

Police Aviation News

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LAW ENFORCEMENT

IRELAND

GARDA: Although it is known that the GASU will also procure an additional helicopter, increasing the unit's already established fleet to three the contract has yet to be signed and the type confirmed.

Initial reports last January suggested that the fleet upgrade would be a new fixed wing and a new helicopter, no details of the rotary wing type were released. The new fixed-wing aircraft is scheduled to enter operational service in 2024 and the rotary wing in 2025.

Based on the initial information it was suggested that the EC135 fleet was being expanded but more recent intelligence suggests that the new type will be the Airbus Helicopters H145.

OMAN

ROYAL OMAN POLICE: On 14 June, Leonardo and the Royal Oman Police (ROP) celebrated the achievement of 20,000 flight hours accrued by the ROP's AW139 fleet of 11 airframes. The landmark signifies the continued success of the AW139 since its certification 20 years ago, with more than 1,100 units delivered to date and 3.7M flight hours logged by the global fleet. The ROP fleet includes both AW139 and AW109 Power types, which are committed to serve the national community by performing a wide range of extremely challenging missions.



Royal Oman Police AW139 in action. PR shot issued by the ROPP

The current leader of the operation - Colonel Pilot Bader Al Siyabi of the Directorate General of Police – has been assessing how the police force, established in 1970 by Sultan Qaboos bin Said Al Said, has

COVER IMAGE: Last month NPAS continued its TFO training programme in the South East, operating from the facility at North Weald. Several images have been issued relating to this activity, including this of the front seat observer. See also last month's issue page 5 and the rear page of this issue.

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fares over the last 53 years, based on the concept of a modern and efficient police service, the air unit was set up a few years later, initially equipped with types operated by the military.

On 9 September 1974, His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said Al Said, the Supreme Commander of the Police, issued a royal decree to establish the Police Aviation Directorate, initially named the Police Aviation Wing, to be attached to the private royal airport. After one year, the number of aircraft in the police fleet rose to seven, helicopters were mainly Bell, but they were supplemented by Pilatus, DHC and other fixed wing types. The early years relied heavily on Ex-Pat pilots but evolved to become a wholly Omani operation.

By 2000 the ROP helicopter fleet was ageing and sought the best helicopters available. Leonardo was selected and two types of helicopters were chosen: the AW109 Power and the AW139. In 2005, the ROP received the first AW109 Power and in 2007, the first AW139 was received.

The typical missions carried out by the AW139 helicopters include aerial surveillance, where the helicopters assist in detecting criminal activities, illegal border crossings, and suspicious movements of people and SAR, in the challenging terrain of Oman. The country has some extremely mountainous terrain. Particular missions, such as firefighting in areas that are inaccessible to traditional firefighting equipment are a prime role.

The helicopters are equipped with advanced SAR systems and can be deployed to locate missing people, assist in medical evacuations, and provide support during cyclones and other adverse weather events.

The AW139 is deployed for VIP Transport, providing a secure and efficient mode of transportation for high-ranking officials, including members of the royal family or government authorities.

SENEGAL

AIR AND BORDER POLICE: The Ambassador of the European Union (EU) in Senegal, Mr. Jean-Marc PISANI has officially made available to the National Police, a building to house the Directorate of Air and Border Police (DPAF).

The inauguration ceremony, chaired by the Minister of the Interior, Mr. Antoine Félix Abdoulaye DIOME and the Ambassador of the European Union, took place on August 04, 2023, at the Abdou DIASSE camp, in Dakar. The modern building will house the DPAF headquarters and the units of the National Division for Combating Migrant Smuggling and Similar Practices (DNLT).

The European project, called 'Joint Operational Partnership', which supported the construction of the building, was financed



The new EU financed police building.

by the EU for an amount of 9 million euros, or 5,850,000,000 CFA francs, over a period of 3 years. Implemented by CIVIPOL, operator of the French Ministry of the Interior, in partnership with FIIAPP, the Spanish cooperation agency, the project came to an end at the end of July 2023.

The objective of this project was to strengthen the capacities of the Senegalese security forces in their fight against criminal networks specializing in the smuggling of migrants and human trafficking.

Ed: Senegal has no independent air support but has limited access to military aircraft. As recently as two years ago they were operating a former Belgian Gendarmerie National Britten-Norman BN-2T G-05/2146. In 2000 G-05 had an unfortunate accident at Beauvechain Airport, when two parked planes collided and caught fire. The Islander was rebuilt though and went to Senegal as 6V-AHW.

UNITED KINGDOM

All remains quiet on the England and Wales police aviation front – NPAS in other words – as the number of days after the recent request for proposals to buy new helicopters grow ever greater. It is fair to say that not a great deal is happening and the many hours that industry spent on putting their bids together are going to be out of date and therefore largely wasted.

We can be pretty sure that in terms of news, NPAS is not going to deliver any time soon, the nearest they have approached true news was to be the order for new helicopters – first London then the main fleet – but both of those appear firmly put on ice. The nearest that story got to sensation was when it ended up in court through NPAS trying to delete the Bell 429 from the competition on grounds that were unacceptable to the High Court in London. That would have left just one in the competition for London. We can perhaps surmise that the choice is between the Bell 429 and the H135 but as nothing is happening it is all an illusion.



There seems to be no master of ceremonies for the new fleet, although there still seems to be movement in the background as NPAS seek to get the fixed wing out of Leeds Bradford into East Midlands. Perhaps the warnings that the airport has challenging crosswinds have come to the fore. Meanwhile major servicing on the fixed wing seems to have settled down to regularly sending an airframe down to Hurn on the south coast, one of the very basic cost savers that basing the whole operation at Doncaster was supposed to achieve. Clearly the £2.5M hangar at Doncaster is being viewed as a lost cause. The best future for that maybe sale or rental income when and if the airport there reopens.

Individuals who might have the knowledge of the “historically correct” way to operate a police aviation unit have been and gone, both retired from senior positions in what went before and now retiring from similar positions in the decade old NPAS. There is virtually no one left of the old brigade and that may be a good thing. The new people have no real experience of the supposed advantages of the old way of working, it is now just the ramblings of long departed old men. It is the aviation equivalent of the general swell of complaint that there is a massive difference between the long lamented “Bobbies on bicycles two by two” in an attempt to deter the causes of crime and 2-3 officers turning up after the event to sort out the aftermath. It is still achievable, but it is largely consigned to history.



There is no money of course – the potential central government budget for new helicopters is being swallowed up by the Home Office migrants funding of the French cops. For which they tell me they are truly grateful but puzzled as to why all their daring deeds are not being promoted by the Brits at every turn. What they have spent on the migrant problem could have fully reequipped NPAS several times over.

Whatever happens NPAS will need to operate what aircraft it can. Where it goes wrong operationally is that the operator still expects to get 1,000 hours a year out of elderly airframes simply because they used to average similar numbers from a more youthful fleet. It simply does not happen. If you look at most operators they aim at an annual use of 200-400 hours an airframe, lower expectations per airframe and often a larger fleet. German police for instance utilise their aircraft around 400 hours each year over 10 years and

sell/exchange the fleet with little more than 4,000 hours on them. There is not much of a market for EC135s with 15-20,000 hours on them – nor for EO/IR sensors that are pushing 20 years old. The latter are not as technically efficient as they were when they were introduced, and they too suffer from growing reliability issues.

In the wider market some US units use far older aircraft, some Bell 206 in police use have had 17,000 hours on them and the former military OH-58s are also old. The point is that there is no expectation of massive annual flight hours from each airframe, the units usually possess 2-3 airframes to operate one.

NORTHERN IRELAND: The Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) has apologised for the self-inflicted security breach after it inadvertently published fairly detailed information on its staff members in response to a Freedom of Information (FOI) request last month.

The breach involved the surname, initials, the rank or grade, the work location and departments of all PSNI staff, but did not involve the officers' and civilians' private addresses. It is known to have fallen into the hands of dissidents.

It also reveals members of the organised crime unit, intelligence officers stationed at ports and airports, officers in the surveillance unit and almost 40 PSNI staff based at MI5's headquarters in Holywood. [Belfast Telegraph]

Ed: This oversight might have passed by without any great turmoil if it had related to almost any mainland police organisation in the United Kingdom. In the case of the PSNI though it points towards great dangers. Threats to police officers in the north of Ireland are nothing new of course, back in 1965 I was in training school in London with an anonymous gentleman recently withdrawn from the then Royal Ulster Constabulary for his own safety. His short course was simply to add local London laws to his already extensive police experience. This was years before 'The Troubles' even started. As we know, many years later, the US Government brokered the Good Friday Agreement which brought a sort of peace to the province. Very much a delusion in the minds of Presidents and politicians of course – hence the very real worry over this leak.

Although he will not have been directly involved in the clerical error, there are calls for the resignation of the Chief Constable of the PSNI, Simon Byrne, and no doubt some of his former colleagues in the Cheshire Constabulary will take a dark pleasure in that. Back in the day (2017) Simon Byrne was suspended by



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Cheshire Police for allegedly bullying his staff. He was cleared the following year after it was judged it was a flawed investigation. The period of suspension had a disjuncting effect on other areas of policing as he was also the Aviation Lead for the Police Chiefs Council at the time. Anyway, he ducked the ultimate on that occasion so it will be interesting to see whether he falls on his sword this time.

UNITED STATES

CALIFORNIA: San Diego is spending \$18M on three new Airbus Helicopters H125 helicopters. They replace an earlier fleet of three similar AS350B3 helicopters acquired in 2005.

The police say the large expenditure on new helicopters is warranted because maintenance costs have been sharply rising for its fleet of four helicopters, which include the three bought in 2005 that will be replaced and one H125 purchased in 2020.

Six years ago, the city commissioned a report to evaluate its two aviation units — police and fire — and in 2019 signed a deal with Airbus to purchase four new H125 helicopters to replace the SDPD's fleet. The timing of that deal would have seen the new airframes entering service around now, but the pandemic and other world events paused the purchase.

The older 2004 models are often out of commission for long stretches during maintenance. The City Council unanimously approved the purchase of the new helicopters on August 1. [San Diego Union-Tribune]

Ed: This is the San Diego Police Department based in San Diego. There is also a San Diego Sheriff's Department that operates nine helicopters out of Gillespie Field, El Cajon. Their fleet utilises the Bell 407 GXi, MD500 with a Bell 412EPX due to replace an in-service Huey and be their first twin engine helicopter.



San Diego law enforcement line up including AS350, Bell 407 and a Fire Department Huey.

AIR AMBULANCE

UNITED KINGDOM

DEVON: TheTrust are looking for a new pilot. They are seeking to recruit a TRE (Type Rating Examiner) qualified HEMS pilot to join their Flight Operations Team. The salary band is £84,500 - £86,500 pa., for a 37-hour week. DAAT bases are at the joint DAAT/NPAS base at Exeter Airport and at Eaglescott in the north of the county.

The candidate needs to be an experienced TRE on H145 or EC135, will have experience within HEMS or similar, and hold a UK CAA APTL (H)/CPL (H). The ideal candidate will have a total of 2000+ flying hours, and a minimum of 1000 hours PIC and 150 hours night with NVIS experience.

Finding someone with all of the right qualifications in place, and wishing to move jobs, may prove difficult



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so the Trust has stated that Line Pilot's qualified and current on EC135 and/or H145 but not qualified as TRE, can apply in anticipation of future opportunities.

The closing date for applications was late August.

UNITED STATES

NEW YORK: The Town of Western has been chosen as the new base for LifeNet emergency medical helicopters, becoming part of a network of landing sites across New York state. LifeNet will join Mercy Flight helicopters in providing fast-traveling emergency care for all of Central New York.

The new landing pad, hangar and 24/7 living quarters will be built alongside the Volunteer Fire Company of Western on Route 46.

Air Methods, the company behind LifeNet, approached local officials in January about using the location. The intervening months have seen taking the plans through the town's planning process, and they applied for the building permit early in August.



The company will build a helicopter pad for landings and take-offs, a hangar to house the aircraft and living quarters for the flight crew with groundbreaking due to have already taken place. Construction should be completed by November as "LifeNet 7-14." Nearby bases include bases in Johnstown, Sidney, Potsdam and Watertown. The crews that will work from Western are currently operating in Watertown. [Rome Sentinel]

WEST COAST: Paradigm Aerospace Corporation (PAC) International recently delivered an upgraded Airbus EC135P2+ for Life Flight Network. PAC removed the aircraft's leather corporate VIP interior and factory avionics and installed a complete Metro Aviation medical interior and Garmin GTN 650/750 Single Pilot IFR Avionics suite. The interior and exterior of the aircraft were also completely repainted to match the Life Flight Network fleet.

Life Flight Network is a not-for-profit patient transport service providing helicopter, fixed-wing, and ground ambulance transport throughout Idaho, Montana, Oregon and Washington. For over 45 years, Life Flight Network has provided award-winning service and support to patients, hospitals, and EMS, ensuring all patients receive the highest quality care.

PAC International is a subsidiary of Metro Aviation, Inc. N219GD is a 2007 EC135P2+ c/n 0534 re-registered in February this year. It was formerly in use as an executive transport with General Aviation Services in Wilmington, Delaware and when on sale earlier this year was listed as having a total airframe flight time of 352 hours.



FIRE

The increasing ferocity of wildfires grabbed the headlines in late July and into August, affecting most parts of the world and in particular the northern hemisphere. In Europe it was Spain, Portugal and Greece but in the United States all the usual fires were overshadowed by one fire that destroyed Lahaina in Hawaii. It was no giant but it was intense, concentrated at one end of the island and overcame the civil defence processes put in place to cover normal circumstances. The outcome was a disaster that appears to have taken a thousand lives overnight.

And if someone mentioned 'Global Warming' once they said it several times. The message is apparently getting through but perhaps the self-righteous know-it-all's are becoming something of a bore right now. Perhaps all we need to know from the know-all's now is what the preferred pronouns are for killer wildfires.

Wildfires have been happening for hundreds of years, they are nature's way of cleaning out and sterilising the planet. It only becomes a problem where there is an interface between man and fire, unfortunately the human population like living among the trees and is growing at such a rate that pain will be experienced from time to time. Most wildfires in remote areas, caused by natural ignition like lightning strikes burn unreported by anyone.

All this does not devalue the devastation wrought on Hawaii, the loss of life is unprecedented for a mere wildfire and takes it into the realms of an earthquake or tsunami where loss of life is expected to be high. Meanwhile the official difference between the missing and the confirmed dead rises only slowly. No one expects the missing thousand to emerge from the scenes of eradicated buildings and devastation anytime soon.

Governments are judged on their response to such disasters and it's fair to say that (once again) the US



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Government has been seen to be slow to react to the eradication by fire of a historic town of Lāhainā on the Hawaiian island of Maui. Rightly or wrongly, the headline getters have been private people with helicopter companies donating rotary craft to help out and transporting relief supplies arriving at Maui's Kahului Airport, which was undamaged by the conflagration. The military and emergency services were there but the accolades were aimed at general aviation rather than government. There are probably good logistical reasons for this but in the end the public perception is what shows up in the headlines and can be reflected in the ballot box.

The local commercial tour operators such as Air Maui, Blue Hawaiian Rainbow Helicopters assisting assets of the Hawaiian Army National Guard, Coast Guard Air Station Barbers Point. Bambi buckets swinging below tourist helicopters is a rare sight.

President Joe Biden was criticized for his response to the Hawaii wildfires as he appeared to make some dismissive remarks and has been slow to consider any plans to visit the beleaguered island state.



PA Image of the devastation at Lahaina

Early in the aftermath, the president was repeatedly asked by reporters about the devastating fires which tore through Maui to no avail. There was pressure for the President to visit but it was being resisted. In contrast the Governor of Hawaii, Josh Green and other state lawmakers have praised the president for the speed with which he deployed FEMA resources to the state. It is all about perception, having a President visit brings with it all sorts of negative security aspects, closing air space, airports and roads needed to undertake rescue efforts at a time when such things are better unhindered. The logistics involved in supporting a Presidential visit do not really fit into a disaster recovery scenario at the best of times. Eventually he made that visit of course but for some the reputational damage had been done.

PORTUGAL

AIR FORCE: US helicopter modification specialist Arista Aviation Services has performed the first flight of an upgraded Sikorsky UH-60 Black Hawk that will eventually be delivered to the Portuguese air force. Lasting for around 30min, the sortie took place from Enterprise Municipal airport in Alabama.

The Portuguese air force says the acceptance process for the helicopter, tail number 29801, will begin this month (September). Currently bearing the US civil registration N669JH, records show that it is a 1989-built A-model UH-60 divested by the US Army in 2018. A second helicopter, 29802, is in the final stage of the modification process with its first flight scheduled later this month.

SEARCH & RESCUE

Early August demonstrated something of a negative vibe in the industry that despite all the best efforts of the authorities many lives were lost at sea. It may be that the lives were already being lost in large numbers, but wider society was not aware. The main focus was the European migrant traffic but across the world the population of the Third World again showed themselves as the unfortunate 'stars' of death, destruction or misadventure.

CANARY ISLANDS

Four would be migrants setting off for Europe found themselves all at sea. The four Nigerians had their eyes set on a short free trip from the west African coast to the Canary Islands or mainland Europe, but the stowaways picked the wrong vessel and ended up in Brazil.

The four stowaways were rescued after spending two weeks in the tiny space above the rudder of a cargo ship Ken Wave out of Monrovia as it travelled 3,500 miles of ocean from their home country west to Brazil rather than north to Europe.

They had food and water enough for just ten days but were forced to survive on sea water for the unexpectedly long journey. They were lucky, elsewhere in the same oceanic region an empty boat was found in the middle of August less its presumed 60 would be migrants.

MEDITERRANEAN

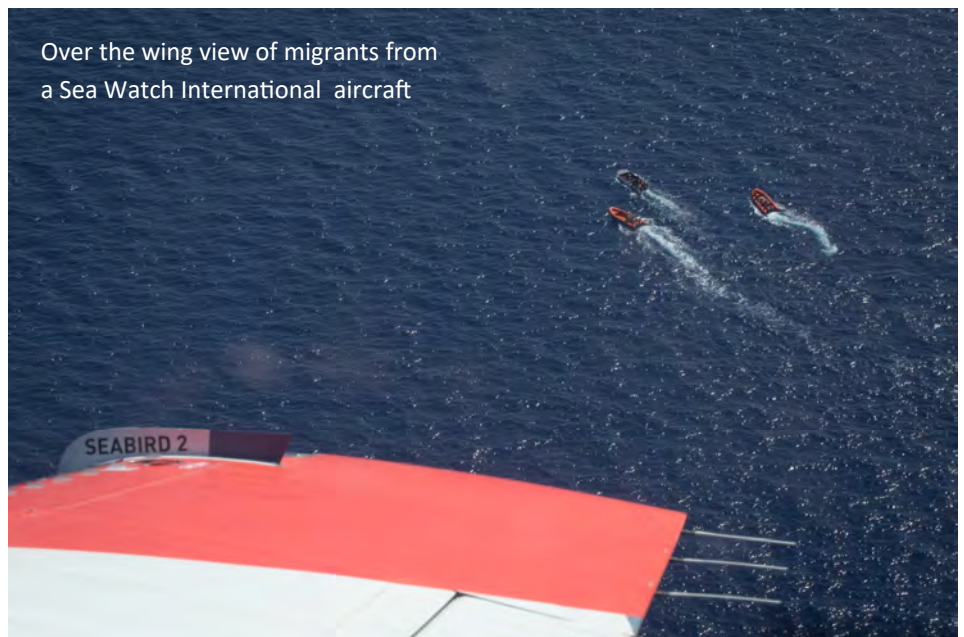
Much is made within these pages of the thousands of would-be migrants crossing the English Channel but the northern coast of Africa and the area around Greece are by far busier in terms of sheer numbers attempting the journey and apparently losing their lives in the attempts. Would be migrants getting to the English Channel have already probably faced multiple, and far more daunting, land and sea journeys.

Over the English Channel there is a fleet of aircraft, both manned and unmanned, observing the would-be small boat travelers, that brings some degree of safety in numbers. The aerial resources over the Mediterranean are meagre in comparison and supplemented by charity surveillance flights.

The recent loss of the boat off Greece where around 750 men, women and children were said to be onboard the fishing boat before it capsized and sank 45 miles off southern Greece sent tremors through the industry. The fishing boat overloaded with migrants went down killing at least 78 people but left hundreds unaccounted for. Often the evidence that anyone has died at sea in unworthy boats is just some poignant flotsam bobbing on the waves. The rescue of a few people here and 50 people there is to be lauded but should be set against the 'missing' – no one even recalls that they set sail, and no one is expecting them to arrive.

One of the charities in the region, Berlin based Sea Watch International, operates boats and two light twin aircraft mainly around the Italian island of Lampedusa. They find the boats in trouble and call-in help from the FRONTEX nations and the EU sponsored Libyan Coast Guard – not always with agreeable results. The charity sees instances where the Libyan's pick up 'those in peril' and return them to Libya – an activity that the charity considers illegal. They say that over 56,000 people were illegally taken back to North Africa.

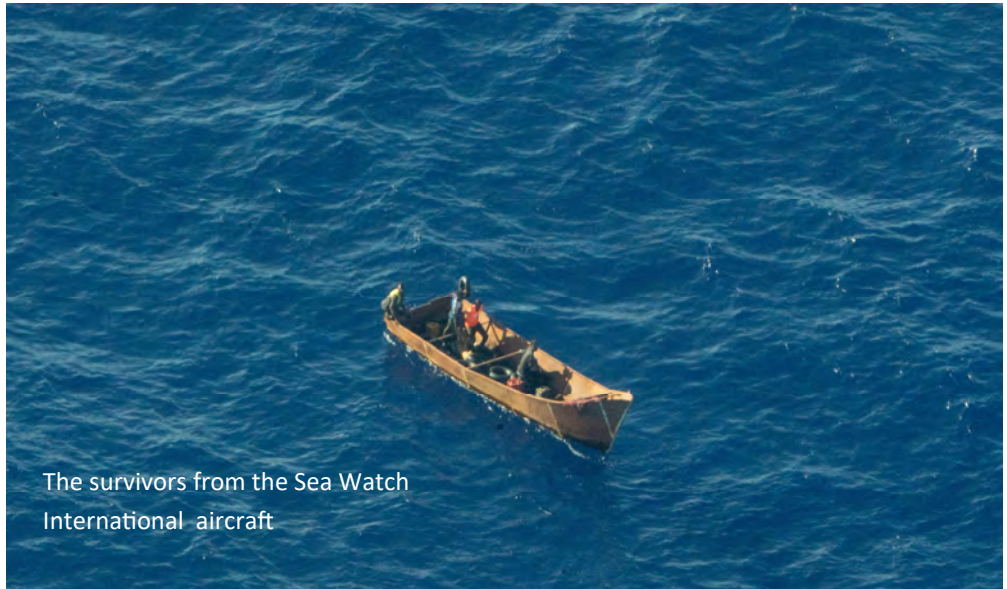
Over the wing view of migrants from a Sea Watch International aircraft



In a recent incident early last month at least 41 people, including children, died in the shipwreck off the island of Lampedusa. A 20ft boat had set off from Sfax in Tunisia with 45 people onboard, including three children, but it ran into trouble only six hours after departing when a huge wave slammed into the vessel. The ship began to take on water as soon as it reached the open sea.

Only 15 migrants were wearing lifejackets, although this seems to have failed to save their lives. Four survivors - a 13-year-old boy, two men and a woman - floated on inner tubes and life-jackets before finding another empty boat in which they spent several days drifting in the water before they were finally rescued. No comment has been made as to where the people who were in the empty boat went.

The images come from Sea Watch and show the survivors in their adopted boat waving for help as rescuers approached.



The survivors from the Sea Watch International aircraft

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) has recorded more than 1,800 migrant deaths in the central Mediterranean so far this year, compared to 1,400 for the whole of 2022.

Ed: Their passing was not unnoticed in the wider world; politicians are famous for grabbing at any oppor-

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tunity to increase their own profile. In a cheap retort on an earlier statement by one politician Lee Anderson that illegal migrants should not complain about the standard of accommodation they were offered in the United Kingdom independent MP Diane Abbott (one time opposition Shadow Home Secretary) went on social media to tweet "These migrants have indeed fucked off. To the bottom of the sea." That has since been deleted, but it does indicate why Ms Abbott had her Labour Party membership suspended.

UNITED KINGDOM

No-one is letting it be known publicly but there appears to be a great deal of positive work being undertaken by the French police in deterring the migrant traffic from the northern French coast. Why else would the British government plead the Gendarmes take their traditional August holiday in September?

It was a plea that was always going to fall on deaf ears of course – everyone knows that France shuts down in August as the whole population heads south to the Mediterranean coast to pile into camp and holiday sites so that they are full to bursting. That is why every intelligent British holidaymaker has headed home by August 1, you just cannot move on the roads in France when the holiday season starts!

Nonetheless it seems that very early in August the unsung efforts of the police in France appeared to have an effect on cross Channel traffic although *The Spectator* in London stated categorically that the French have intercepted fewer migrants in the Channel this year than they did in 2022. Where they got either set of figures from is a mystery. The *Daily Telegraph* has come up with some numbers as well, but where from also remains a mystery. The number of migrants turned back in France, to mid-August, is given as 13,759. The number of boats destroyed, 511. By comparison, the number of migrants landing in the UK is, to the 15 August 2023, 17,346 and the number of boats used was 359, mostly very large inflatables carrying 50 migrants, or more. That suggests that nearly half of the traffic from France is being interfered with even if it is a long way from being stopped.

It would seem, by using these *Daily Telegraph* figures the French are destroying more boats than those that enter UK waters. The number of migrants turned back is, of course, impossible to verify as they are not arrested, or processed by the French police. They simply return to the camps in northern France, to attempt a further crossing at a later date.

The weather intervenes.

Poor weather was on the side of the British throughout much of July and at the end of the month that was a clear interval of 8 days, beset by strong winds and a rough sea, in the Pas de Calais region. This was broken on August 4 when five boats carrying 262 migrants, an average of 52 migrants per boat, crossed the Channel in good weather. The weather was excellent, for the people smugglers, with a very light wind and a calm sea.

Many expected a greater number of boats and hundreds more migrants, but the suspicion remains that the Gendarmerie and Police national, actively supported from the air by police and FRONTEX aircraft, were successful in turning back many migrants and destroying their boats.

In a scenario where all reports on French police activity are being suppressed, apparently for political reasons, the August 5 report that two French police officers were injured in clashes with migrants may be more common than we think.

The trouble erupted around Sangatte, near Calais, as officers tried to stop a group of people smugglers and migrants launch a small boat from the local beach. Around 60 migrants threw rocks and other missiles at the police, injuring two of them. Reinforcements were called from the French police public order unit, the CRS. The boat was stopped and made unseaworthy.

At the time some 15,100 migrants had been recorded as crossing the English Channel illegally since the start of the year. That number was down more than 2,500 on the same period last year, nominally due to the inclement weather conditions – the unknown 'secret' factor, remains the effect of the French law enforcers beach patrols on crossings.

It was clear that for a time the traffickers were losing opportunities to make money by sending would be migrants across. As soon as the weather improved slightly – and despite 17mph winds that were far higher than you might expect to encounter for any safe crossing in the vessels involved – there was a flush of crossings, 14 boats and 756 occupants on August 10. The marginal weather led to a boat overturning near the French coast at Sangatte. Leading to many being rescued but others dying. Six bodies were quickly identified but others were missing.

Prising the lid off Lydd

The Bristow Coastguard base at Lydd on the English Channel coast was the subject of several unconfirmed stories in early August. The airfield operates around five Tekever drones over the migrant routes as well as a base for UK Coastguard helicopters, a 2Excel Diamond DA-62 and general aviation flights and it seems that security is not particularly strict. On the first day of the new month there was a burglary in one of the hangars occupied by Border Force – the little publicised home the Tekever drones used over the English Channel - the raid did not come to public notice for over a week.

The story carried by some of the media states that thieves cut their way into the new Rubb hangar through the plastic material and stole a range of items including fuel, tools, equipment and data. The latter supposed included video footage obtained by the unmanned aircraft, and potentially other reconnaissance aircraft, of those crossing the English Channel. It is suggested that the footage might include incriminating footage of traffickers and their boats and that therefore the theft was instigated by the traffickers but potentially involving an 'inside job' at the control room.



The only visible Rubb hangar at Lydd is this structure set aside from the Coastguard hangar.

In the same story it was revealed that one of the unmanned aircraft operated from Lydd had crashed into the sea. If confirmed, this is at least the third event involving the Tekever fleet operating from Lydd. The craft was recovered, and it expected to return to service. [Times/LBC]

Try and Try Again

Following the successful Australian model, the British government attempted to divert all the would be migrants to an African country but found themselves thwarted at every corner. The Australian broke the back of their problem after coming to an agreement with Papua New Guinea, the London government is simply trying to find a similar repository that is not being blocked by opposition parliamentarians and the courts.

Ed: Why is news of this positive French police activity being suppressed? We can only guess, but a potential scenario lies in the nature of recent street violence troubles in parts of France. The struggles on the streets and the beaches appears to be set on religious lines. The Police are seen as The Christians (even if they are not) and the Migrants and their traffickers are mainly seen as of the Muslim faith. It is not a clear cut as that, but you can understand the reticence of politicians to become associated with any activity that can be construed this way. The effect is that the expensive deterrence programme set up between the British and the French simply cannot be promoted to an already disillusioned British public.

The alleged developments around the theft of video from the apparently unguarded Rubb hangar at Lydd brings a whole new aspect of this war of the waves. It may be that the taking of £30,000 worth of aviation fuel in bowsers and other items was only a diversion from the primary aim of the theft of the video footage (and its denial to the forces of law and order). It is suggested that a recent conviction of a trafficker using similar footage lies at the root of the theft. Whichever applies it was a raid that involved major logistics to move the booty and suggests that the security must have been all but non-existent.

The only potential flaw in all of this activity is the thought that France, with its open land borders, is facing far higher numbers of migrants that ever appear on the English Channel beaches. As France will necessarily be faced with a significantly higher bill for housing and supporting the migrants it is a wonder that they ever became interested in 'helping' the United Kingdom at all!

The losers in all this are the British politicians. They are making massive promises to stop the boats, but they have no hands on control of how well might work out. It would appear that the massive air programme over the English Channel is an expensive failure. It does not stop them coming, it merely makes sure that they arrive safely and that fatalities do not occur in British waters. The cost of air cover, boats to collect the migrants and then to feed and house them is a public disgrace that is unsurmountable. The only place to stop them is on the beaches of northern France of which we know so little.

Tony Cowan gives his monthly report on his observations of the activity in the English Channel and reports from the British Media later in this edition.



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The would be air rescue of the month set itself up in Pakistan where they have novel designs of cable car designed and manufactured locally. They are not mechanical designs of note.

When the Pakistan Air Force attempted to undertake an ad-hoc long line rescue from this structure they stopped after one person was saved, it was too dangerous and getting dark. Clearly something they had not trained for. The remaining occupants were got out using the remaining cable as a zip line.



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The number of electric cars grows, and General Aviation electric aircraft are seen as part of the future. To meet the need to charge GA aircraft **Aerovolt** are planning to install their smart charging network starting in the Solent region airports along the south coast in the UK. With exclusive airside smart charging operations and access to electric aircraft.

The first six install sites will be: Sandown, Isle of Wight: Lydd, Kent: Bournemouth, Dorset: Lee-on-Solent, Hampshire: Brighton City Airport, West Sussex: Kittyhawk Aerodrome, East Sussex.

Aerovolt already have over 20 aerodromes signed on for fixed charger installations at large regional and medium sized aerodromes for a first stage rollout. Making it the largest smart aviation network in the world. Facilitating planning, payment and operations into one unique system. A further 18 chargers are scheduled to be installed over the next 18 months, with more powerful chargers in development. Contact: fly@aerovolt.co.uk or 0790 33 11111

Some significant changes have been made to the maintenance of **Spectrolab** searchlights in the United Kingdom. For some years now Luxopus have represented the searchlight manufacturer in sales and support from a base near Oxford.

For a decade the maintenance has been undertaken at Hangar 4 jointly occupied by Luxopus and A2B Helicopters, a charter company. They jointly repaired searchlights and undertook commercial activities including providing hangarage and charter flights. The arrangement changed when A2B moved the main part of their business to Shoreham on the south coast. Although engineers remained at the Oxford business it gradually faded until last autumn when only Luxopus and to National Grid helicopters were using the hangar. The end result was that the searchlight support was transferred to Airbus using an engineer supplied by them and remaining at Oxford. There is a special approval by UK CAA for Searchlight repair and Airbus Only Received this approval in July.



Norway based **Axnes** has introduced the new MP30 Compact Base Station for its PNG Wireless Intercom System (WICS) family, offering a Cost-Effective, Small Formfactor Base Station Solution for Aircraft, Vehicles, and Watercraft.

The Compact Base Station comes in the form factor of the existing MP30 handheld transceiver, offering a simple to use keypad for operations, while maintaining the robust design that operators need to work in austere environments. The new base station comes equipped with an Amphenol 164 series connector and adapted firmware, this along with an included adapter cable will allow for a seamless interface to the Intercommunication System (ICS) of an Aircraft, Vehicle, or Watercraft.

The new PNG Compact Base Station will act as the system base station to provide wireless, full duplex, handsfree audio network capability between the wireless users and half-duplex audio for the platform. The new PNG MP30 Compact Base Station operates just like the Axnes fixed installed BST50 base station or the mobile BST35 base station. Any standard PNG handset Transceiver within the programmed frequency band can connect to the new MP30 Compact Base Station allowing for future system scalability.

This economical solution enables users to enjoy the renowned audio noise suppression and quality, reliability, and situational awareness of the Axnes PNG WICS system at a more affordable investment cost. Furthermore, this new Axnes technology also provides a possible upgrade path in case a customer requires more capability in the future, as the MP30 Compact Base Station can be reconfigured to a standard MP30 Handheld Transceiver, protecting the user's investment in case an upgrade to a BST50 or BST35 Base Station is desired in the future.

This new capability offers the operator independence from the traditional PNG system approach without sacrificing audio quality. Users who do not require the full capability set of a fixed installed BST50 or a mobile BST35 base station can benefit from the lower entry price point.

Some continue to doubt that highly inflammable batteries are the way to proceed to ecological future transport. News early last month that the Northeast of England is to benefit from new funding for hydrogen transport (though that has a reputation for being somewhat flammable).

New Government-backed transport projects to fuel supermarket delivery trucks and airport vehicles with hydrogen will place the region at the forefront of developing hydrogen tech, with over an £8M investment into the **Tees Valley Hydrogen Transport Hub**.

Airports and supermarket deliveries could become greener and more efficient, thanks to the support. Two winning projects of the second phase of the competition, encouraging more businesses and innovators to develop new technology that uses hydrogen fuel to accelerate transport decarbonisation.

One project led by ULEMCo, receiving a share of the funding, will develop hydrogen powered airport ground-based support vehicles, such as tow trucks for airplanes and sweepers to clean runways. This will be based at Teesside International Airport, helping Teesside International Airport reach its goal of being net zero by 2030.

Another of the winning projects, led by Element 2, aims to create new hydrogen refuelling stations, helping to provide the infrastructure needed to scale-up the use of hydrogen as a fuel. This funding will create four new publicly accessible hydrogen refuelling stations, increasing by 50% the total number of refuelling stations in the UK. These will be used to fuel a range of vehicles, from airside vehicles to HGVs, including supermarket delivery trucks.

The prototype **Bristol Vertical Aerospace VX4** G-EVTL air vehicle crashed last month while running tests that are needed before the electric vertical take-off and landing (eVTOL) aircraft can carry passengers.



Bristol Vertical Aerospace VX4

The crash, reported to be a free drop from 20 feet, took place at Kemble Airport in Gloucestershire. It is believed to have caused substantial damage to the airframe.

During previous successful flight activity, the VX4 had reached 45 miles an hour and completed more than a dozen landings and take-offs.

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Vita Inclinata Technologies has acquired **Air Rescue Systems (ARS)**, a helicopter response, training, and equipment company that has served customers in various branches of the military and emergency response organizations worldwide for more than 20 years. Vita said combining the companies will provide lifting solutions to a broader range of emergency response organizations, equipping them with the tools and skills required to execute successful missions.

ARS offers courses for advanced helicopter operations, including hoist, short-haul, rappel, fast rope, medical/rescue, precision long line, and skid operations tailored to mission-specific requirements with equipment that is purpose-designed and built by helicopter operations professionals. This includes the Air Rescue Vest—Quick Connect, which is used by the U.S. Army, Navy, and Marines.

Part of Vita Inclinata, Vita Aerospace manufactures the Vita Rescue System—Litter Attachment, which utilizes a computer-controlled fan package to adjust speed and stabilise hoist loads and eliminate spinning.

CMC Electronics has a multi-year contract with Swiss-based Pilatus Aircraft Ltd. for the purchase of its avionics solutions for the PC-21 Next Generation Trainer. This contract includes the supply of the Head-Up Display (HUD) sub-system, the Flight Management System, and the GNSS receiver.

The award follows the acquisition of additional PC-21 turboprop-powered advanced trainers by Spain, an order that will bring Spain's PC-21 fleet to 40 aircraft.

CMC's HUD sub-system comprises the SparrowHawk HUD, which features a comprehensive set of Up-Front Control Panels (UGCP) in both the front and rear cockpits, along with a HUD camera. Additionally, the subsystem includes a HUD Symbol Generator and a Video Display Unit (VDU) specifically designed for the rear seat instructor. The SparrowHawk HUD is a compact unit with a wide 25-degree Total Field of View (TFOV) capable of seamlessly displaying both raster video and stroke symbology.

www.cmcelectronics.ca

The two highly modified **Oil Spill Response** pollution control Boeing 727-2S2F (A)(RE) owned by 2Excel Aviation are to be based at London Southend airport. The first airframe G-OSRB is already there and the other G-OSRA will follow after the next maintenance cycle is completed. After Doncaster Sheffield Airport (Robin Hood) closed down the pair of specialist aircraft moved to Teesside International Airport. [EchoEssex/2E]



Last month **Bristow Ireland Limited**, a subsidiary of Bristow Group Inc., signed a contract with the Irish Department of Transport for the provision of rotary and fixed-wing aviation services for the Irish Coast Guard.

Bristow will begin transitioning to the new contract in the fourth quarter of 2024. The Company will operate six specialised SAR-configured AW189 helicopters from four dedicated bases in Sligo, Shannon, Waterford, and Dublin Weston. The AW189s will be configured with the latest evolution of mission system reflecting the requirements of the Irish Coast Guard.

In an expansion to the current service for the Irish Coast Guard, two specialised King Air fixed-wing aircraft, operated by 2Excel Aviation in the UK, will provide operational support from Shannon Airport for search and rescue and environmental monitoring. The fixed-wing element of the service will also provide highly sophisticated aircraft mission management and communications systems (in coordination with the helicopter fleet). The fixed-wing aircraft will also be available to provide 'Top Cover' support to helicopters engaged in long range medical evacuations.

Bristow will deliver nationwide all-weather 24-hour coverage, 365 days a year. Under the new contract, Bristow will create or sustain more than 150 jobs ranging from specialist ground support, engineering, flight operations, and in-country maintenance and support capabilities, ensuring its teams and aircraft stand at full readiness to respond to tasking from the Irish Coast Guard.

The 10-year contract has options to extend an additional three years, allowing for a total of 13 years for these new aviation services. The contract also makes provision for the Air Corps to provide the fixed-wing element of the service after five years.

"The entire team at Bristow Ireland Limited is honoured to be chosen to deliver this critical and life-saving public service for the people of Ireland," said Alan Corbett, Bristow's Chief Operating Officer, Government Services. "We look forward to collaborating closely with the Irish Department of Transport, Irish Coast Guard, and all stakeholders as we prepare to deliver this critical public service."

"We will provide a safe, dependable, and innovative service that will deliver world-class search and rescue across the country. Bristow Ireland Limited will implement Bristow's globally recognised and industry-leading 'Target Zero' safety culture in Ireland, to ensure safety is at the forefront of every flight we take, and each decision made," added Corbett.

More information about the Irish Coast Guard Aviation Service contract can be found on the gov.ie web-

site. www.bristowgroup.com.

Ed: This basic story was announced in the July edition of PAN, when the Irish Government stated that Bristow was its preferred contractor. This announcement is confirmation of contract signing. At the end of May the Irish government announced that it has accepted a recommendation from the Minister of Transport to offer the next Irish Coast Guard (IRCG) search & rescue aviation (SAR) contract to Bristow Ireland Limited. The current contractor, CHC, were to appeal the decision in the courts.

Britten-Norman, a long-standing British manufacturer that builds aircraft used for civil and military surveillance as well as transportation is said to be scrambling to get its finances in order after it was hit with a winding-up petition. Britten-Norman's 69-year existence was recently under threat as the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) made an attempt to recoup unpaid debts through the High court. [Daily Telegraph]

There may be something modified coming out of the **Airbus Helicopters** stable and it looks like it is going to be an H135 variant. Images have appeared on several websites and along with the standard "What is it?" question there have been some pointers as to what they have undertaken with the latest alteration. On the face of it, the rotorcraft does not seem to have changed a great deal, the profile is similar to the H135T3 but there appears to be a greater use of plastic in the skinning and the rear cabin window has been deleted. It has been noted though that the rotor head and Fenestron have changed. With the former now clearly five blades and related to the work of the latest BK117 variants, the H145.



Comment suggests that the design of the rotor head it isn't much of a challenge to add a blade as most of the "components" are in the blade cuff which is now separate from the blade as per BK117-D3. The mast is said to be a simple design and perhaps the R&D was done for the H145 and scaled down.

The Fenestron looks to be slightly larger, and some changes have taken place to the stator vanes and blades. *Editor: If the comments are correct it looks like the end of the biggest problem the EC135 had 20 years ago. The ARIS pots, part of the MRB system and important for ensuring a smooth ride in flight. When they failed the ride became much harsher – but they were not an immediate 'no fly' problem. They are not a constant problem now as fixes have been put place to improve reliability – but that was not the case decades ago and they gave rival manufacturers plenty of ammunition to decry the 135. Preflight inspections required visual inspection of the Aris Pots to check if the bellows had cracked and were leaking.*

As one of the operators of the early EC135s in the UK despaired in 2003...."We use a 135 T1 as a Police aircraft here in the UK. Does anyone else have the same problem with ARIS pot failures that we in the UK suffer. I think we've had 5 or 6 fail in the 8 months that we've had the aircraft, and other operators have had similar numbers. The only good thing about it is the company that makes them are replacing them for free."

Enterprise Control Systems will be at the DESEi London Docklands later this month (see advert this issue) but first they will be attending the MSPO International Defence Industry Exhibition from 5th - 8th September 2023 in Kielce, Poland. Visit them on Stand D36 where we will be delighted to answer any questions or discuss any Tactical EW, Counter-drone or Data Link requirements you may have - or just have an informal chat. Find out more about us at: <https://lnkd.in/e4AmAa3n>

ACCIDENTS AND INCIDENTS

1 August 2023 Bell 407 N31PB Charleston County Sheriff's Office helicopter inbound from Sumter Municipal airport after a maintenance on runway 15 at the busy South Carolina Airport closing it for a time. After the pilot reported a malfunction, the helicopter crashed upright with the skids collapsed, tail boom detached and main rotor smashed. The pilot, Lt. Scott Martray who has been a pilot with the sheriff's office since 2006, was alone onboard, he did not receive significant injuries. The airframe suffered substantial damage to the fuselage, main rotor system, and tail rotor system.

Ed: In a subsequent initial report from the NTSB, it was reported that the accident had involved a maintenance error relating to bolts removed and reinstalled during maintenance six weeks prior to the accident. They found one of the two bolts that secure the lever assemblies in the tail rotor control system was missing. The other bolt was in place but loose; the cotter pin for its attachment nut was missing. A further review of the maintenance records revealed that the bolts would have been removed and reinstalled during recent maintenance on June 28, 2023, about 15 flight hours prior to the accident.

August 2023 Tekever AR drone. Border Force operated under contract from the manufacturer Tekever out of Lydd Airport (Ashford). Kent. Came down in the English Channel while undertaking a surveillance mission. Reported to be a controlled landing. Airframe recovered for refurbishment. [The Times]

7 August 2023 Sikorsky S-64E N4037S firefighting helicopter of Siller Helicopters.

Bell 407 N555AS firefighting helicopter of Aero Leasing Inc.

A Bell 407 (Eagle 407HP conversion) crashed in Cabazon, California, after a mid-air collision with a Sikorsky S-64E while fighting a blaze in Riverside County, in the south of California.

The helicopter which crashed was performing work under contract with the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection. The three occupants (one Cal Fire Division chief, one Cal Fire captain and the contractor pilot) died and the helicopter was destroyed. The Sikorsky S-64E made a hard landing. The other helicopter made a safe landing.

Authorities are trying to unlock the mystery of how two helicopters battling a small fire in

The victims were identified as Assistant Chief Josh Bischof and Fire Capt. Tim Rodriguez, both with the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, and helicopter pilot Tony Sousa. Friends from Cal Fire confirmed the deaths online. Here's what we know about them.

11 August 2023 Eurocopter AS355NP EC-MMF Ministerio del Interior - Dirección General de Tráfico. struck a tree with its tail rotor during a landing attempt in a parking area beside the Cortijo Blanco restaurant, La Mojonera, Almeria. Ended up on its right side in bushes with extensive damage. No fire reported. One of the two occupants sustained minor injuries. Brownout a likely contributory factor. [Conecta5 Telecinco, S.A.U.]

19 August 2023 Airbus Helicopters EC225LP Super Puma Mark II+ JA69?JA operated by the 3rd Regional Coast Guard. Operating on patrol from Tokyo International Airport, Hanada, Japan. On returning to base found small number of parts missing. No reports of any ground/collateral damage. [ASN] ,

24 August 2023 IAI Heron 1 drone operated by the Hellenic Coast Guard on FRONTEX mission. Reported to have departed from Tympaki Air Base on aerial patrol crashed into the sea 70 nm off Crete. [ASN/Naftemporiki]

28 August 2023 Eurocopter EC135T1 N109BC. Broward County Sheriff's Office (BSO Fire Rescue). The helicopter operating from Pompano Beach Airport, north of Fort Lauderdale, Florida, came down on an apartment building in Pompano Beach after apparently suffering a left engine fire followed by loss of tail authority shortly after leaving the airport. One occupant onboard and one person on the ground sustained fatal injuries. Authorities identified the dead as Broward Sheriff Fire Rescue Captain Terryson Jackson, who was in the helicopter, and an unnamed adult woman who lived in the apartment complex. The two remaining helicopter occupants and four persons on the ground were taken to hospital with unspecified injuries. The wreck burned in the building it ended up in. From flight tracking it appears that the helicopter was attempting to return to the point of departure, but the tail boom failed in the fire causing it to descend almost vertically around half a mile short of the landing ground. [Media Videos]

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SAFETY

Transport Canada and the FAA have issued an Emergency Airworthiness Directive (AD) to owners and operators of Bell Model 407 helicopters relating to a tail rotor fault. It requires investigative action within 10 hours in service or 14 days.

According to Transport Canada, a 407 operator heard an “abnormal sound” while manually rotating the tail rotor. A “tap inspection” revealed that there was an area where the adhesive bonding the skin to the core (the disbanded area) exceeded allowable limits.

Bell Textron Canada Limited investigated the issue and found that a 43 tail rotor blades could have missing adhesive between their upper skin and core as a result of issues in the manufacturing process.

Microsleeps in the cockpit, insufficient rest opportunities to prevent cumulative fatigue, extending flight duties beyond the legal maximum: a newly released report paints a poor picture of fatigue risk management in European aviation. The report, [‘A fatigue survey of European Pilots’](#) by the aviation safety management consultancy Baines Simmons, analyses the responses from nearly 6,900 European pilots from 31 countries. The report identifies not only significant indicators of fatigue ahead of the busy summer period, but also structural shortcomings in how European airlines manage their fatigue risk. Airlines under the safety oversight of several countries – in particular Ireland, Malta, Spain, and the UK – stand out as the worst performers on many of the aspects covered by the report.

Based on data collected in July, the report shows that fatigue was building up in the cockpits already ahead of the summer peak season. 3 out of 4 pilots experienced at least one microsleep whilst operating an aircraft in the past 4 weeks – and one quarter reported 5 or more microsleeps. Furthermore, 72.9% of pilots reported having insufficient rest to allow them to recover from fatigue between duties. In addition, the report reveals a concerning trend of flight duty extensions, with nearly one in five pilots using Commander’s Discretion (CD) to extend flight duties twice or more within the past four weeks. Moreover, over 60% of pilots expressed varying degrees of concern about potential negative consequences if they were to refuse to extend a flight duty under CD.

The Baines Simmons report is based on data collected through a European-wide, ECA promoted survey among airline pilots, running from 1 to 22 July 2023. Several questions used a 4-week ‘look-back’ period, thereby covering the ‘ramp-up’ to the busy summer travel season (i.e., since early June), rather than the peak of operations. Participation in the online survey was voluntary, and whilst the questions – which had been designed in collaboration between ECA and Baines Simmons – were mandatory. The analysis contained within the report was undertaken by Baines Simmons as was the drawing of conclusions and recommendations.

The report aims at facilitating ongoing enhancements in fatigue risk management at European airlines. Additionally, it aims at providing valuable insights to bolster the safety oversight of both national and European authorities. Lastly, it lends support to EASA’s goals of promoting standardization among European nations.

ECA is the representative body of over 40,000 pilots from across Europe, striving for the highest levels of aviation safety and fostering social rights and quality employment for pilots in Europe.

UNMANNED

TEKEVER, the small Portuguese manufacturer who see themselves as market leaders in Unmanned Maritime Surveillance and the first to provide a BVLOS UAS commercial service in the UK, are looking to hire a Safety & Regulations Assistant.

The candidate will carry out Regulatory oversight of future UAS operations. For that they will need experience within an Air Traffic Management environment and/or the UK aviation industry or equivalent experience and transferable skills will be considered

The candidate will be expected to manage Tekever’s current authorisations to provide effective operations with a world-class product, working with the Safety Manager and stakeholders to ensure Tekever aircraft operate in safe and effective airspace.

The job is primarily home based but may involve a need to deploy around the world with a small team.

TEKEVER’s technology, on behalf of the UK Home Office, recently contributed to a successful operation, aiding in the rescue of migrants in the English Channel. A total of seventeen people were safely rescued from the water by diligent lifeboat crews during their dangerous journey across the English Channel. This accomplishment was made possible through the joint efforts of the RNLI, Coastguard, and UK Border Force.

Since the establishment of operations in June 2019, TEKEVER has delivered thousands of maritime surveillance flight hours. Carrying out missions with humanitarian purposes, TEKEVER UAV data has been a critical component of a multiagency operation that has saved more than 84,000 lives.



The uncertified eVTOL craft has already been delivered to the police in Spain

EHang is expecting to receive a type certificate very soon for its EH216-S autonomous eVTOL aircraft from the Civil Aviation Administration of China (CAAC), after reporting it has now completed all required testing. If confirmed, this would make the Chinese company the first in the world to get approval for an eVTOL vehicle, with leading Western regulators not expected to follow suit until at least the second quarter of 2024.

Reporting second-quarter financial results on August 17, EHang confirmed that it has in fact already been making some pre-certification deliveries in China with 16 of the two-seat vehicles delivered during the first half of 2023. The CAAC has permitted these aircraft to be deployed on a trial basis “in certain tourism locations” for testing, training, and demonstration purposes.

The production line at Yunfu in Guangdong province is fully up and running with an initial throughput capacity of 600 aircraft per year. The police in Spain already own one vehicle but it is not known what they intend to do with it.

Late last month the FAA authorized Phoenix Air Unmanned to operate Swiss Drones SVO50 V2 drones BVLOS for aerial work, aerial photography, survey and powerline and pipeline patrol and inspection. The authorisation allows these operations below 400 feet altitude over certain roads and sparsely populated areas below pre-planned flight paths.

The FAA issued the approval after asking for public input on four BVLOS requests, including from Phoenix Air Unmanned. The agency is reviewing the other three requests. Data collected from these operations will inform the FAA’s ongoing policy and rulemaking activities.

The FAA is focused on developing standard rules to make BVLOS operations routine, scalable and economically viable.

The FAA’s long-term goal is to safely integrate drones into the National Airspace System rather than set aside separate airspace exclusively for drones.

Editor: The detailed 54-page document clearly lays down some strict requirements. The craft used is marketed by Zurich, Switzerland, manufacturers as having a unique twin-rotor designed to replace manned helicopters at reduced costs, significantly lower carbon emissions and without putting crews at risk when operating in challenging weather conditions. Missions are possible under difficult or dangerous circumstances (e.g., bad weather, darkness, flying over hostile or otherwise unsafe areas) when manned operations are not feasible. <https://www.swissdrones.com>



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PEOPLE

Cheri Bates has been appointed as Group Safety Manager for 2Excel Aviation and 2Excel Engineering, including responsibility for the Safety Management Systems (SMS) across both organisations.

North Carolinian Cheri served in the US Navy where she held the position of Aircraft Maintenance Officer, and on leaving the service joined Lockheed Martin where she managed the Aviation Safety/ Compliance organisation for the flight training programme.

Before joining 2Excel Cheri was SMS Manager in the production organisations at Gulfstream Aerospace Corporate.



Aimee Neale has joined 2Excel Aviation as Head of Special Missions Project Team for Search & Rescue (SAR), based at Lydd Airport, Kent. Aimee will lead a team of Project Officers to work on delivery of fixed wing aerospace services for the MCA second generation Search & Rescue (SAR2G) aviation contract on behalf of HM Coastguard, as part of the partnership between 2Excel Aviation, Bristow Helicopters Ltd and Nova Systems.

Aimee, who hails from Kent, has extensive maritime experience, including crewing a super yacht in the Caribbean, followed by more than 25 years' experience in UK Search & Rescue.

She was the Royal National Lifeboat Institution's (RNLI) very first female lifeboat trainer, and then spent 18 years with HM Coastguard, including ten years as a Watch Officer, rising to the role of Tactical Commander at the UK's national maritime command and control centre in Southampton where she took charge of the UK National SAR, and finally as Station Commander at Dover.

2Excel Aviation have appointed Roger Wyness as Head of Support – Special Missions to lead business governance and support for the division's Director.

This new role has been established as a result of significant new contract wins and Roger's appointment will ensure consistency and support for Special Missions Counter Pollution and Search & Rescue operations. He will also lead two key MoD contracts.

Roger, who brings with him extensive experience of global roles in leadership training, aviation instruction and squadron command, served for 38 years in the Royal Navy, joining straight out of education as a Weapons Engineer, then as a Warfare Officer and pilot. On his recent retirement as Captain, Roger was the Assistant Director of Flying Training, responsible for the delivery of appropriately trained aircrew to the Royal Navy, Royal Air Force, and the British Army.



And finally, when looking at the seemingly ever-growing staffing at 2Excel Aviation, the company has appointed Paul Moody to head up its work on Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems (RPAS)/Drones.

Moody has extensive knowledge of unmanned systems from his time served in the British Army, holding several roles ranging from pilot to Mission Commander, instructor, investigator, and Incident Officer. He was awarded an MBE in 2008 for Operational Service and Services and Contributions to UAV within the British Army.

On leaving the military, Paul continued to work in the RPAS industry and continued to work world-wide in similar roles, including projects for the United Nations, and in the global petroleum industry.



BOOK

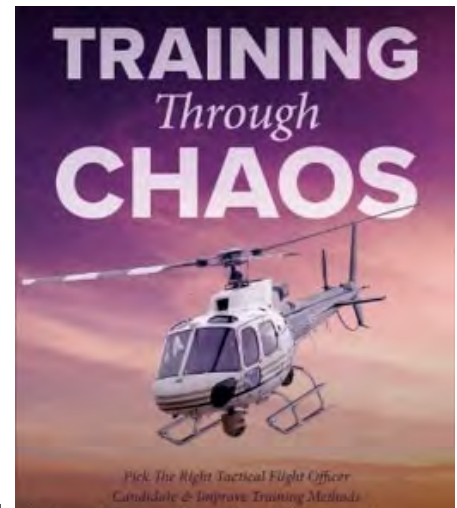
The book was reviewed last month, but I am aware that the reviewers quoted were perhaps too easy to perceive as 'close to the project' and American to boot!

I have therefore taken a set of words from a posting by Harald Brink, Netherlands Police, to echo the endorsement of this short but pertinent addition to books on police aviation.

Training through chaos.

Speaking in the words of Jon Gray: this book provides insight and structure to help with your #TacticalFlightOfficer (#TFO) selection and training. Nice to see how and what can help you as an Airborne Law Enforcement Unit to "get the right people to the bus" Mike Calhoun has written down the selection programme, the training phases and very important the mentoring of the TFO trainee clearly and with great feeling.

With attention for the trainee but certainly also for the TFO instructor who gets clear guidance in this book. This book is a must for Law Enforcement Agencies that already have or want to start up an Air Unit and an absolute value in the world of selecting, training and checking TFO's. This book needs to be mandatory reading for all public safety air support managers and instructors Airborne Public Safety Association.



Haynes Books have dispersed to the wind. The Car repair manuals and leisure/lifestyle books are still available on their website but dwindling in number and variety. A brief search on the Internet will show that where you will find your preferred title varies greatly. Logically, the Tank Museum in Bovington, Dorset is the best place to go for Haynes books on tanks and armoured cars of all nationalities (though they do have other titles on offer) but it is clear that more obscure titles on ships and planes may be harder to find.

The Haynes Air Ambulance Operations manual will probably linger on in charity ambulance shops, but it and the Police Helicopter – Delivering air support for law enforcement are still to be found on Amazon at a knock down price.

MOVE ALONG THERE

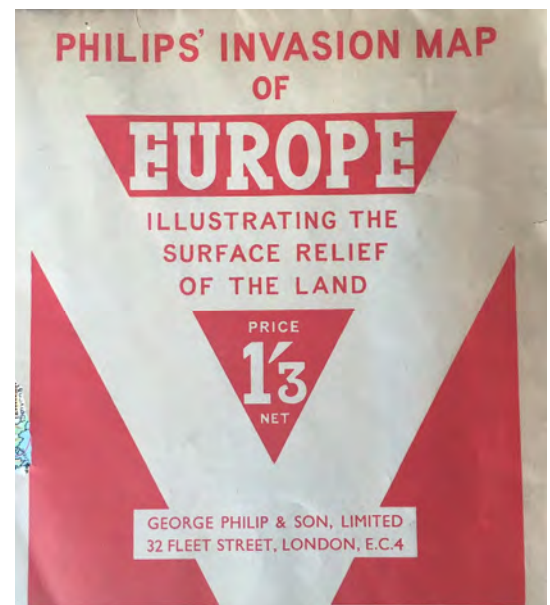
An unsuitable Nationality


Despite the good relationships engendered among those on the ground it seems that at EU governmental level the big stick is still out for post Brexit Britain. As if the many attempts to thwart Brexit by those inside Britain were not enough!

Soon, British wishing to travel to Europe are to face new restrictions when travelling. Facial scans and fingerprints no less to get from Britain to any European destination, it seems the Europeans are turning into the American TSA they have used such tactics for ages.

It's good to know that the Brits will not retaliate, most nations can still simply arrive at the UK Border and go through auto gates for trouble free entry. Indeed, come by rubber boat and we will collect you whether you have papers or not!

So if you are off to Europe and you are British you need to plan! It seems that the documents are out there....





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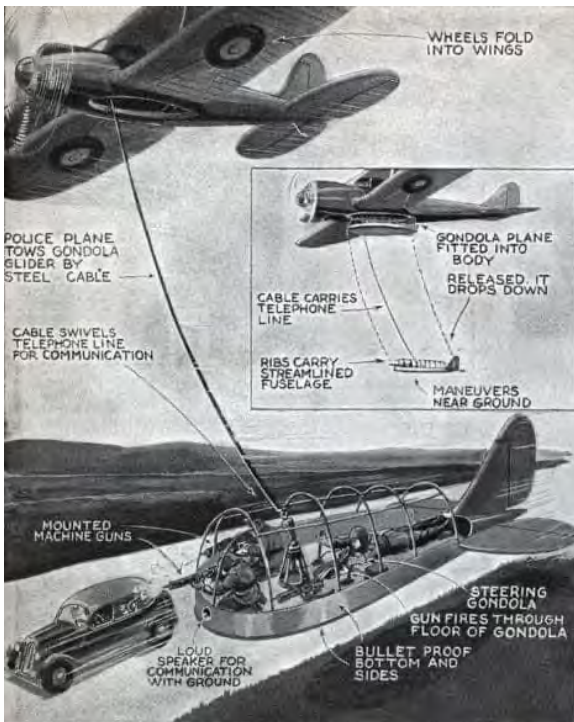
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It seems everyone has their 'problems' with migrants and where to house them. I noted on Facebook that there was a comment from Ken Solosky the retired Chief Pilot of the New York Police Department and several times PAVCon Police Aviation Conference speaker about the latest political proposals to house migrants at his former workplace....

"I am following the proposed housing of migrants at Floyd Bennett Field as that was my work home for many years.

"I am seeing a subtle yet important nuance being reported in the media. For years we were told (the NYPD Aviation Unit) we couldn't do a wide variety of modifications etc. at our base because Floyd Bennett Field is a "national park". They needed to protect the piping plover bird and a host of other environmental priorities.

"Suddenly, Floyd Bennet is an "abandoned airfield". It was an airfield that closed in 1972. More than 50 years ago. No mention now of the piping plover or any environmental issues. Suddenly, according to the Feds, Mayor Adams and Gov Hochul, it's a mere "abandoned airport".



Another passing fancy from the annals of Facebook and Linked In is this apparent 1930s travesty of justice posing as 'Police Aviation'.

The especially adapted police biplane carries a belly mounted streamlined pod that is lowered down on cables from the mother aircraft to enable it to intercept and interact with a fleeing car. Communication with the carrier aircraft is via a telephone line and there are loudspeakers (Sky Shout) on the gondola to shout at the bandit car. Clearly if the car ignores the shouting it is machine gunned out of existence.

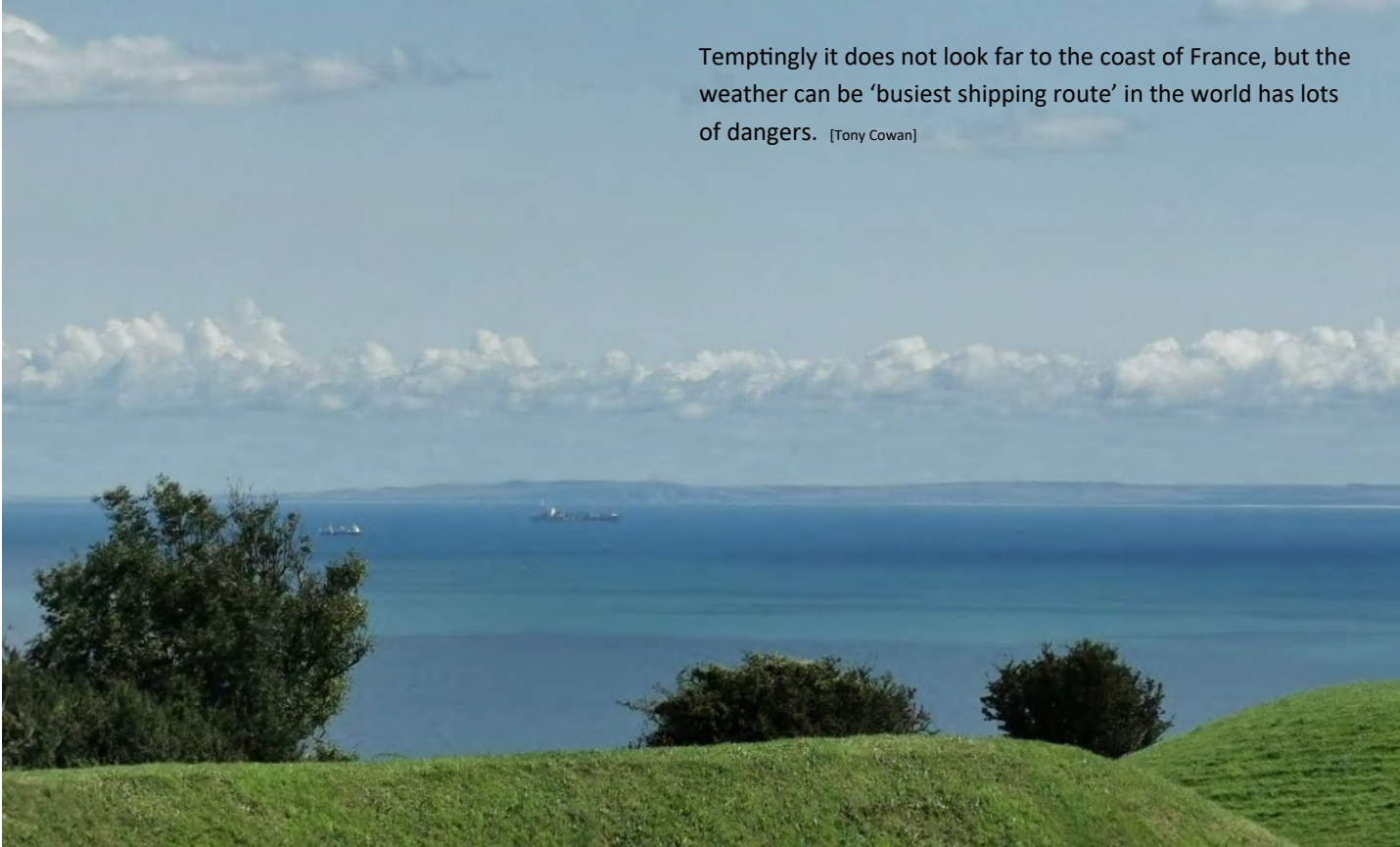
Great system, what could possibly go wrong?

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Temporarily it does not look far to the coast of France, but the weather can be 'busiest shipping route' in the world has lots of dangers. [Tony Cowan]

CHANNEL TRAFFIC YES, THE BOATS CAN BE STOPPED!

INTRODUCTION

1. The boats, mostly large inflatables, flimsy, 'one shot' boats, those made in Turkey and transported across Europe to France, from where people smugglers are blatantly transporting migrants in very large numbers across the English Channel are, at long last, being stopped, but not in France, in neighbouring Belgium! Although, to be fair, the Belgium coastline, some 40 miles in length is just half that of the northern coast of France between the Baie de Somme and Dunkirk.

BELGIUM SUCCESS

2. The report, that the Belgians have reduced the number of migrants heading for Britain in small boats, from 12,800 in 2018 to just 944 in 2022, a cut of over 90% in 4 years, is very welcome, a sign of hope, an indication of what can be done. Clear proof of the saying, 'where there's a will, there's a way! This success is based on a policy zero tolerance. Whilst the French will escort boats carrying migrants into UK waters, the Belgians will stop the boats and arrest everyone on board! The Belgian policy of zero tolerance is backed up with a network of sensors, cameras, barriers and drones, together with a Frontex patrol aircraft in the sky and police patrols on the beaches. The police patrols travel quickly using 4x4's and dune buggies. These tactics have stopped the people traffickers in their tracks. If any migrant camps appear on Belgium's west coast they are quickly dismantled. Moreover, to obtain employment in Belgium you require both a work permit and an ID card.

3. At a glance, 17,032, the number of migrants stopped by the French, up to mid-August this year, is over 50% of the total of 30,418, reported by the French, who attempted to cross the Channel; it's certainly not 45.2%, as quoted. It would seem that the 2 journalists who wrote the report, in 'The Daily Telegraph', are articulate, but not too well versed in simple arithmetic! Using Home Office figures, the Border Force, together with the RNLI, landed 16,790 migrants in the UK from 1 January to 15 August 2023. Therefore, at face value, the French stopped more migrants from crossing the Channel than the number who were landed in Britain. However, it's unclear if the French stopped 17,032 individuals. It's equally possible that 1,000 individual migrants may have attempted to cross the Channel 17 times in the space of 7 months! An earlier report indicates that the French also stopped and destroyed 511 boats, compared to the 359 boats that were intercepted, mid-Channel, by the UK Border Force.

Despite the best efforts of the French Gendarmerie and the Police Nationale migrants continue to cross the English Channel in large numbers, often exceeding 50 migrants per boat.



4. Nevertheless, the French police, the Gendarmerie and the Police Nationale, will have to try much harder if they are to emulate the success of their Belgium neighbours. Where are the light observation aircraft, the 'spotter planes' to support the members of the French police, those patrolling the beaches of northern France? The same beaches that were described by the Minister for Immigration, The Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP, as the 'goal line' when writing in the 'Daily Express' during the Government's 'small boats week', 7-13 August. This was the same chaotic week when the 'flotel' to be used to accommodate migrants, the Bibby Stockholm was evacuated due to a contaminated water supply. Also, 6 migrants lost their lives when their large inflatable boat, carrying 65 migrants, sank near Sangatte.

AIR PATROLS

5. The Police Aux Frontières will, on occasion, hire and fly a Cessna 182 based at Le Touquet, to complete a beach patrol, between the Baie de Somme and Dunkirk, often at weekends. At other times the Dutch company, EAPS AIR will patrol the French coast with a Dornier 328, a maritime patrol aircraft, call sign, Eagle 3, based at Ostend and on contract the EU Border and Coastguard Agency (Frontex).

6. Other aircraft used to patrol the English Channel, on the UK side of the median line, include a de Havilland Dash 8 maritime patrol aircraft, a Diamond DA62 surveillance aircraft and a Tekever AR5 drone which is also used for overwater surveillance; all 3 aircraft are based at Lydd. In addition, a Beechcraft King Air, on contract to HM Coastguard and based at Humberside Airport, will also patrol the Channel.

No images direct from Lydd but last month the author managed to stumble upon the base of the Tekever AR5 operation at Dover as they were working upon one of the smaller drones.



7. On Wednesday, 16 August, when 444 migrants crossed the Channel in 8 boats, the 3 Lydd based aircraft, the Dash 8, the DA62 and the AR5 drone were all patrolling the middle of the Channel at the same time, in a 'stack', one above the other, some 10 miles away from the 'goal line' on the beaches of northern France. The mission for these aircraft is unclear. In fact, there is no evidence that their presence, in mid-Channel, has stopped any boats, those with migrants on board, from crossing the English Channel. Despite the fact that this is now an illegal route following the introduction of the 'Illegal Migration Act 2023' which gained Royal assent on the 20 July.

AN ALTERNATIVE PLAN

8. The alternative to patrolling the English Channel, on the median line, half-way between England and France, would be to support the French police, the Gendarmerie and the Police Nationale, with 'persistent' air patrols, with light air observation aircraft, 'spotter planes', above the beaches of northern France in good weather, the same good weather that is known to favour the current generation of large, unseaworthy inflatable boats, boats that are often grossly overloaded with 50, or more migrants on board. Inflatable boats that are dangerously unsafe in anything other than perfect weather, a light breeze with a calm sea. These aircraft would fly high visibility, persistent air patrols at low level above the beaches to detect and to deter those migrants intending to launch their large inflatable boats. At night, the same aircraft would carry an electro-optical camera turret with a thermal imager and the crew would wear night vision goggles. Alternatively, the light observation aircraft would fly from dawn to dusk with a light twin-engine aircraft such as the Diamond DA62 MPP patrolling the coast at night.

9. Where would the light observation aircraft, the 'spotter planes' come from? There are two possibilities, one military, the other civil. A third possibility would be a combination of both military and civil aircraft. There are military precedents and, in the past, the Royal Danish Air Force has supported Frontex with a Bombardier Challenger 604 maritime surveillance aircraft. Also, the Royal Air Force has flown

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Channel patrols with a wide range of aircraft; the Boeing P-8 Poseidon, the Airbus A400M Atlas and the Beechcraft Shadow R1. None of these aircraft has proved to be particularly successful, and certainly they are not cost-effective. They have been described as 'sledgehammers being used to crack walnuts!'

THE RIGHT AIRCRAFT IN THE RIGHT PLACE

10. Both air forces, the RAF and the RDAF have light training aircraft, aircraft that could be re-roled for air observation duties. These aircraft are the Grob Tutor T1, in service with the RAF and the RDAF Saab T-17 Supporter. Again, there is a precedent. In the late 1950's the RAF re-roled the DHC1 Chipmunk, the RAF's primary training aircraft, for air observation duties, to support the British Army in Cyprus. To defeat the EOKA terrorists hiding in the Troodos Mountains, by locating their camps from the air.

11. If these air forces and other air forces, the French and the Belgian's are too stretched to support the French police with light observation aircraft, then the alternative would be to turn to the voluntary sector. Again, there is a precedent, one that is close to home too. In Sweden there is a voluntary air support service, the Swedish Volunteer Air Corps, or FFK. The FFK has some 2,400 members who use their own aircraft, typically the Cessna 172 and the Piper PA-28, to support the armed forces and the police, part of Sweden's policy of 'Total Defence'. In the face of the current 'invasion', across the English Channel, there is a strong argument for the UK to form its own volunteer air corps. A voluntary sector organisation to complement the volunteers of HM Coastguard, the Special Constabulary, the RNLI lifeboat service and the highly regarded lowland and mountain rescue teams.

CONCLUSION

12. In almost 5 years, since 2018, a variety of large and medium sized aircraft, including, from the RAF, the P-8 Poseidon, the Airbus A400M Atlas transport, and the Beechcraft Shadow R1, and from other air forces and civilian contractors, the ATR 72, the Bombardier Challenger 604, the Dornier 328, the Beechcraft King Air, the Piper Navajo, the Diamond DA62, together with the Tekever AR5 and AR3B drones, have been used to patrol the English Channel and the beaches of northern France. None of these aircraft have been particularly successful in 'stopping the boats'. In fact, in the intervening years, since 2018, the number of migrants who have landed in the UK from a small boats, has increased, year on year, from 299 in 2018 to 45,755 in 2022. With no sign of any significant reduction in the number of migrants crossing the English Channel, now an illegal route, the total since 2018, will, quite soon, exceed 110,000.



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Border Force vessels wait in port for the next wave of would be migrants to appear. [Tony Cowan]



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13. After 5 years, it is now widely accepted that the people traffickers, the criminal gangs must be defeated on the beaches of northern France, those beaches that have been described by one British politician, the Immigration Minister, The Rt Hon Robert Jenrik MP, as the ‘goal line’. In addition the supply chains, for delivering inflatable boats across Europe must be disrupted, whilst, at the same time, following the example provided by the Belgians’, those smart ‘phones used by migrants must be seized and downloaded to target the social media sites that are being used, on a daily basis, to promote illegal entry into the UK.

14. However, if the migrants are to be stopped and the people traffickers defeated on the French beaches then the police, the gendarmes, together with the Police Nationale, must be in the right place and at the right time. To do this air support will be essential, but not with a large maritime patrol aircraft flying some 10 miles offshore, in the middle of the English Channel, and not with a ‘biz jet’, a Bombardier Challenger 604 flying past a beach, too high and too fast! This ‘game’ calls for aircraft that can be flown ‘low and slow’. Flying over the beaches and the sand dunes of northern France, between the Baie de Somme and Dunkirk, with light observation aircraft, with ‘spotter planes’, to provide the essential ‘eyes in the sky’!

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

21 August 2023

When aircraft do not fly the Coastguard make full use of their hi-tech ground based sensor systems to keep an eye on the British side of the migrant routes.



To mark the 20th anniversary of Airbus Helicopters Columbus, Mississippi, facility a pole mounted H125 was placed at the facility. At the ribbon cutting for the dedication of the H125 were Bart Reijnen, CEO of Satair; Major General Tom O’Connor, U.S. Army Air and Missile Command; Johannes Dienemann, vice president of industry and civil programs/Columbus plant manager; Roger Wicker, U.S. Senator for Mississippi; Cindy Hyde-Smith, U.S. Senator for Mississippi; Romain Trapp, president of Airbus Helicopters and head of North America Region; Major General Trent Kelly, Mississippi Congressman/Army National Guard; and Rob Geckle, CEO for Airbus U.S. Space and Defense. Brent Bundy Photo



UPCOMING

Bit of a bumper month in Britain with several shows in the Police Aviation News sector. At the ExCel Conference centre in Docklands London there is the DSEi Defence Show, quite high end of course military and naval (if you are into ships of the line) and then Helitech and Drone X with the month closing out with the Emergency Services Show up the NEC in Birmingham. Not one bit of conventional Police Aviation may be expected but often at such shows surprises lurk in the shadows. If you are into drones however there will be plenty to see and hopefully mull over.

Police Aviation News has been a regular at the Helitech branded shows for decades and has often been critical of the marketing of recent editions of the show. But the show goes on and the 2023 edition is not far off! Even now it is difficult to be sure whether they are making improbable claims for the number of 'full size' aviation related exhibitors, the number of 'full size' aviation speakers and other aspects.

Last year there were several drones as exhibits but only an autogyro and an old RN Westland Lynx representing full size airframes. Neither was really appropriate but as I said at the time set dressing is set dressing and there may never be a need for hardware for visiting professionals.

Reading between the lines it would appear that there are around 100 exhibitors in the halls and numerically they will probably be orientated towards the drone industry.

Drones are the future they tell us so that mix of exhibitors may not be completely wrong. Certainly any expectation that there will be a line up of full size helicopters in the hall would be misplaced. For the record the organisers are still claiming the 300 exhibitors and 150 seminars that last year were simply vapour.

Each 'show' within the show has its own web presence and while the Drone X website seems sensible the Helitech one looks to be playing catch up – perhaps because it cannot match the status it once had as a European event with partners from Europe. It still likes to consider and promote itself a European event but this simply annoys their former partners who now operate European Rotors. Hopefully they will eventually sell what they have not some dream drawn from the past.

Tickets for free access are available at <https://tinyurl.com/yz37t5js>

The organisers claim that the event remains a mix of rotary and unmanned and we are told that drones are the future – we shall have to see if the mix is right this time. PAN will be there to report on it, perhaps you will join us? If nothing else it is free to enter.

This year I 'partnered' with the organisers to provide them with promotion for the helicopter event, it must be said that they appear not to have read some of the often scathing remarks in past reports (they are still



on line) and wanted to change my wording here and there in the promotional materials. I have resisted their efforts.

Helitech is a UK based event and (at least since Brexit confirmed it) not in Europe any more. Yes Europe is just over there, important and can be interacted with (PAVCon) but Britain is not Europe. I therefore deleted references to Helitech being a European event and mentioned that it has had some difficulties recently (including consistently selling under 100 exhibitors as 300). It may not be a bad event, but they need to sell what they have, not dreams. In a months time we will no doubt see whether Helitech is still an event to visit with the report in the October edition of PAN.

Over on the other side of the Atlantic you have the opportunity to visit a REAL drone show from September 5-7, 2023. The event is at Caesars Forum, Las Vegas, Nevada and previous reports have been good. You may recall that Mark Colborn (Dallas Police Department Retired) has provided comprehensive reports on this event in the past and next month should see the latest.

The organisers call it the world's leading commercial drone trade show and conference,. They have announced an important addition to this year's conference program: the Advanced Airspace Summit will be held on Wednesday, September 6, as part of the event's conference programme.

"There is currently a large gap between crewed and uncrewed aviation," said Jeremiah Karpowicz, Group Editorial Director at Diversified Communications, organizer of Commercial UAV Expo. "Commercial UAV Expo is working to bridge that gap and create trust within the entirety of the airspace community – including the general public. As the commercial drone industry continues to grow, the UAS community needs to address stakeholders' challenges and concerns so that we can build the future of the airspace together. This highly anticipated addition to our conference program will allow attendees to discuss where the industry is today, how the technology will evolve, what regulatory changes will likely be necessary, and what challenges the industry will face related to passenger expectations and public acceptance. We will tackle these issues through insightful communication and planning, and Commercial UAV Expo is proud to be at the forefront and provide a platform to move the industry forward."

"Sharing perspectives and knowledge will affect safe further integration into our NAS. By listening and educating the community holistically, we are building the bridge of understanding and paving a road to success," said Toni Drummond, President US of Titan Aviation Global. "As we have been witnessing, it's critical during this rapid growth for collaboration between all parties, especially general aviation and emerging technologies. The next revolution of sustainable aviation will depend on all stakeholders working together to develop solutions that will carry us directly into the future."

This live event defines and showcases the global commercial drone industry, with a tie-in into the world of advanced air mobility. In 2022, the show smashed all previous records and registered more than 4,100 attendees from 60 nations and all 50 states, while hosting 232 exhibitors (up 60%). It draws the power buyers and global influencers and sets the pace for the industry. 4,000+ delegates from 6 continents will attend in 2023. "Vertical Focus - Global

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Commercial drone professionals are eagerly anticipating Commercial UAV Expo 2023, where they can look forward to critical, timely education delivered by industry leaders; opportunities to network and engage with peers; and the best opportunity of the year to see and learn about the newest technology through conference sessions, workshops, and live-action



Taking place from 19-20 September 2023 at the NEC Birmingham, The Emergency Services Show 2023 is the most impressive edition yet the UK's leading annual exhibition for the blue light sector. Featuring cutting-edge products and solutions from top suppliers, engaging CPD-accredited content, and ample opportunities for networking, this once-a-year opportunity is not to be missed!

Lots of speakers at this event, they talk about 90 speaking slots, so there should be something to listen to somewhere. The policing theatre includes a slot featuring Lord Bernard Hogan-Howe former Police Commissioner of London's Metropolitan Police (2011-2017) but other venues are offering people who are still doing the job and attendees might just identify with them more.

Increased aviation content this year. Already they have drone companies including Avy showing, the Air Ambulances UK, Airbox Systems, Blue Light Commercial and Bristow Helicopters, Organised by Broden Media Ltd., Robert Denholm House, Bletchingley Road, Nutfield, Surrey, RH1 4HW <https://www.emergencyuk.com/>

October 2023. For several years the northern police air units have been undertaking hoist and mountain flying training in and around the Allgäu Alps, near Füssen, Upper Swabia, Germany Around 15 helicopters from a range of Federal and state units take part each October and are nominally based at the Bundespolizei (Federal Police) base at Oberschleißheim, Munich, Bavaria and fly out all day using the glider field at Füssen as the forward field. The training is for the young new Pilots. The hosts at the field are Luftsportverein Füssen e.V., and they welcome the clattering helicopters at the grass field normally associated with near silent gliders. Füssen is normally available as a backup airport for emergency situations for emergency forces and is unique in the district undertaking that so the addition of the field as a training base makes sense. Füssen is a Bavarian town in Germany, just north of the Austrian border. The Allgäu Alps are a mountain range in the Northern Limestone Alps, located in Bavaria and Baden-Württemberg in Germany.

9-10 October 2023 The 7th OFSEC - Oman Fire, Safety and Security Event to be held at the Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre, Muscat - Sultanate of Oman. The event is designed to meet the needs of the local, regional and international markets by linking practitioners, suppliers, distributors and manufacturers from the fire, safety, HSE and security industry, with key decision makers from the government and private sectors, making it a definitive networking platform, where new projects and partnerships are initiated, and visionary objectives are implemented. This event also aims to create synergy and strengthen the collaboration between the authorities and the industries. The 2-day Expo will attract participation from a large number of exhibitors and representation from over 20 countries, with product and service launches, to the trade visitors and potential buyers from the region and beyond. For more information on Sponsorship and Exhibiting Enquiries, please contact the Project Director Navneeth K. Mobile: +968 9123 7892 Email: nk@muscat-expo.com Muscat Expo LLC | P O Box 1406 PC 133 | Al Khuwair, Sultanate of Oman

16-17 October 2023 Aerial Fire Fighting – Europe Conference and Exhibition, Athens, Greece Organised by Tangent Link. Chilterns House Business Centre, Eton Place, 64 High Street, Burnham, SL1 7JT UK.

Complementing the cover image for this issue is this further study issued by NPAS on social media showing the rear TFO's position in one of their EC135 helicopters.

