member with significant interest in Kent.

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NATIONAL: The next big question is what is to happen about NPAS? In the last month I have written to the main players likely to be involved in the future of the organisation for opinions and information. These have included the National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC), the West Yorkshire Mayor, NPAS, the Inspectorate and Essex. Naturally not all have replied quickly, but some have tried to address the issues from positions of knowledge and speculation. The latter simply because no-one really knows all the information and they try and divest themselves of getting too involved. It seems a consistent thread, the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO), which has been in overall control of this tawdry tale was itself dissolved in 2015 to create the 'squeaky clean' National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC). On the basis that you do not change your identity unless there is a problem with the original, that is clearly a whole new story in itself.

The plan, such as it is, looks to be based on the operating model of Police Scotland as practiced by Babcock but feedback suggests that Babcock are likely to be less enthusiastic about taking on such a large project. The group has lost a significant amount of its oil industry revenues and NPAS is likely to be a costly set up at a time when they are effectively finding themselves.

There are others of course but many of them might understand aviation but not necessarily police aviation. Someone has to still find a viable leader for what comes out of the other side. Quite clearly a lot people currently involved have some significant detrimental baggage. *Submissions on a post card?*

Airbus and Leonardo may be the only airframe producing candidates with potential access to significant money. Others including Gama and SAS will face the same cash issues as are assumed for Babcock. They may have had aspirations to pick off the odd air ambulance contract here and there but it is doubtful that they had pre-planned the creation and support of a small air force. This is a bumper project that might be expected to involve an investment in the region of £100M. The separate and smaller Metropolitan Police tender will be more attractive to all. The broad picture leaves Leonardo as the dark horse. They will not want to invest cash into a fleet of ancient EC135s so will need a front organisation or to consider investing in a whole new fleet. That is an eye-watering proposal even with the greatly denuded fleet of today.



NPAS has an all-Airbus helicopter fleet ©PAR

What is apparently being proposed by West Yorkshire Police is a very different prospect to that faced by NPAS at the start. At the beginning they brought together several existing operations that worked in their own way in a vaguely planned exercise to create an entity that was multi-aircraft/multi-base operating as one. The fact that NPAS as an entity failed in management and forward planning from the start simply disabled everything that was in place and has resulted in an organisation that does not work well. The individual units can operate but without a central plan they will be almost useless in a national sense. It is that leaderless organisation of multiple aircraft and bases that outside industry is supposed to make work – as if by magic.

The NPAS has had a chequered existence over the years and has been the subject of an extremely critical report by Matt Parr of HM Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Service HMICFRS in 2017. The report "*Planes, Drones and Helicopters*" called for Police leaders to **act quickly** to fundamentally change the National Police Air Service (NPAS) if it is to help police forces further improve their efficiency and effectiveness. Four years on it is in an arguably worse state.

As far as the public record shows, NPAS has never addressed and resolved the criticisms in the HMICFRS report. Indeed, the available minutes of the National Strategic Board have indicated that the board has consistently avoided open discussion of the report. In fairness to the management though, there has been no sign that any other body [for instance the NPCC and the Home Office] has been standing over them to make sure they complied. There seems to have been a corporate wringing of hands and hope that the problem would go away or that those that might be in a position to make changes happen would retire to the House of Lords, move on to another task like dismantling a library in Bramshill and making sticky buns. Indeed, all of those happened to those in charge. There are a lot of culpable people involved in the bad management of NPAS.

When the report, written in the summer of 2017, came out in November 2017 it set out some targets including "as soon as practicable, the NPCC lead for air support should..." Well that all went awry because Simon Byrne the Chief Constable of Cheshire and the NPCC lead for air support went and got himself suspended by his home force just as the report was published. He was later cleared but never came back and the aviation oversight post was effectively suspended for a year.

Another target mentioned in the report was that NPAS should communicate to forces its plans for the use of fixed-wing aircraft by March 2018. That was based on the project entering service imminently, but it was nearly two years before they actually entered service, so the subject was set aside. That was another unexpected dead end.

There was a ready-made road map in place to guide them. "Planes, Drones and Helicopters" set out the prime parameters for improvement that were identified four years ago, the report simply chronicled the elements of what many other people were already stating - NPAS was set to fail. And yet because Simon Byrne was suspended no-one seems to have the corporate pride and drive to modify the recommendation and get someone else to do the tasking.

I spoke to the author of the report, former submariner turned Her Majesty's Inspector Matt Parr in recent weeks. He considers the report on the police air operation to have been the "...most depressing I have ever done."

A submariner by specialisation in the Royal Navy, nonetheless he did have significant experience of military air operations and connections with whom he could discuss what does and does not work in aviation. There is a loose synergy between the dispersal of individual helicopters on far flung ships at sea and the dispersed operations of NPAS. Both have a remote base HQ organisation and rely upon the remote unit to operate independently and sensibly within a wider corporate strategy. West Yorkshire Police did not and have never demonstrated their trust in the ability of their remote units to act independently.



It is a very old cartoon joke illustrated by the late John Witt in the last century but it is clear that senior ranks in the police do not understand aviation at all and probably never have done. Unfortunately they do not simply leave the subject on trust with those that have spent time and trouble to understand how to fly the police mission.

The simplest way to explain it to police chiefs is "pull the stick back and the houses get smaller, push it forward and they get bigger"

Strictly enforcing a requirement that ‘self-launching’ by the units to meet local demand was not allowed channelled all calls through an expensive and remote-control room greatly reduced the chances of aircraft getting in the air in time.

Much of Matt Parr’s career was spent at sea; but among his shore appointments he was responsible for the Navy’s inspection regime, was a member of the Navy Board and the Navy’s Director of Operations. He was appointed as HM Inspector of Constabulary in August 2016 and was working on the NPAS report within months. I am sure there is no conclusion to be drawn from the fact that the HMICFRS website listing of all police and fire services upon which he has written reports does not include NPAS!

At the heart of the many problems identified in the report lay a “Fundamental lack of understanding of police aviation” According Parr, in the management of the organisation he mainly encountered individuals who had no experience of aviation and having little experience of planning.

All too often, as *Police Aviation News* has chronicled over the years, plans made little sense and were quickly superseded by new plans that also failed to show much promise. Equipment was purchased that did not have a specification, let alone meet one. Even on the ground they were buying support vehicles and towed fuel bow-sers that were ill matched and did not meet a sensible specification. They bought new bases where the existing one was adequate and in so doing abandoned bases that made more strategic sense. In the case of Lippitts Hill the break was with the location because it was owned by the hated Metropolitan Police. True it was costly, but rather than renegotiate the price paid NPAS bought a new building and entered into a 25-year lease that they have no hope of keeping to. The courts may have to sort that one out.



North Weald has a hangar built for four helicopters and a fixed wing. Fixed wing did not happen so that looks likely to leave just one EC135 to fill a cavernous space.

When it came to the aircraft, they disposed of a helicopter type [the Explorer] and planned to replace it with a fixed wing programme which showed a promising spark of originality. Unfortunately, they decided to



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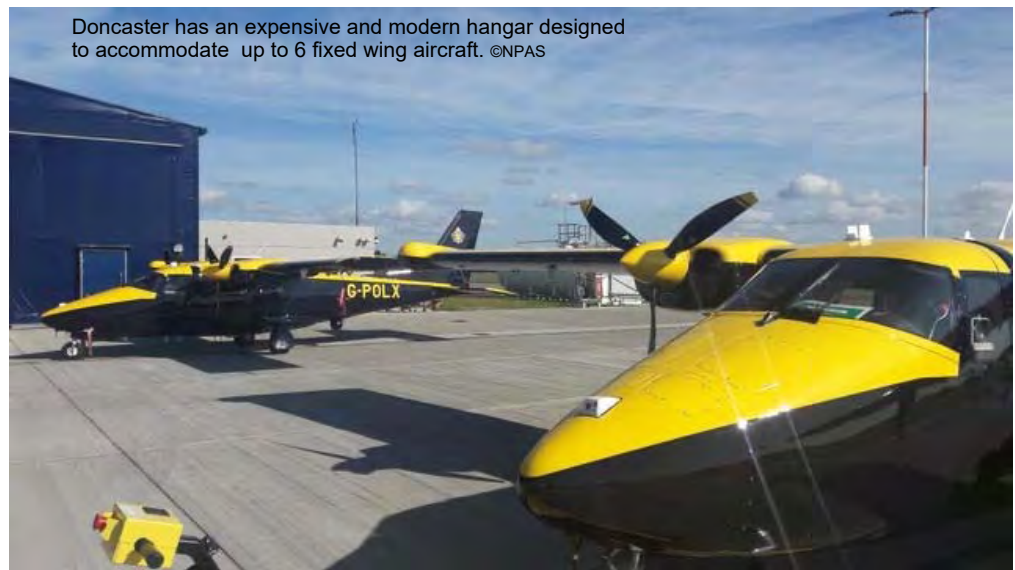


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use an aircraft type was not yet able to meet its specification and that provided a yawning three-year gap in capability. They could have leased in additional resources to fly and prove the mission, but they did not. Aircraft are cheap, leaving pilots and TFOs sitting around 'planning' is not.

When they finally got the P68R into service they neglected to remind everyone that the type it replaced was an expensive helicopter and what its operational aims were. They also neglected to promote their magnificent new acquisition to the people or the media except with a few bland words. To my knowledge no aviation media has been on site since I walked through the starkly empty hangar three years ago. It is evident that the management decided that the project was a failure long ago. There was little chance less informed outsiders would form a differing opinion.



Doncaster has an expensive and modern hangar designed to accommodate up to 6 fixed wing aircraft. ©NPAS

We might assume that the repeated failure of NPAS management to provide the public with documentation supporting accountability relating to their operation and decisions about the police aviation operation is consistent. Numerous people, including private individuals and the media, have been obliged to regularly submit FOI requests for information to gain grudging access to documents.

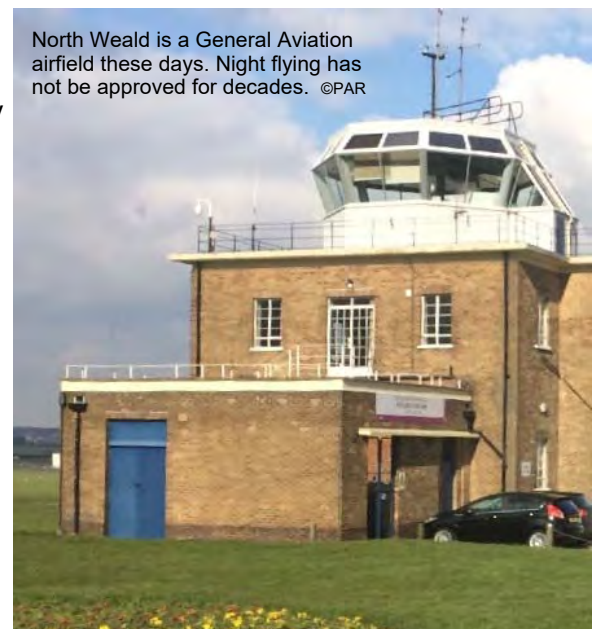
This lack of transparency has included withholding National Strategic Board quarterly minutes for lengthy periods until extracted by the repeated FOI requests. Currently the backlog is all material for 2021, these may include information explaining the recent decision to cease operations. At one time the organisation was posting documents back to 2013 on their website. These have now been removed in a minor website revision, a factor that hampers new research of the subject by newly interested analysts.

There is significant interest in the scrutiny of recent financial transactions by NPAS, including the acquisition of new fixed wing aircraft and multi-million-pound ground facilities – viz aircraft hangars and office space at Hurn, Doncaster and North Weald.

Recent estimates that the purchase of four 'highly economic' fixed wing Vulcanair P68R aircraft have resulted in runaway costs, cannot be investigated in a balanced manner. Even the original estimated cost of the fixed wing project is unknown due to document redaction. It was assumed by persons outside NPAS to be in the region of £2.5M per aircraft to produce a role equipped twin engine type based on the P68R, but even recent estimates of an actual project cost of some £20M for four aircraft and one hangar may well be a significant underestimate.

Still, apparently, **“it is only public money.”**

When North Weald was set up the planning application specifically stated a P68R was supposed to be based there. It turns out that the type could not use that airfield 24/7 as it and most others were not available in the hours of darkness. It seems that no-one had asked. The lack of alternative refuelling airfields massively impinges on the viability of the fixed wing programme. The sortie rate with limited pilots is abysmal. Four aircraft in service should make three aircraft available daily – that is not the case. This project, and how it was set up and planned, needs to be comprehensively and urgently audited by an independent body. As with all the dispersed operations the Doncaster air unit does its best with wholly inadequate resources planned by the management. When the latter became disenchanted with their fixed wing project, they seem to have simply stopped getting it more pilots so it could not fly more if it wanted to.



North Weald is a General Aviation airfield these days. Night flying has not been approved for decades. ©PAR



There is evidence that in the past year the fixed wing unit has almost doubled the number of hours it flies each year. Last year they flew 556 hours and this year the '4' aircraft flew nearly 990 hours. To put that in perspective though sorties are far longer than those of the rotary wing fleet and other bases where only a single helicopter is based are exceeding 1,000 hours pa. I guess, if it were properly resourced, we should expect the fixed wing fleet to be flying at least 3,000 hours by now and taking the pressure off the older helicopter fleet. Instead, management have apparently cut it back and restricted its operations to the north east of England. This appears to be because the non-aviation specialist Police and Crime Commissioner's in other areas declared they preferred a rotary wing service. Seemingly, no-one explained that delivery of a rotary wing only service may be seriously flawed with the elderly aircraft available.

When set up NPAS enthusiastically issued comprehensive Annual Reports but the last one of these, covering 2017/18 was published in 2019. Its content was a shadow of the upbeat and detailed early documents. After several requests, later reports [2018/19 and 2019/20] have consistently been promised to me by West Yorkshire Police (FOI 5624/19) as due to be published to the website in early Autumn" as long ago as last August. More than six months later, the latest I have now heard is that WYP FOI office has stated to another June 2021 FOI enquirer.

"Please note that NPAS no longer produce an Annual Report"

Really? NPAS is an accountable body and simply declaring its wish to no longer undertake its duty to police aviation and the police officers and civil staff working in the organisation does not ultimately divorce it from financial and management accountability. The lack of even perfunctory reports for 2018/19, 2019/20 and 2020/21 by a public body spending many tens of millions of pounds annually, cannot be unchallenged. Yes, apparently, "it is only public money" but it is my money and that matters.

NPAS has massively cut the service to the public, disposed of aircraft, bases and operational staff and capability and yet failed to achieve meaningful savings or even set up a pretense of maintaining the service to the paying public. All too often there are complaints of staff bullying and mental health issues by the staff who have been unceremoniously discarded and yet those allegedly involved in that bullying continue to climb the tree of promotion without a care in the world. An Assistant Chief Constable here [and there], a Chief Constable over there – all funded by public money of course.

The Federated ranks of the police in England and Wales – those that airborne law enforcement was designed to help in their hour of need - have lost confidence in the service, the Chief Officers safe in their ivory towers simply do not care.

At the core of this was a desire by the UK Government to cut costs. NPAS was an exercise in money saving. Since Covid-19 struck I think we can all see that money means nothing. It can be found. Although no fleet replacement money has been provided to NPAS since it was set up, in recent weeks it is clear that the Home Office sees a greater need to support the airborne emergency services aviation assets of France [i.e., Customs and Gendarmerie] than its own.

Last November the UK gave France £28M to provide patrols along the French coast so that Migrants



The new face of NPAS funding
Give the money to the French

could be stopped from making the journey to England. One report in recent days suggests that only six people have been arrested this year, another that the French will not use unmanned aircraft to patrol the beaches to ensure that the privacy of the citizen is not breached. That is as the result of a French Court ruling that reflects the situation in some parts of the USA. Magically the numbers safely making the journey across the English Channel have gone through the roof!

Buoyed up by this apparent “success” the same department is now to pay another £54M to the same French government to provide ground and air patrols along the French coast.

So far £82M has been paid out to France in 8 months. That was about double the UK police annual budget for air support that was set to be cut by creating NPAS. And that does not include the additional millions pumped into UK SAR to get them patrolling the English Channel for half of each day looking for unwelcome guests.

In truth there is little surprise that the NPAS management failed. Despite clear guidance provided by the independent 2017 report, they were not managed by those above them in government. Not a great deal has changed.



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UNITED STATES

ALABAMA: On July 8 the DeKalb County Sheriff's Office announced it had a new helicopter to assist with emergency calls requiring aviation assets. The helicopter illustrating was a Bell OH-58A Kiowa N510MN last noted in Georgia.

DeKalb County has one of the highest call rates for aviation help in Alabama. The addition will allow for the Sheriff's Office to respond at a faster rate to emergencies involving the dealing with missing persons, fires and assistance from the air.

The helicopter addition was made possible by donations, grants and volunteer support and has come at no cost to the taxpayers of DeKalb County.

Also in Alabama it seems that the Oxford Police Department are operating a new helicopter. MD Helicopters (MDHI) had Oxford Police Department's law-enforcement-configured MD 530F helicopter on display during the Airborne Public Safety Association's annual APSCON show in New Orleans.



Based in Oxford, Alabama, the Oxford Police Department's Aviation Support Unit (ASU) uses its MD 530F and a second helicopter to support ground officers and the Department's Emergency Services Unit. The ASU also has mutual aid agreements with several other law enforcement agencies throughout central and eastern Alabama. In addition, it provides support to the FBI and other state and federal agencies.

Ed: Back in 2014 the Police Department acquired a surplus OH-6 but even a year later the unit was not operational, with the airframe parked up at an airfield in Pell City, awaiting a pilot and TFO to be trained up early in 2016. The aircraft was expected to be moved closer to the Oxford Police Department's jurisdiction once unit personnel were ready.

Last year they were operating a military surplus Bell 206/T-67 Creek N1084X but since January this year that has been registered to Chambers County Sheriff in Lafayette. It would appear that the new MD will be working with the Bell in a consortium set up.

MICHIGAN: The Flint City Council has agreed to the police department leasing a helicopter for three months at a cost put at \$304,000.

Flint Police Chief Terence Green said the helicopter would help give officers another way to keep an eye on the city from high above. Police across the country have been dealing with a significant increase in violent crime through the first half of 2021.

Michigan State Police have deployed their patrol helicopter over Flint on and off for several years, which has helped police on the ground capture armed suspects. The Oakland County Sheriff's Office also operates an air unit to aid with patrols and searches. [WJRT]

Ed: Flint is the largest city and seat of Genesee County, Michigan, United States. Located along the Flint River, 66 miles northwest of Detroit, it has a population of around 95,000.



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VIRGINIA: The State Police Association has long led a campaign to improve the lot of its members – they claim them to be seriously understaffed by 27% and that the main cause is a lower-than-normal salary.

They have been seeking \$18.6M to redress the situation and there is a request on the table for access to COVID relief funds, part of which would be for their helicopter operation. Wayne Huggins, Executive Director, Virginia State Police Association said the helicopters are becoming unsafe due to unacceptable downtime, which has adversely impacted the department's capabilities.

The unit currently operates 5 Bell 407 Helicopters, 1 Bell 412EPI Helicopter, 2 Airbus EC-145 Helicopters and 3 Cessna 206 Turbo Stationair singles.



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AIR AMBULANCE

AUSTRIA

An essential safety factor in air rescue is the optimal support of the pilot by the flight rescuer during the different phases of the flight. For this reason, regular cockpit training will be required by law for flight rescuers at European level from 2022.

ÖAMTC Air Rescue have been actively involving its flight rescuers in simulator training for a number of years, even so the new regulation results in increased training costs for them. To that end they have teamed up with RotorSky GmbH, one of the largest and most successful flight schools in Austria as a cooperation partner to provide further training for pilots and rescuers.

To meet the new European guidelines, a training schedule will be developed that focuses on day-to-day teamwork with repeatedly overlapping competencies brought to the cooperation by Hörsching based RotorSky and ÖAMTC Air Rescue.

In a first step, a state-of-the-art and type-specific flight simulator for the H135 helicopter used by the ÖAMTC air rescue service is to be set up at the RotorSky site in Linz. The Synthetic Training Device offers pilots and flight rescuers the opportunity to familiarize themselves with the flight characteristics of the helicopter in a safe environment, to practice flight manoeuvres and to work through incidents together. Previously simulators were only available in Germany, having one in country saves significantly on staff time and travel.

Ed: The current CEO of RotorSky GmbH, Christian Gruber, set up the company in Schärding during 2007. Since then, additional bases have been opened in Linz and Krems before expanding internationally, initially to Emden, Germany [2018], and then Troutdale Airport Portland last year. On the ÖAMTC Air Rescue side of the developing programme Reinhard Kraxner, is the Managing Director and Marco Trefanitz, CFO.



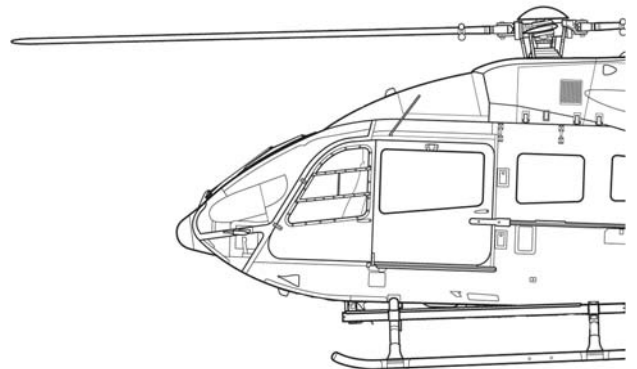
CANADA

SASKATCHEWAN: The air ambulance service that flies over Saskatchewan has added a new helicopter to its fleet. The STARS (Shock Trauma Air Rescue Service) Air Ambulance officially unveiled the new Airbus H145 helicopter in Regina in late June though it actually entered service in the province weeks earlier.

On the side of the new helicopter, just below the door to the cockpit, is the registration "C-GFRG." The last three letters stand for "founder Rod Gantefoer"

"It's not about the people that are providing the service, it's about the people they're providing services to, or for," said Gantefoer, who was the Melfort area's MLA from 1995 to 2011 and served as finance minister.

The helicopter is the fifth of ten medically equipped helicopters needed to replace the air ambulance's fleet across Western Canada. They cost \$13M each.



GERMANY

KARLSRUHE: The DRF Luftrettung is to host the 1st HHO Symposium from 2nd- 3rd September 2021 at the Operation-Center at Karlsruhe / Baden-Baden Airport under the slogan "Safe.Hoist.Operation". Experts from Europe and overseas will discuss topics regarding safety, quality standards and innovation in hoist operation: How can safety be increased in hoist rescue? Which new developments characterise the market? How can crews and patients benefit profit from new rescue tips and techniques?

The objective of this unique event is to set up an expert platform for helicopter hoist operators in Europe in order to ensure a safe hoist operation for patients - not only in rough or alpine terrain but also regarding offshore-rescue.

In addition to the symposium DRF Luftrettung will demonstrate a hoist rescue routine. [DRF]

ITALY

VENETO: Babcock Italia has reported that they have won a new HEMS contract in the Veneto Region. The contract requires the Babcock operation to supply helicopters, pilots, maintenance, NVG flight support, firefighting and the management of hospital helipads.

Following a competitive bid, the new six-year contract marks the continuation of a successful 20-year relationship with a region that takes in the Ulss Dolomiti Mountain, and area that often requires some of the more challenging rescue operations. [Babcock]

NORWAY

VESTRE VIKEN: A new hospital in Drammen (NSD) will be a local hospital for the municipalities of Lier, Drammen, Røyken, Hurum and Sande and the regional hospital for all of Vestre Viken. The division of functions between the hospitals in Vestre Viken is adapted to the assignment and function division in the Southeastern Norway Regional Health Authority. A tender has been issued for a roof top heli-pad that closes to bids in August 2021.

If the process goes to plan, from August 2023 construction will start on the roof-top aluminium helicopter landing platform designed to accept machines up to and including the AW139 is being incorporated into the hospital design. The hospital building is oriented in a northeast-southwest direction. The landing place is planned to be on the roof where two ward towers intersect, with grade elevation of approx. 42 metres.

The landing pad will be separated from adjacent stairs and walkways. A horizontal safety net will be included outside the platform and at parts of the walkway and stairs closest to it. It includes a railing that can folded down during landing and take-off. A covered walkway constructed with a roof, glass walls and rail-

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ings are elevated above the insulated roof connecting to the emergency lift and stairs.

The deck must be ice-free, to this end a thermal snow melting system is incorporated in the construction, including the emergency corridor from the lift to the deck.

A technical room on the 9th floor houses drainage from the platform into an oil separator and foam tanks and plant for the fire extinguishing system on the helicopter deck.

SWEDEN

BABCOCK: On July 5, 2021, the 2009 build EC135T2 c/ 0745 formerly with Wales Air Ambulance as G-WASS departed from Staverton by air to its new home in Sweden registered as SE-JTO. The helicopter retained its basic red and green Wales Air Ambulance colours and small air ambulance titles. It has seen recent service with the Scottish Charity air ambulance but has been for sale since last August.

The helicopter departed Gloucester Airport/Staverton en route to its new destination routing through London Oxford (Kidlington) Airport, then Lydd Airport on the English Channel coast in Kent before crossing to Europe bound for Scandinavia. At the end of May the airframe had recorded a total of 2,992 hours. [MJ]

UNITED KINGDOM

DEVON: The Exeter Airport based air ambulance operation is encouraging the public to download a free app, to help crews attend the precise location of patients in an emergency.

At the end of July they took part in the #KnowExactlyWhere summer safety campaign to raise awareness of the free what3words app and how it can be effectively used in an emergency. Every year, emergency services join with local authorities and organisations from across the UK to encourage the public to download the app as a simple way to save time, resources, and in some cases, lives.



**Help 999
#Know
exactly
where**
what3words

**Every 3 metre square has an address
Download the app today**

This year more than ever, emergency services across the UK are experiencing an exceptionally busy summer, as restrictions on international travel have resulted in a huge increase in Brits opting to holiday in the UK. Downloading the what3words app is one of the simplest actions the public can take to support stretched emergency control rooms.

what3words has divided the world into a grid of 3m x 3m squares. It has given each square a unique identifier made of three random words - a what3words address. *///anyway.lend.give*, for example, will take you to a precise square on Bromsgrove Highway where in April 2021 a man had a heart attack while his son was driving. Using this what3words address, his son was able to quickly direct the ambulance service to their precise location, which they say undoubtedly saved his father's life.

The app is free to download for both iOS and Android and works entirely offline – making it ideal for use in areas of the UK with an unreliable data connection, such as beaches, national parks and campsites which are incredibly popular during the summer months. what3words can also be used via the online map at [what3words.com](https://www.what3words.com). The app is available in over 45 languages and can be used anywhere in the world.

what3words is now used by over 85% of UK emergency services – police, fire and ambulance – and all services surveyed described what3words as 'a reliable tool to have as part of the emergency toolkit'. While not intended as a replacement for the traditional 'must-pack' survival gear worth bringing along on all hikes, camping trips, and other outdoor adventures this summer, the technology has become a well-used partner to emergency services, saving dispatchers and responders precious time and resources in an emergency.

Ed: With the supposed 85% of the UK Emergency Services already using the system it would seem that it is a done deal and surprising more has not been made of the App previously. Whether it remains free and an effective replacement for a long winded GPS reference remains to be seen, it has been around for a few years now and effectively paid for by corporate and government users. But, if you are near London you could down load the App and type in "bill.status.castle" to find yourself standing outside the firmly closed door of the long abandoned police station in Waltham Abbey. Still, not an entirely wasted exercise, there is a coffee shop just next door.



EAST ANGLIA: Last month PAN carried a cover image of the Airbus Helicopters H145 for the full night service air ambulance launched on July 1. The charity has been leading up to this milestone for some four years now and was left with a gap between 1:30 am and 7am where there had been no helicopter emergency medical service (HEMS) coverage in the region. That was closed as EAAA became the first air ambulance in the East of England to fly 24 hours a day.

EAAA has two critical care teams, Anglia One and Anglia Two, which operate from Norwich and Cambridge respectively to take the A and E department to the patient, by air or by car, wherever they may be in Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Suffolk or Norfolk. The highly skilled doctor and critical care paramedics have been operating 24/7 by rapid response vehicle since March 2020 and now that 24/7 service will be bolstered by a 24/7 helicopter operation, too, for the very first time. Weather permitting.

By becoming a 24/7 service by air and by car, EAAA estimates it can be tasked around 600 more times a year, helping hundreds more patients. Last year, the crews were tasked more than 500 times at night by RRV alone, demonstrating the demand that exists overnight.

In just over 20 years East Anglian Air Ambulance has gone from operating just one day a week to becoming a sophisticated 24/7 helicopter operation.

UNITED STATES

ALABAMA: Several big changes to ambulance and medical helicopter services are upcoming for Escambia County, Alabama.

The Escambia County Health Care Authority (ECHCA) has reached an agreement with MedStar to provide comprehensive 24/7 ground ambulance coverage for the greater Atmore market, replacing ASAP EMS. MedStar currently provides ground ambulance services for the Flomaton area, but D.W. McMillan EMS will assume responsibility for providing ground ambulance service in the greater Flomaton area.

ECHCA has also contracted with MedStar to provide a Bell medical helicopter service to all of Escambia County, Alabama. MedStar's Air Care 2 helicopter is currently based at Atmore Community Hospital.

FIRE

SPAIN

VALLADOLID: Eliance Helicopter Global Services, S. L. has a €6.8M contract to supply aerial forest firefighting services to the Province of Valladolid in northwest Spain.

The service will be provided by single engine helicopters based at the Aeropuerto de Cuatro Vientos, in Madrid. It is expected that the main operations will take place over Castile and León a region of consisting predominantly of a high plateau ringed by mountains.

UNITED STATES

CALIFORNIA: Napa County will go out to bid to see if it can add a water-dropping helicopter to its resources before the worst of the wildfire season arrives.

Securing a helicopter and operator for this fire season could cost \$1.8M to \$2.9M, plus other costs including insurance.

In early June Cal Fire based a water carrying Boeing Chinook helicopter at Napa County Airport for the season. It also recently replaced a helicopter in neighbouring Lake County.

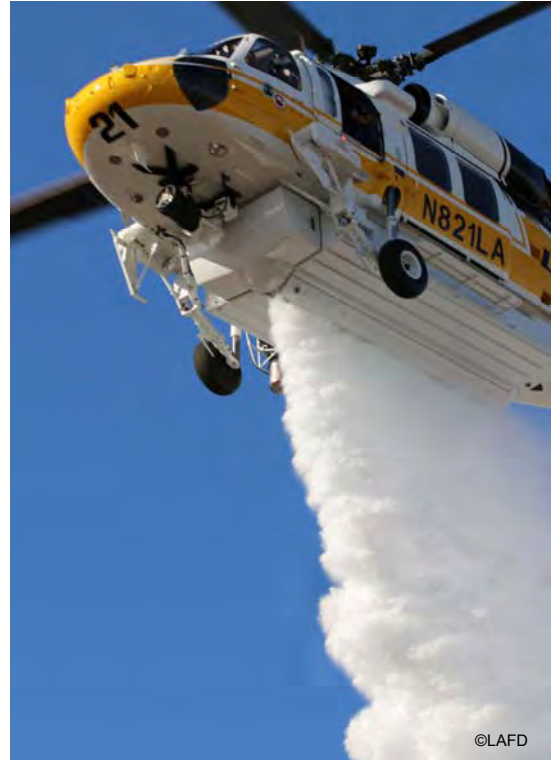
The issue is that these are other people's resources, and they can be withdrawn. Napa County wants a helicopter that's based in Napa County, paid for by Napa County and dedicated to Napa County. An "exclusive use" helicopter.

County officials depicted a Napa County-only helicopter as a short-term step. It would be part of a larger strategy to try to avoid a repeat of the devastating Tubbs, Atlas and Nuns fires of 2017 and Hennessey and Glass fires of 2020.

The county has put in place a \$42M five-year-plan to reduce vegetation that can fuel wildfires. That plan is in only its early stages, with a fire break recently completed around rural Circle Oaks and vegetation being cleared along roads in the Angwin area.

Rogerson Kratos recently offered use of two Blackhawk helicopters to the county at a cost of \$1.9M for daytime only operations. That sort of figure makes sense to such as the Napa Valley Vintners. The wine industry alone suffered \$2 billion in losses from recent fires.

California has had more wildfires this year than last year to the same date, but the fires have burned fewer total acres. [\[Register\]](#)



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SEARCH & RESCUE

AUSTRALIA

NEW SOUTH WALES: On June 12, the Westpac Rescue Helicopter (NSW Australia) achieved a significant milestone officially reaching 10,000 flying hours in the AgustaWestland AW139 aircraft. The Service commenced flight operations in the AW139 in 2017.

The milestone was reached on a day when the Aircrew and Medical Teams from all three bases were called to missions. Aircraft from Belmont, Tamworth and Lismore were tasked to assist people in nine towns throughout Northern NSW on that day.

CANADA

CORMORANT: The long-expected upgrade of the Canadian AgustaWestland CH-149 Cormorant based SAR helicopter fleet is on hold for financial reasons. In 2018 the plan was to upgrade the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) variant of the AW101 to the Norwegian standard.



Although the former US Presidential helicopter airframes are in store to support the upgrade and enlargement of the force the effect of the recent pandemic has led to the Cormorant Mid-Life Upgrade project valued at up to \$1.39 billion being halted. As planned the fleet will receive at least two additional helicopters and be upgraded to extend its life to at least 2042.

The Department of National Defence has been working with Leonardo to identify how the updates could be made. The latest feeling is that upgrading the CH-149 fully to the Norwegian variant of the AW-101 was not a cost-effective solution. After a year of consultation, it was determined that Leonardo couldn't do the work at a cost that would respect the project's overall budget, said to be around \$1.03 billion.

EUROPE

FRONTEX: Frontex, the European Border and Coast Guard Agency, is deploying European border guard teams to Lithuania and Latvia to support border controls with Belarus. This follows a request for support by these Member States in June due to a significant rise in the number of illegal border crossings from Belarus in recent weeks. Only ten officers with patrol cars will initially be deployed but their numbers will gradually be increased.

In June, more than 400 people were detected crossing illegally into Lithuania from Belarus, six times the total number recorded in all of last year. While Latvia has not seen such a spike, it has also asked Frontex for support as a precautionary measure.

Officers from the Carpathian Border Guard Unit, CBŚP, together with the Spanish services of the Policia Nacional and Guardia Civil, defeated an organized criminal group operating in Poland and Spain. The group was intent on smuggling 1.2 tons of marijuana to Poland.

Of a group that has been operating for the last five years (since 2016), 9 people were detained, 2 cannabis plantations with 1,400 bushes were liquidated, and drugs were seized. Property of the suspects was seized, this included luxury villas in Spain. The detainees are Polish citizens aged 30 to 45, living both in Poland and in Spain on a daily basis.



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BELGIUM - GERMANY - NETHERLANDS

THE RAINS: The big story of the last month was undoubtedly the catastrophic rains and flooding initially affecting rivers in parts of western Germany, Switzerland and later Belgium and The Netherlands.

The devastation was extensive and the loss of life high but difficult to quantify with so much damage having been caused to the infrastructure. Hundreds were found dead, but thousands remained unaccounted for.

A European weather agency had issued an extreme flood warning that foresaw rivers surging to levels that it was said Germany had not seen in hundreds of years. Unfortunately, the warning was given insufficient gravity and was missed by many in the population. The devastation came as a surprise.

German officials say that their sensors measuring river levels in real time, functioned as they were supposed to, but the amount of the rainfall was unprecedented. In Central Europe rescue efforts were hampered, with electricity and communications networks down, roads and bridges washed out, and drinking water scarce.

The resources of all the locally based airborne emergency services were committed to the life saving operation but in some areas were seriously hampered by the continuing bad weather. Falling rain and low cloud meant that some aircraft could not be launched. In Belgium, for two days in a row, the cloud cover was so low in the Ardennes (100 - 150metres and even lower in some places) that it was impossible to fly.

At least six ADAC helicopters were committed to the flood crisis areas alongside many more aid organisations to help the people from North Rhine-Westphalia, a western German state centred around Cologne and the River Rhine, and Rhineland-Palatinate a state bordered by France, Belgium and Luxembourg. In addition to the Christoph 10, Christoph 23 stationed in Wittlich, the Aachenian Christoph Europa 1, Christoph Rheinland from Cologne and the Munich helicopter Christoph 1. Not all were equipped for the work and winches had to be fitted overnight.

Ed: Recovery operations continue.

The flooding damage was widespread but in some areas the force of the water destroyed all in front of it. ©Rheine-Erft Kreis/Cologne District Government and AP



ITALY

MIGRANTS: Last month the International Organisation for Migration reported that deaths among maritime migration routes to Europe have more than doubled in the first half of this year compared to the same period in 2020.

At least 1,146 people died attempting to reach Europe in the first six months of 2021. Most of those who died were attempting to cross the Mediterranean. The total number of attempted crossings is also on the rise with over 31,500 people intercepted or rescued by North African authorities in the first half of 2021, compared to just over 23,000 in the same period last year. Many of the migrants departed from Tunisia, headed for Italy.

Data illustrates that the migrant deaths occurred because of insufficient search and rescue operations in the Mediterranean and on the Atlantic Route to the Canary Islands, even though interceptions off the North African coast have increased for the second consecutive year. [VOA]

FALKLAND ISLANDS

British International Helicopters (BIH) has extended a partnership with global aviation support specialists, HeliSpeed, supporting its search and rescue (SAR) operations in the Falkland Islands. The extended five-year agreement cements a long-term partnership between HeliSpeed, and BIH.

HeliSpeed will continue to provide helicopter pilots, engineers and technical crew from their growing network of over 2,500 aviation professionals available for both short and long-term global missions on over 83 types of helicopters, supporting ferry flights, aircraft repositioning, ground and flight tests, and training across every platform. [BIH]

NEW ZEALAND

WHITIANGA: Prior to 2019 the Coromandel Rescue Helicopter Trust based an early model BK117 helicopter in Whitianga, Coromandel, had operated a service for more than 12 years. It was axed by the Health Service. Now a new battle has started to bring the lifesaving helicopter service back is heading to the Parliament.

It is said that the ministry has made a deliberate decision to prioritise Auckland and Northland ahead of people in Coromandel and the locals are complaining to the highest house in New Zealand.

The ministry stands by its decision, saying Whitianga is not an “ideal location” from a national perspective and flying from Auckland to Coromandel only adds an extra 18 minutes to rescue times. Over the last few years helicopters have been taken out of smaller areas and based in centres with bigger populations such as Hamilton, Tauranga and Auckland.

Local’s fund raised more than \$1M to update the Coromandel base with new hangars and accommodation for pilots and paramedics, but that base now sits empty. A 50,000 signature petitions has not changed the situation either.

Coromandel isn’t the only region calling for their local rescue helicopter to be reinstated but sees itself in having unique seasonal needs. The population swells significantly over the busy periods and roads are completely clogged with a 40-minute road journey turning into two hours over the busy period. That issue has been addressed and over four weeks in summer a helicopter was based in Coromandel. The Health Service attitude is that Whitianga and the wider Coromandel Peninsula are serviced by two air ambulance providers – Northern Rescue Helicopter Limited and Central Air Ambulance Rescue Limited. Between these there are eight helicopters that can provide emergency services to Coromandel.

Bases at Auckland, Hamilton and Tauranga are the closest to the Coromandel Peninsula. The other bases

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at Whangārei and Taupō can also service that region but are a little further away.”

When Auckland Rescue Helicopter Trust has available helicopter and crew capacity in addition to the contracted capacity it provides, he said it can choose to base this at Whitianga, and it has done this in recent summers. That is not accepted by the campaigners. [stuff]

UNITED KINGDOM

SAR 2G: HeliHub.com has confirmed that Serco have withdrawn from the UK Search and Rescue contract process known as SAR 2G.

Tender documents are scheduled to be delivered by the end of this month to address:

Lot 1: Rotary, shorter endurance with standard carriage capacity for short range rescue work Bristow Helicopters Ltd and EEA Helicopter Operations BV better known in the industry as CHC.

Lot 2: Rotary; High endurance with larger carriage capacity for long range/multiple casualty rescues Bristow Helicopters Ltd, EEA Helicopters Operations B.V.

Lot 3: Fixed wing, manned and potentially unmanned for rapid search, surveillance and pollution identification 2Excel Aviation Ltd, EEA Helicopters Operations B.V, Elbit Systems UK Ltd.

Lot 4: A combined solution that contains all of the requirements for Lots 1, 2 and 3 but provided by one supplier/consortium, enabling the potential cost saving benefits of such an arrangement to be articulated in a single bid. Airbus Helicopters UK Ltd Bristow Helicopters Ltd EEA Helicopters Operations B.V. [Full detail at www.helihub.com]

HM Coastguard’s first operational drone flight, using the Austrian Schiebel Camcopter S-100 is due to join manned helicopters, planes, boats and cliff rescue teams on lifesaving missions at sea and over land in North Wales for the first time, this summer.

The drone, initially trialled a year ago during the first easing of pandemic restrictions, will fly from the HM Coastguard helicopter base at Caernarfon, and will also participate in a series of major training exercises with other 999 teams.

HM Coastguard’s search and rescue helicopters and fixed-wing surveillance aircraft provide support in maritime, coastal and inland environments, including mountainous regions.

During a phase of operational integration training, the drone - operated by Bristow Helicopters Ltd - flew in formation alongside both the HM Coastguard S92 helicopter from Caernarfon (also operated by Bristow), and HM Coastguard’s King Air surveillance aircraft, operated by 2Excel Aviation.

Remotely piloted aircraft are expected to play a key role when UKSAR2G, the second-generation of search and rescue service, is due to begin operations in 2024.



MIGRANT TRAFFIC: UK based drones already figure greatly in the air operations over the seemingly never-ending flow of migrants making their way in frail craft across the English Channel. These are not operated by the MCA but appear to be Tekever craft under contract to Border Force.

Regularly UK newspapers grow tired of carrying stories on the so called 'Migrant Crisis' and who can blame them? However, they eventually get revitalised by a new angle of this seemingly never-ending story and more come to light. The sheer numbers involved make it difficult for the subject to be ignored any more. There is a new tactical war being played out on the high seas as larger inflatable boats, some capable of carrying up to 70 passengers put to sea. Some occupants have cheaper life preservers more usually recognisable as inflated vehicle inner tubes. Their size attracts attention allowing smaller, faster vessels the opportunity to slip across unobstructed by the Border Force vessels safely out of the way dealing with the less seaworthy vessel.

After the recent embarrassment of being caught out by someone recording their cosy conversations with French officials the Border Force vessels are using covert tactics to keep their activities hidden, and that one of their techniques is to communicate with the French navy using 'closed' radio channels as opposed to the open channel most boats use.

And what is more, it is clear that the Royal National Lifeboat Institution — the registered charity so many help fund through donations, garden fetes and collection boxes — is regularly sending its vessels into French waters to bring in migrants that the Border Force are nominally unable to. Not everyone is happy with the situation. The areas they are operating in are supposed to be where French rescue services should be prominent.

Migrant sea arrivals to the south coast have topped 9,000 in 2021 so far. It is predicted a total of 20,000 could come this year. More pictures of numerous abandoned boats stored near UK ports have emerged and the official rescue services have continued to keep their conversations secret using telephones and other more secure means rather than broadcast conversations. [iNews]

Ed: The positive effects of the £28M the British Government gave to France are difficult to detect the recent addition of another £55M to the seemingly bottomless pot continues to keep the media stories flowing.

Still, they should not really get bored by the story. Even working out who is involved must be a serious task. Home Office, Ministry of Defence, Royal Navy, Royal Air Force, Army, HM Coastguard, Border Force, police, RNLi, National Coastwatch Institution – and now the French Navy, Customs, Police Nationale and Gendarmerie...

The Home Office 'Channel Threat Commander', Mr Dan O'Mahoney must be pulling his hair out. He was put in post a year ago with a "primary responsibility of making the Channel route unviable for small boat crossings." I think it is fair to say he has not excelled in that objective.

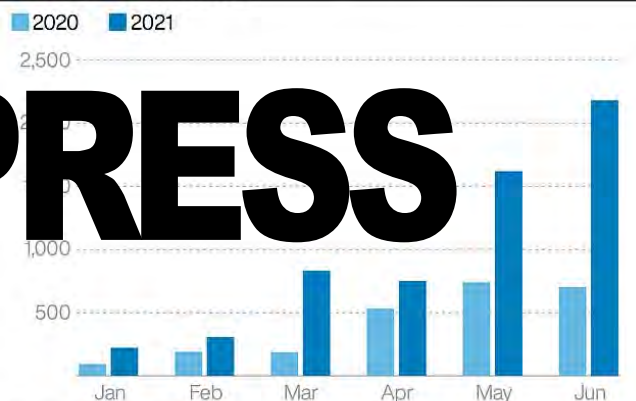


Difficult times Dan O'Mahoney and the Home Secretary Pritti Patel

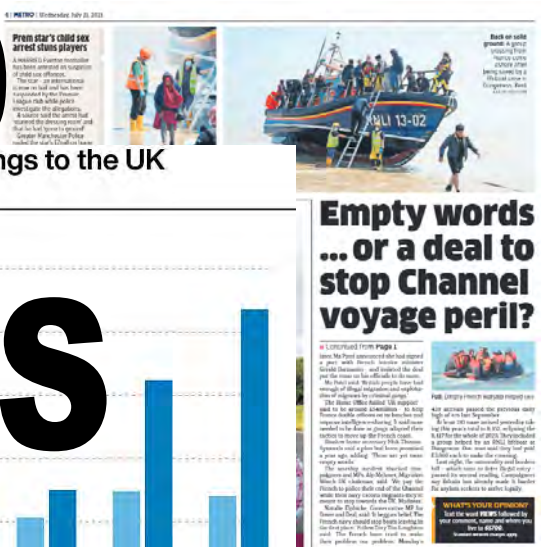


BAD

Successful migrant crossings to the UK aboard small boats



PRESS



INDUSTRY

A new management team has taken the helm at **MD Helicopters** (MDHI). "It's a new day for MD Helicopters," said Alan Carr, currently the company's sole director and acting CEO. Since taking over MDHI from Lynn Tilton, Carr has moved quickly to shore up customer support and return the company to relevancy in the commercial market.

MDHI has been preoccupied with lucrative foreign military sales of its MD500 series helicopters in recent years and had all but vanished from the commercial market.

Tilton resigned in 2020 after running MDHI for 15 years.

In the last 10 months the company sold ten MD500 series helicopters: one MD530E and the remainder MD530Fs. Other than these MDHI has not made even one new commercial sale in five years. Recent activity has showed a small turnaround.

MD, say they have improved support of the MD900. They talk of 100 being in service but many of those are not flying. MDHI are intent on improving support of the type. Tilton was intent on bringing all processes in house but in a complete turnaround the new management are seeking new suppliers for pitch casings, tail booms and blades. Despite several relaunches in the Tilton years MDHI are not producing the MD902 but, amazingly, there is interest out there.

Ed: The chief military market that MD saw as its own was Afghanistan. With the West pulling out its troops from that country and the Taliban advancing the future of this lucrative market is clearly in doubt.

The ebb and flow of apparently disparate management decisions cannot endear the company to a customer base that has plenty of choices out there. The commercial sector was 'switched off' when it suited MDHI and now, faced with lean times in the military sector, they deign to take money from the sector again. It may be – should be - too late.

MDHI has been flying its enhanced glass cockpit MD530F aircraft on a demonstration flight tour. The aircraft travelled across Texas, Louisiana, Georgia, Tennessee, Kentucky, Missouri, and Oklahoma from July 20 to August 11, providing operators and agencies the opportunity to experience its power and performance first hand. As a part of the tour, the aircraft participated in APSCON in New Orleans, providing demonstration flights throughout the show.

There are signs that the new management at MD might be seeing law enforcement aviation as something of a saviour for its future business. Not so many years ago no self-respecting ALE unit in the USA would operate European machines. The MD500/OH-6 was a good compact machine that economically met the needs of ALE. Now the increasing age of the stock of the Vietnam era machines, the lack of spares and technical support and the dearth of development told on the US product (and that included Bell for many years).

The new management face an uphill struggle across the board. Faced with little choice but to look elsewhere their customers have experienced a continuously developed European product (the H125) that, although not that much younger, offers more power and space for the tools of the now expanded mission.

The modern USP for MD was Notar but that has been side-lined and few see a need to investigate a type that has an apparent lack of directional control power and flexibility. The Notar based on the Vietnam era Hughes 500, more recently the MD500/520/600, has stagnated for years and the other wholly new offering [well new 28 years ago!] is the MD900.

Each has their promoters, but success can be measured in total sales of about 300 over the three Notar models over 30 years. Like the Brantly B2 (334 built), they are a niche type, not the world beating type that was hoped for.

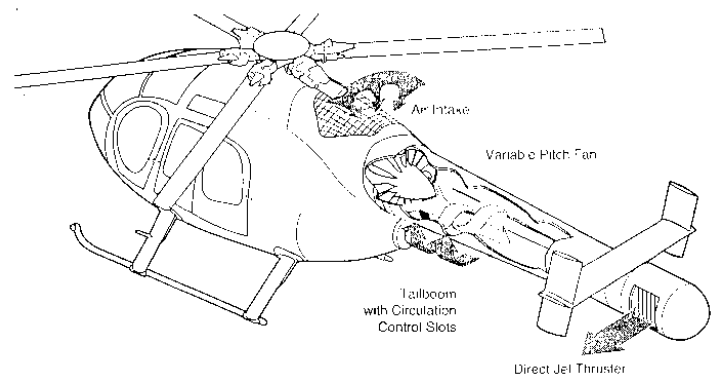
The City of Phoenix, Arizona, was one of the largest operators of the type, they had nine MD520N in the early days of the type, but they gave up in 2005 at the height of the spares crisis, in California Huntington Beach had three MD520N but recently they chose three conventional MD530F in their place.

The present largest operator of the MD520N is the Prince George's County Police in Maryland. The 1,500 officer PD responsible for 575 sq. mls and a population of 800,000. They officially launched the unit with the 520N in October 2000. Since then, they added two others of the same type. They had low hours and were being offered at an attractive price in 2008.

They have been happy with the 520N, it works well for their limited crime fighting aspirations.

At one time the largest operators of the MD900/902 were the police in the UK. With the coming of NPAS they were disposed of and re-emerged in Hungary, the latest major operator. There are many doubts that they fly much.

It will be interesting to see where the Belgian Police go with their ongoing task of replacing their fleet of Explorer's.

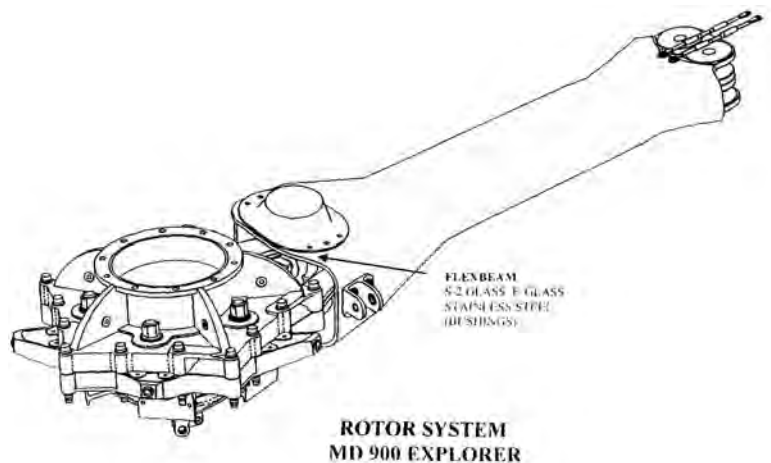




One of the Prince Georges County MD520N fleet. ©Jon Goldin

As part of MDHI bringing in new suppliers they signed new contracts with Unitech Composites and ACT Aerospace to improve production and spare parts availability for the MD 902, MD 520N, and MD 600N aircraft.

MDHI contracted with Unitech Composites of Hayden, Idaho, to supply pitch cases, flex beams, and main rotor blades for the MD 902. The pitch cases have been in production for several months, and MDHI already has over two dozen in stock. Flex beam production is well underway, with multiple test samples manufactured and inspected with NDI and destructive testing. MDHI expects flex beams to be in stock this summer. Additionally, all proven MD 902 rotor blade tooling is now located at Unitech’s facility and used for blade manufacturing. Once appropriate development articles and qualification testing is complete, MDHI expects rotor blades to be in stock in 2022.



The CMA is consulting on whether to launch a market investigation into Motorola’s Airwave network – the mobile radio network used by all emergency services in Great Britain.

The move follows concerns expressed about the impact of the dual role of Motorola as the owner of the company providing the current mobile radio network (Airwave Solutions) and as a key supplier in the roll-out of the planned new ‘Emergency Services Network’ (ESN).

The Government, the National Audit Office and the Public Accounts Committee have expressed concerns regarding Motorola’s position and incentives to deliver ESN, given the continuing high profitability of



the Airwave network. The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) is particularly concerned that Motorola could stand to make excess profits of about £1.2 billion in the period from 2020 to 2026 – a cost which will ultimately fall to the British taxpayer. This issue has arisen because **the planned replacement of the Airwave network with ESN has been delayed from 2019 to the end of 2026.**

The CMA's initial review of the evidence available indicates that the supply of the Airwave network in Great Britain is not working well, resulting in significant detriment to customers and the taxpayer. Given the nature and significance of the issues the CMA has identified, it has reached the initial view that further investigation is needed.

Andrea Coscelli, Chief Executive of the CMA, said: "At the moment, Motorola is the only provider of critical mobile radio network services used by our emergency service workers and is involved in both the current and future set-up. We're worried that the company could be cashing in on its position, while taxpayers are left to foot the bill.

"The CMA is minded to launch a market investigation to dig deeper into its concerns and will now consult with a range of stakeholders, including the Government, on its plans."

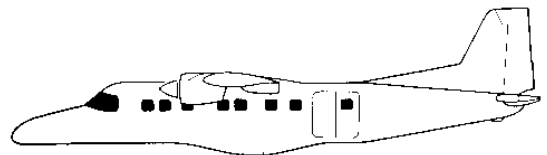
Motorola gained its dual role by purchasing Airwave in February 2016, two months after it had entered into a contract with the Government to provide software for ESN, intended to replace Airwave. The merger was cleared by the CMA, in part because of the expectation of the Government that the Airwave network would be shut down by 2019.

While the probe is still in early stages, the CMA has identified two potential solutions in its consultation that may, in principle, be available should a market investigation confirm its initial concerns: regulate Motorola's rate of return in relation to the Airwave network or require Motorola to sell the Airwave network. The CMA is required to consult before making a market investigation reference. Following its consultation, which is open until 2 September 2021, the CMA will decide whether to launch a market investigation.

U.K.-government-backed **ZeroAvia** has acquired a pair of Dornier 228 twin turboprops to use as test beds for its Hyflyer II development phase involving 600-kW hydrogen-electric powerplants. One of the 19-seat former regional airliners will be based at Kemble, U.K., and the second at ZeroAvia's U.S. location in Hollister, California. The 19-seat aircraft will have hydrogen fuel tanks designed to ultimately contain 100 kg of compressed gaseous hydrogen, providing an expected 500-mile range.

Hyflyer II follows up on the first R&D project, a 250-kW hydrogen fuel cell powertrain installed in a six-seat Piper Malibu. HyFlyer I achieved all its technical goals, according to ZeroAvia, though the aircraft was seriously damaged in an off airport landing on April 29.

The company also announced it has secured \$13 million in funding for its next phase—developing a hydrogen-electric powerplant for a 50+ seat airliner. Current funding for that project now totals \$37M.



GKN Aerospace is leading a Swedish national collaboration programme called H2JET, aiming to develop technical solutions for three important engine subsystems for H2-propulsion of medium range civil aircraft. The two-year project, which started this month, sees GKN Aerospace collaborate with the Swedish Energy Agency, Chalmers University of Technology, Lund University, KTH Royal Institute of Technology, University West, Research institutes of Sweden (RISE) and Oxeon.



Hydrogen is expected to play a key role in the decarbonisation strategy of aviation as it can power aircraft efficiently, leaving water as the only by-product. Power can be generated by either direct combustion, the focus of H2JET, or by generating onboard electrical power by use of a fuel cell, the focus of GKN Aerospace's 'H2GEAR' program launched earlier this year.

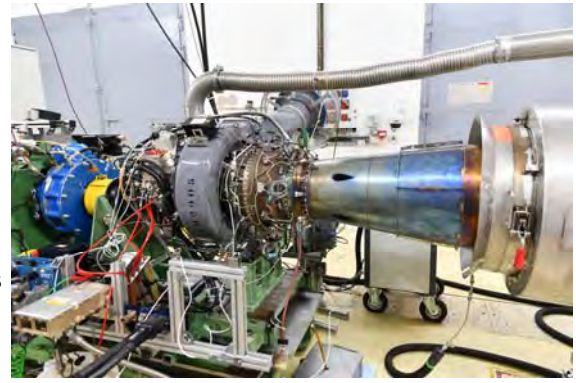
Whilst H2GEAR is exploring a liquid hydrogen propulsion system for sub-regional aircraft, H2JET will explore hydrogen combustion powered turboprop or turbofan engines for the single aisle market for potential entry into service on intra-European routes in 2035.



For the first time, **Safran Helicopter Engines** has run an Arrano engine using 38% of sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) at its Bordes plant in SW France. This biofuel was produced from used cooking oil. The ground run marks the first step of a strategy to deploy SAF in engine test cells at all Safran Helicopter Engines plants. By the end of the year, the manufacturer plans to use at least 10% SAF at all its French facilities.

This milestone comes two weeks after Safran Helicopter Engines marked the first flight of a rescue helicopter using biofuel. An Airbus H145 of ADAC Luftrettung operated its twin Arriel 2E turbines on a mixture of 40 % biofuel and conventional Jet-A1. Safran Helicopter Engines and ADAC have agreed to continue studying biofuel usage on a daily basis with a helicopter based at Cologne. In parallel the manufacturer plans to conduct similar tests with other helicopter operators.

Safran engines are already fully certified to operate on up to 50% sustainable fuel, including biofuel. The OEM's ambition is to obtain a 100% biofuel approval by 2023. Emitting much less carbon throughout their entire life-cycle, these fuels could help reduce aviation CO2 emissions by up to 80%.



SPAES GmbH & Co. KG has designed, manufactured and certified six (6) stowage cabinets for the stowage of pilot and crew baggage.

The stowage boxes were procured due to the lack of options for quickly stowing luggage and other equipment such as pilot helmets, headphones or the approach maps.

With a mechanical opening on the top side, the stowage cabinet has a volume of 60 litres and it is easily accessible with a quick opener. The material is made of fire-proof metal and allows safe storage for every mission. The rotatable mounting feet allows the installation in lateral and longitudinal direction along the seat rails.

Optionally, additional luggage or the UVC - ultraviolet circulation air disinfection system - can be mounted on the top side. The system is available for Airbus H145 and H135 helicopters.



Last month, three senators introduced the RE-TAIN GPS and Satellite Communications Act on Capitol Hill. If signed into law, the legislation would hold communications company **Ligado**, which won FCC approval to go ahead with its 5G cellular network, financially accountable for private and public sector costs caused by GPS interference from their surface-based telecommunications system.

AL-Sharqiya Aviation LLC (ASA), the first and only commercial helicopter operator in the Sultanate of Oman, announced last month that it will shortly take delivery of its first **Airbus H145** helicopter, leased from the Milestone Aviation Group Limited. Not only is this the first five-bladed Airbus H145 for ASA, but it is also the first to be delivered to a customer in the Middle East. The addition of the new helicopter will support ASA's fleet expansion and will enable the provision of reliable onshore and offshore passenger transport and Emergency Medical Aviation Services throughout the Sultanate of Oman.



After many years in the background it seems that Schiebel are getting somewhere with their Wankel engine powered single rotor craft. ©EMSA



The Spanish maritime safety and rescue body SASEMAR is operating the CAMCOPTER® S-100 for maritime surveillance over the coming months. The Remotely Piloted Aircraft System (RPAS) service is delivered by the **European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA)**.

Stationed in Finisterre in the northwest of Spain, the CAMCOPTER® S-100 supports the Spanish authorities in carrying out maritime traffic control, pollution prevention and fisheries protection.

The S-100 executes these various tasks equipped with an EO/IR camera gimbal, a Becker Avionics BD406 Emergency Beacon Locator and a Shine Micro Automatic Identification System (AIS) receiver. In the execution of Schiebel's contract with EMSA, the CAMCOPTER® S-100 provides simultaneous maritime surveillance services to several EU Member States. Most recently, the S-100 was operational in the United Kingdom, Romania, Estonia and Finland. In addition flights operating from France were mainly associated with detecting illegal sulphur levels from ships operating off La Manche [the English Channel].

Two Bear Air Rescue of Kalispell, Montana held an annual rescue hoist training session a few weeks ago and invited along Norwegian company Axnes AS to see their PNG Wireless Intercommunication System for pilots, Rescue Specialists and hoist operators in action. Two Bear operate in conjunction with the Flathead County Sheriff with a primary helicopter being a Bell 429.



©Axnes/Two Bear Air



Tempe, Arizona, USA based **Van Horn Aviation** completed a ground run of its newly-developed tail rotor assembly for the Airbus Helicopters H125/AS350. The new system features two individually-replaceable composite tail rotor blades attached to a VHA-designed titanium hub using self-lubricating spherical bearings. Since VHA's H125/AS350 tail rotor blades use the same NASA-designed laminar airfoil as the company's popular 206 series tail rotor blades, VHA engineers expect a similar increase in performance and decrease in overall noise signature compared to OEM blades. Flight testing will begin this summer with FAA certification estimated in 2022.



AS350 tail rotor ©Van Horn Aviation

Pilatus has incorporated numerous new features into Super Versatile Jets which come off the production line from this year onward. Many of these new features can be retrofitted in earlier serial number PC-24s. For PC-24 flight crews, Pilatus and Honeywell have continued to develop and refine the Advanced Cockpit Environment (ACE). A touch-screen avionics controller replaces the multi-function controller as standard equipment. The touch-screen controller was first introduced in the PC-12 NGX, and has proven to be very well liked for entering and editing flight plan data, changing radio frequencies, and controlling the weather radar. It features a slip-resistant design around the bezel for stability and input precision in turbulence. The PC-24's flight control system now incorporates Tactile Feedback in both roll and pitch to prevent unintended unusual attitudes. If the aircraft rolls through 51 degrees bank angle, roll limit protection will engage to bring the aircraft back to 31 degrees bank angle. If the PC-24 is predicted to exceed the Vmo/Mmo limits, the pitch servo will engage until the aircraft exits the potential overspeed condition. Tactile Feedback protection is provided even with the autopilot turned off, and can be manually overridden by the pilot with a quick-disconnect button.



PC-24 takes it rough ©Pilatus

The standard auto-throttle system also includes a new Automatic Speed Protection function. This function provides both under and over-speed protection by automatically engaging the auto-throttle to adjust power so that the aircraft always remains inside the entire speed envelope for all flight phases. Working in conjunction with the auto-throttle, the Williams FJ44-4A engine FADEC software has also been fine-tuned to reduce power oscillations in cruise and descent.

Improved safety

A new automatic yaw trim function further reduces flight crew workload during departure and climb phases. This auto-pilot mode is automatically activated when the yaw damper is engaged, and will attempt to hold the aircraft to zero sideslip. If one engine is inoperative or a large thrust asymmetry exists, the automatic yaw trim will attempt to maintain approximately ½ trapezoid indicated sideslip.

The Advanced Cockpit Environment also features the Pilot-Defined Visual Approach function. This approach mode allows the pilot in command to easily set up an autopilot and auto-throttle coupled visual approach to any runway, and precisely track a left-hand, right-hand, or straight-in pattern down to the runway threshold. This is a very useful feature for operations into smaller, remote airports which the PC-24 is designed to use. It increases safety at uncontrolled fields by allowing the pilot to keep attention focused outside the aircraft looking for other traffic.

The **Government of Quebec and the Government of Canada** are providing financial assistance of up to \$685M to companies Pratt & Whitney Canada, Bell Textron Canada, and CAE. The funding will support projects totalling \$2 billion in investments in Canada, including close to \$1.6 billion in Quebec. It will also create more than 1,000 jobs in the Quebec aerospace industry, and co-op placements for more than 6,200 students.

In the USA the **National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund (NLEOMF)** has released its Mid-Year Report of law enforcement officer fatalities. As the nationwide authority of line-of-duty deaths, NLEOMF releases reports each year that include officer fatality numbers and other statistics relevant to law enforcement.

This year's Mid-Year Report indicates a significant increase in officer deaths and could potentially be the deadliest year for law enforcement on record, if trends continue.

Unlike say Europe, they are more liberal with their interpretation of 'line-on-duty' deaths. Others would record them simply as 'in-serve' deaths.

So far in 2021, there have been 155 line-of-duty officer deaths. COVID-19 continues to be the number-one cause of death, reaching 71 officers so far this year. The report also notes that traffic fatalities are up 58%, with the leading cause being officers struck by vehicles, currently numbering 19 fatalities. This equals the entire number of struck-by fatalities in 2020.

Texas has the highest number of officer deaths at 25, followed by 15 federal agency deaths. Other states near the top of the list include Georgia (13 deaths), California (13 deaths), and Florida (10 deaths). Out of 155 line-of-duty death cases in 2021, a still large number of 33 officers were killed in circumstances that other would judge as the main criteria. This includes 28 gunfire cases, three beatings, and two stabbings.



Schweizer RSG, the current owner of the S300 production line, has announced that their first S300 has been issued a Certificate of Airworthiness, and will soon be delivered to a customer in the African country of Senegal. [check out Helihub for full details]

Do you know how many **CCTV cameras** there are there in London, or in other major cities around the world? While there have been attempts to estimate these numbers, systematic surveys of camera density are hard to come by. While some studies have sought to estimate the number of CCTV cameras installed in a city, only a few have identified their precise locations.

Researchers at Stanford University in California have used Google street view images and computer vision algorithms to count the number and density of cameras in 10 major US cities and six other large cities around the world.

The study found that Seoul in South Korea had the largest number of cameras per linear kilometre (0.95), while Seattle had the lowest with 0.07 cameras per kilometre. London – which has long been touted as the CCTV capital of the world – only came in around mid-table at 0.45, surprisingly behind cities such as Paris (0.76), Boston (0.63) and San Francisco (0.52). Though, in terms of sheer numbers, London was still estimated to have around 13,000 CCTV cameras, only behind Tokyo and Seoul.



©File image



The Polish Navy's first **AW101** achieved its first flight last month at the Leonardo site in Yeovil UK. The flight demonstrated functional checks of the main airframe systems as well as the control system, and engine-handling checks were taken throughout to monitor the speed range of the aircraft.

In April 2019, the company announced it would supply four AW101s and a comprehensive integrated logistics and training package to the

Polish Ministry of National Defence. The aircraft will significantly enhance the Polish Navy's helicopter capability. PZL-Swidnik, acts as the prime contractor and is responsible for the entire contract execution, and at Leonardo in Yeovil, the team assembles the aircraft. The AW101 will perform a range of missions for the Polish Navy including Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) and Combat Search and Rescue (CSAR).

Negotiations for the sale of **Piaggio Aerospace** are entering the final stage with the field of would-be buyers narrowed to a single bidder, the Italian airframer has confirmed. Those negotiations are expected to last about a month and result in an "irrevocable and binding offer."

The company originally received nineteen expressions of interest for the acquisition of the corporate assets of Piaggio Aero Industries and Piaggio Aviation, the two companies operating under the Piaggio Aerospace brand. Piaggio has not yet revealed the name of the remaining bidder.



Ready for the customer. The new tail boom for Pinal CSO. Left is the normal profile for a Huey derivative ©PAR/SA

StandardAero has delivered the industry's first UH-1H helicopter tailboom modified to be the lightest with the most heavy-lift strength to fly in the hottest and highest altitudes in the world. The first modification was delivered to launch customer, Pinal County, Arizona Sheriff's Department's helicopter fleet, last month.

To achieve this upgrade, the following major modifications were incorporated during tailboom refurbishment and paint, including the accompanying Supplemental Type Certificates (STCs):

- ⇒ StandardAero 212 Vertical Fin, Tail Rotor and Push-Pull anti-torque control system incorporated onto a UH-1H Helicopter (FAA STC SR00267SE)
- ⇒ StandardAero improved UH-1H tailboom longerons and tailboom skins for high torque and higher heat
- ⇒ BLR Aerospace LLC Fast Fin and Dual Strake (FAA STC SR01470SE)
- ⇒ Trinity Aviation Services Ltd. Carbon Fiber Driveshaft Cover (FAA STC SR04156NY)
- ⇒ Upgrade modifications to the UH-1H tailboom and airframe provide a number of operational benefits including improved hover-hold tasks, yaw control, high density altitude capability, reduced torque, reduced tail rotor power requirements and reduced fuel consumption.

The modifications are being provided in phases, from now through 2022. Additional airframe modifications are in works to provide increased cargo hook capacity to 5,000 lbs, external cargo load capacity and improved external gross weight limits.

The upgraded UH-1H Tailboom and new 212 Tail Rotor and Hub Assemblies with 212 drive train components were completed at StandardAero's Helicopter Airframe MRO facility. Additional airframe upgrades will be completed this September at the customer's facility in Arizona.

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ACCIDENTS AND INCIDENTS

29 March 2021 MD902 Explorer Air ambulance London Air Ambulance. The UK Airprox Board, which investigates close calls between various aircraft, delivered its finding based on an eyewitness account. A doctor at the London Royal Hospital who was standing on the rooftop heliport reported seeing a drone rise up to meet the incoming air ambulance, coming within several yards of the craft. The medic said that while the helicopter circled awaiting the departure of another air ambulance, the drone “orbited with them for a quarter turn,” and then “departed towards the south-east.” The height of the rooftop helipad suggests that the helicopter was about 500 metres above the ground when the incident took place. That means that in addition to violating hospital airspace and flying dangerously close to a passenger aircraft, the drone pilot broke rules limiting maximum flight altitude to 400 metres. [UKAB]

27 June Mil Mi-2 EW-164CC Belarusian emergencies ministry crash landed near Chderebasovo, Brest region on a forest surveying mission. Both occupants were unhurt.

28 June 2021 Eurocopter AS 350B3 Ecureuil PT-SUS Air ambulance of the Corpo de Bombeiros Militar de Minas Gerais [Fire Brigade] rolled over in an attempted landing at a fuel station 4 km north of Jequitaiá, Minas Gerais, Brazil. A video of the accident shows the helicopter approaching to land, starting a thick dust cloud in which it is lost to sight. When the dust clears the airframe is on its left side largely intact with its nose close to a substantial bush. No indication of a fire and no reports of significant injuries in the crew of four. The helicopter had been dispatched to assist a medical team in Jequitaiá, dealing with a patient with a heart attack.

28 June 2021 Bell 212 C-GYHQ Firefighting helicopter of Yellowhead Helicopters crashed near the community of Evansburg, 100km west of Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. The 49 years old pilot was fatally injured. The 175-hectare wildfire had been burning for nearly a week. The remote crash site is west of Highway 22 and north of Highway 16 in Yellowhead County. The location is not accessible by road. In the wake of this crash Transport Canada grounded four types of Bell helicopters. The cause of the grounding related to the alleged failure of a strap pin (also known as a TT strap) in the main rotor hub. One had sheared off during flight, which resulted in the detachment of the main rotor blade and main rotor head. It has been reported that the failed main rotor hub strap pin (TT) had only accumulated 20 hours of service. Although defective main rotor hub strap pins (TT) were only reported on Bell 212 helicopters, strap pins of the same part number can also be installed on Bell 204B, 205A-1 and 205B helicopters.



A typical TT strap. Illustrative only.

29 June 2021 Sikorsky MH-60T US Coast Guard. Air Station Cape Cod launched the helicopter on a search and rescue mission. One of the plexiglass emergency exit windows separated from the aircraft in the vicinity of P.A. Landers Inc. Sand & Gravel and Peter's Pond in Forestdale, Forestdale a village within the town of Sandwich in Massachusetts, United States.

2 July 2021 Eurocopter AS350B3 I-TNLD Vigili del Fuoco Province of Trento. The helicopter touched down very hard alongside a roadway at Trento, Terentino, Italy. Airframe remained upright but the impact resulted in massive structural damage including the severing the tail boom in two sections and extensive distortion of the cabin. No fire. Both occupants sustained minor injuries. [Ladige]

7 July 2021 Bell 212 N911KW Firefighting helicopter of Rogers Helicopters Inc. Bell operating from Dunsmuir Municipal-Mott Airport, California made an emergency landing into Lake Shastina, east of Weed, Siskiyou County, California and sank. The pilot was able to swim clear without injury. The contract helicopter was fighting the Lava Fire near Weed. It started by a lightning strike June 24 and had burned 25,002 acres by the time of the crash. [ASN]

11 July 2021 Airbus Helicopters AS365N3 EC-JDQ Servicio de Vigilancia Aduanera (Spanish Customs) operated by Eliance. Crashed into sea off Sotogrande beach, San Roque, Cádiz, Spain. while helicopter was involved in the pursuit of a rapid motor launch being used by traffickers at night. One crew member, the Customs sensor operator 61-year-old José Luis Domínguez Iborra, died in the crash and the two pilots survived and were rescued by a Customs vessel. The helicopter was salvaged capsized the same day.

25 July 2021 Cessna U206G Stationair 6 HK-2803. Light aircraft operated by Medical Services and with occupants including a pilot, doctor and patient called an emergency and went missing near Sonaña, Colombia. Subsequently found safe having landed in an unprepared field. [ASN]

27 July 2021 Cessna152 PNC-0261 Colombian National Police. Escuela de Aviación Policial Cessna crashed when landing at the José Celestino Mutis Airport in the municipality of San Sebastián de Mariquita (Tolima). The aircraft burned. The instructor pilot died in the crash and a trainee pilot survived. Preliminary information indicates that the aircraft was manned by the training pilot, Captain Ramiro Luna Tabares, 34, and by the student of the police pilot course, Second Lieutenant Estefanía Buitrago Herrera, 26. The latter was hospitalised with multiple injuries. [NP Colombia]

UNMANNED

Early in July the use of drones by private or non-government persons was banned in Srinagar, Kashmir, after an Indian military base in Jammu was attacked from the air. Srinagar, the summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir union territory (Jammu is the winter capital), in the mountains of **northern India**. A few days earlier the border district of Rajouri and Kathua issued similar orders banning the operation of drones and low flying objects in their territories.

Two drones dropped bombs at the Indian Air Force (IAF) station in Jammu, they have been reported as carrying a cocktail of explosive material, including RDX and Nitrate. One craft was bigger in size. It was aimed at infrastructure damage; the other was aimed at personnel with more splinters and ball-bearings. RDX is not available in India. It is assumed sourced from Pakistan. The drones involved are believed to be manufactured in China.

The police have stated that the attackers were the banned Lashkar-e-Taiba terrorists based in Pakistan. This is the first instance of them deploying drones to strike vital installations. Two airmen were injured. The ban covers the storage, sale and possession, use and transport of drones and similar kinds of Unmanned aerial vehicles in the territorial jurisdiction of District Srinagar. Persons already having the drone cameras/similar kind of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles in their possession have to surrender them to police. The attack has resulted in strict controls on government departments using drones for mapping, surveys and surveillance in "agricultural, environment conservation and disaster mitigation" sectors. They now have to inform the local police before undertaking any activity.

The Indian Air Force has now prioritised the deployment of anti-drone systems to Jammu. They have also spoken of being prepared to attack the craft in future but in the absence of electronic means of stopping the craft fear for the effect of gunfire on the surrounding population.

PEOPLE

John Bridge OBE DL, from Cambridgeshire and previously the Chief Executive of the Cambridgeshire Chambers of Commerce for 17 years, has been appointed as Magpas Air Ambulance's Chairman replacing Dr Nigel Brown.

John brings with him a wealth of business knowledge and experience and has been committed to driving the region's success throughout his 50-year career. In 1997 his achievements were recognised when he was awarded an OBE in Sir John Majors resignation honour's list and in October 2014, John was appointed as a Deputy Lieutenant to the HM Lord Lieutenant of Cambridgeshire.

John takes over the role from Dr Nigel Brown OBE, who ended his 10 years as Chairman of the local life-saving charity earlier this year in its 50th anniversary. During his time at Magpas Air Ambulance, Nigel led the charity to become the first air ambulance service in the region (and only second in the country) to provide 24/7 critical care as well as overseeing the introduction of a new state of the art helicopter.

John Bridge has joined the organisation at an important time for Magpas AA as they start work on plans for a purpose-built air base, headquarters and training centre at Alconbury Weald. [the former RAF Alconbury USAF base].

It seems there are moves in the senior management at NPAS in Wakefield . It is all about the promotion path (of course?) as individuals carve out their next rank. NPAS, reputedly the home of temporary senior officers has another small crop of them. T/ACC Scott Bisset, the Chief Operating Officer for NPAS is apparently off of a senior command course that will confirm his rank. He is to be replaced temporarily by a Superintendent from Nottinghamshire Police. To maintain her status she will be given the rank of T/Chief Superintendent. Clearly this officer will not be fully trained in a police aviation expert role that is to go in less than a year, which begs the question of who will be the T/Chief Operating Officer.

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

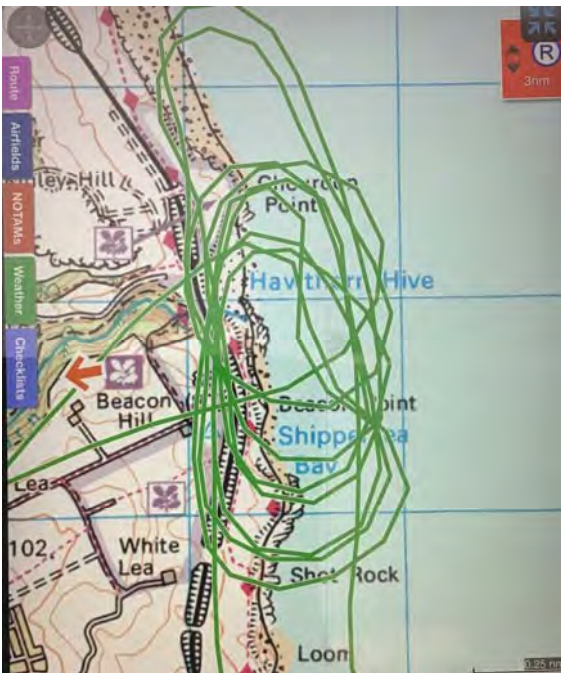
Dear Editor,

After reading the July edition of *'Police Aviation News'*, I'm delighted, once again, to be informed by the excellent coverage of topical subjects, including the demise of the UK's National Police Air Service (NPAS) and the ongoing concern for migrants entering the UK without permission after crossing the English Channel, one of the world's busiest shipping lanes, in small, sometimes very large, inflatable boats.

Search for missing persons

Nevertheless, I have to admit that I've struggled with David Howells most recent article, *'Aerial Searches and Change Management'*. I was anticipating a new, radical approach to using an aircraft to search for a missing person, but quickly realised that there wasn't anything that we weren't doing some 15 years ago when I was flying the BN Islander with the former North East Air Support Unit (NEASU). Moreover, I'm still doing the same with my own aircraft today, as a member of the UK's voluntary sector. Based on previous service with the Royal Air Force, hunting submarines, but also searching for persons missing at sea, as well as being a former police pilot, the modus operandi hasn't really changed at all. All the available information is evaluated and the lessons from the past are applied. The basic questions, *'What, Where and When'* are asked, and then answered, before trying very hard to be at the right place at the right time.

For example, when a local school teacher, Darren Blyth, 55 years was reported as missing at last light, at a local beauty spot, in Hawthorn Dene, County Durham, on Wednesday, 14 April 2021 the emergency services, police, HM Coastguard, the RNLi, 5 local mountain rescue teams, together with an RAF MRT for RAF Leeming in North Yorkshire, completed a very thorough search with 'boots on the ground', helicopters and drones in the air and lifeboats at sea. There were no sightings of the missing person.



This very large search reminded me of a very similar incident that had occurred in 2014 when another schoolteacher, from Durham City, was also reported as missing. His car was found later the next day in a car park a few miles away, on the coast at Blackhall Rocks. His body was recovered from a nearby beach some 14 days later. I presumed that because Mr Blyth hadn't been found in Hawthorn Dene after one of the biggest searches in the Northeast of England in recent years, he must have walked downhill, to where the dene, a tree covered valley, enters the sea at Hawthorn Hive, see attached map. The assumption was that if Mr Blyth had drowned then his body would, most probably, be deposited on the beach, close by, within 14 days, at low tide. In fact, the body of Mr Blyth was found at low tide, at Hawthorn Hive on the evening of Sunday, 25 May, by a member of the public, 11 days after his family had reported him as missing.

The aerial search for missing schoolteacher, Darren Blyth where Hawthorn Dene enters the sea, showing the track of the voluntary sector aircraft in green. ©AC

Exercise Northumberland

In 2017 the Northumberland based 'Centre for Search Research', together with Newcastle University, organised a search exercise in the Northumberland National Park which evaluated the use of manned aircraft, aeroplanes and helicopters, drones, a mountain rescue team and air scenting search dogs when searching for a missing person. This exercise was based on the much earlier air search exercise of 1987, organised by the Home Office Scientific Research & Development Branch, which led to the *'O'Donnell Theory'*, the cornerstone of police air search operations.

The results showed that whilst ground based search teams, including search dogs, can be 100% effective they are relatively slow, and they have to be transported to the search area. Likewise, drones of the type used by the police, typically the DJI Inspire, also have to be transported to the search area. Moreover, although they have some utility, particularly when searching a small, discrete area, the value of the drone, when searching for a missing person, is restricted by its limited range and frequent battery changes.

On the other hand, manned aircraft may be deployed over great distances. For Exercise Northumberland a Vans RV12 fixed wing deployed from Perth in Scotland whilst a Robinson R22 helicopter flew from its

base at Sywell Aerodrome in Northamptonshire. Manned aircraft, together with their observers, including the pilot, looking at the ground from their aerial vantage point, have the advantages of speed, height and reach; the first three 'Principles of Air Power'. Two other principles are agility and ubiquity. Moreover, although the value of an observer looking at the ground should never be underrated today's police aircraft also carry powerful electro-optical camera turrets and multi-function observer workstations.



National Police Air Service

With regard to NPAS, now with a replacement police air service in prospect, many will agree that overlaying a national air support service onto 43 individual police forces in England & Wales, together with their disparate needs, was never going to work, and it didn't! Setting aside the large metropolitan areas, London, Birmingham and Manchester, there are many other English and Welsh police forces that cover areas that are a mix of urban and rural environments. In this respect, we need to look no further than the Northeast of England and the former North East Air Support Unit (NEASU) for a very good model of a police air support unit; one unit with two aircraft, an aeroplane and a helicopter, based 35 miles apart, serving 3 police forces, Cleveland, Durham and Northumbria and covering an area of 3,000 square miles with a population of 2.6 million.

Although it may not have been fully appreciated at the time, this was a very good example of how police aircraft should be deployed for best effect. A regional unit with two bases and local police officers interacting with their colleagues on the ground and on the water (Northumbria Police has a marine craft unit), monitoring local police radio channels and often getting airborne before the request for air support had been received! Speed often precedes success in police air support operations and, in the case of a missing person, a 'hasty search' with limited information should not be discounted, using the aircraft to clear open ground, in a rural setting, very quickly.

The UK's Air Ambulance Service

Another good example of an emergency service with aircraft, using the regional model, rather than the national model, is the UK's air ambulance service with 19 individual air ambulance charities operating a fleet of 39 helicopters, inclusive of spare airframes, from 33 bases in England & Wales; NPAS has just 14 bases in England & Wales. This in turn begs the question that if the UK can support a comprehensive air ambulance service with charity why did the National Police Air Service, with government funding, fail? For many the answer is very simple, and very obvious. Police air support in the UK worked when it was based on a regional model, but with a national model, it doesn't. It's time to change back to a regional police air support service, and quickly too, many will agree.



James A Cowan MBE
Squadron Leader Royal Air Force (Ret' d)

MOVE ALONG THERE

Just a short period of getting the heart racing on July 1 when a giant airship appeared to be patrolling the English Channel and therefore assumed to be an additional resource for Border Force UK. The government promised changes. This might be it.

The hopes were quickly dashed when after its 'patrol' line close to the coast between Dover and the Solent was exchanged for an inland route cut south of London and returning to the coast at Sandwich. The starting and returning point in both cases was Calais. The purpose apparently advertising Good Year tyres.

We can only dream, and those dreams were dashed when the UK Government revealed that the promised dreams were simply exporting some few millions of pounds to France.

The media of course was confused and ignorant [tell me about it]. The airship flew over Worthing and the local news hounds grasped the story...showing two images of the craft. The 'then' image from the dusty files in the office and 'now' being captured on the beach by local Eddie Mitchell. They were two very different craft of course. The then being a small craft and the now being a very much larger, 75-metre-long semi-rigid Zeppelin NT D-LZFN. Simply because both carried a similar Good Year advertising logo, they deduced that the Zeppelin made its first trip to England in 1972 and has covered the 1980 FA Cup Final at Wembley, Live Aid in 1985, and two royal weddings. The Zeppelin is a 1997 design, it was not even built then.

Zeppelin has been working with Goodyear since 2011 after the company gave up operating its own famous non-rigid GZ-20 blimps in the USA. Goodyear placed an order for three Zeppelin NT LZ N07-101 models with plans to commence operation in January 2014. Seven NT have been built three operating in the USA and three in Europe.

Having visited anew the UK Air Accident Investigation Branch reports I note that for some time they have wisely set aside the reports on drones whacking into inanimate objects into very short mentions. With COVID shutting down drone flights it has been quiet of late but now with flying starting again it seems that these pesky craft are falling from the sky like confetti. The report listed 19 commercial drones coming to grief in a three-month period. If that is the number of commercial failures, we may soon have to wear helmets let along face masks simply to go shopping.



ADVANCING PUBLIC SAFETY AVIATION

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Among the crop in July was a police air accident dating back to May 6 this year. A DJI M300 RTK. being operated in the hours of darkness in support of a police operation in New Maldon Surrey. It seems that whilst manoeuvring to land it collided with some unseen telephone wires causing it to fall to the ground and collided with a parked car. All propeller blades, a propeller arm, leg and camera mount were broken in the accident. We can only hope the telephone line still worked and no-one noticed the scratch on the car. It is amazing how these telephone lines suddenly appear from nowhere! In the same mini bulletin, another drone was making a video about a car, got too close and collided with it and then was despatched by the same car driving over the wreck. Some sort of justice I reckon.

Now a hypothetical question for senior police officers across the land. If you were in an organisation that was very short of financial resources and you had 'inadvertently' invested a scarce £50M in setting up a four aircraft air operation that was expensive but has been proven to work why would you now seek to sell them off for peanuts?



EVENTS



New Orleans flight line ©Bryan Smith



As this edition goes to press the Annual **APSCON 2021** is winding to a close in New Orleans, Louisiana in the deep south of the USA [Event dates July 26 - 31, 2021] Although it was thanks to Covid a more domestic event than usual at least it made an appearance. The organisers reported that all Covid-19 restrictions were lifted in time for the event – for the fully vaccinated at least.

Various reports from the exhibitors have been included in this edition with Metro Aviation being very upbeat after a long delayed return to conventions, beginning with the Airborne Public Safety Convention in New Orleans.

Metro displayed the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office Airbus H125, a mission-ready aircraft equipped with a Goodrich electric-powered rescue hoist, LoJack system integration for the recovery of stolen vehi-

cles, and NVG-compatible avionics. What did we miss? Well not everyone missed it of course, **PAVCon Europe** was there in the form of US based APSA members who attend and a surprise was that there was a European member lurking there too. He was there on other business but the exhibitors were asking Harald about next year in Austria June 2022. More PAVCon at APSA next year—Reno I believe.

Metro Aviation has an impressive roster of law enforcement clients including Hillsborough County, Massachusetts State Police, City of Tulsa Police Department, Texas DPS, and more. The team at Metro’s completion centre in Shreveport, Louisiana has built a reputation for clean, streamlined installations and an easy completion process covering a range of Emergency Services airframes.

Metro invited all attendees to their booth for a taste of New Orleans with events and an open bar, coffee, cold beer and hot pretzels.

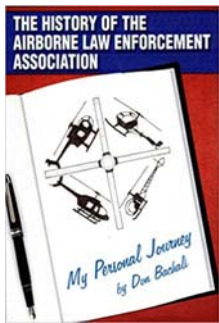
MDHI invited APSCON attendees to an evening social gathering at the Barcadia New Orleans. The event included drinks, hors d’oeuvres, and an overdue opportunity for attendees to reconnect, network, and celebrate.

MDHI also hosted a book signing by ALE pioneer Don Bachali in the MDHI booth. The book, *History of Airborne Law Enforcement Association – My Personal Journey* tells the story of how Bachali served on the Hughes Helicopters sales team that helped establish the first 24-hour aerial patrol program in a large city, Kansas City, Missouri in 1968. Two years later he worked with the original members of the ALEA when the organization was founded. From Hughes Helicopters to McDonnell Douglas Helicopters, then on to a consulting career supporting law enforcement in their airborne operations, Bachali’s long career helped shape the foundation of today’s US ALE community.

MDHI sponsors the ASPA’s Safety Award, details next month.

It appears that the log jam of non-events may be clearing, perhaps not in Europe in any great way at the moment but we may see movement from September.

There is the 2-3 September 2021. DRF Luftrettung HHO Symposium from 2nd- 3rd September 2021 at Karlsruhe / Baden-Baden Airport (Germany) See page 16 for some details on that.



THE FACILITIES EVENT

7-9 SEPTEMBER 2021

NEC BIRMINGHAM UK

THE SECURITY EVENT

7-9 SEPTEMBER 2021

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THE HEALTH & SAFETY EVENT

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THE FIRE SAFETY EVENT

7-9 SEPTEMBER 2021

NEC BIRMINGHAM UK

THE EMERGENCY SERVICES SHOW

HALL 5 | NEC | BIRMINGHAM | 7-8 SEPTEMBER 2021

The multiple event previously known only as the Emergency Services Show at the NEC Birmingham looks to be on from 7-9 September. See the adverts on page 40.

The **Emergency Services Show** at Hall 5, is the UK's leading annual showcase of the blue light sector, featuring over 450 exhibitors, live demonstrations, unique learning opportunities and unrivalled networking. The two-day event (the other events are three days) brings together all disciplines from the emergency services sector to discover innovative technology and operational solutions, share their experiences and unite in their collaborative approach to public safety. The 2021 Show 2021 will be co-located with **The Fire Safety Event, The Health & Safety Event, The Security Event & The Facilities Event**, creating the UK's largest event dedicated to the protection of people. All have been stricken by cancellations and rescheduling. Whether this Covid driven grouping happens again time will tell. Organised by Broden Media Ltd., Robert Denholm House, Bletchingley Road, Nutfield, Surrey, RH1 4HW <https://www.emergencyuk.com/>

Clarion Events Defence and Security have announced that the police and security orientated **Counter Terror Expo (CTX) and Forensics Expo Europe (FEE)** are scheduled and take place alongside the nominally military event **DSEI** at ExCel London on 14 – 16th September 2021. DSEI is on track to deliver the event's most comprehensive iteration to date, with both returning key accounts and first-time exhibitor numbers reflecting the industry's commitment to a return to live events. As the UK's leading networking event for security professionals from industry, infrastructure, government and policing, CTX attracts attendees and exhibitors from across Europe, all of whom will have the opportunity to seek counter-terror business synergies with a wider pool of stakeholders attending DSEI across the Land, Naval, Aerospace, Joint, and Security domains. <https://www.dsei.co.uk/>


Later this month is **World Helicopter Day 2021**, seek out events across your region on Sunday 15 Aug. This is its seventh year. #worldhelicopterday hashtag

Another one to look forward to is the 22nd Edition of the 2021 **Milipol** to be held in November at PARIS-NORD VILLEPINTE . Technology and innovation for Homeland Security and Safety. www.milipol.com #



FORENSICS EUROPE EXPO

14-16 September 2021
ExCeL London



DSEI

14-17 SEPTEMBER 2021
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PUBLIC SAFETY DRONE EXPO 2021

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