

AIRBUS H160 IN SERVICE RECENT U.S. DELIVERIES MAGPAS AND A ROYAL OPENING

DECISION TIME FOR MD902?

MD may sell off the Explorer



LAW ENFORCEMENT

FRANCE



H160 ©Airbus Helicopters

CUSTOMS: The Airbus Helicopters H160 for the French Customs (direction générale des douanes et droits indirects (DGDDI)) is currently finalising its pre-delivery flight tests. This helicopter will serve communities in the French West Indies following a contract awarded by the French Armed Forces Air Maintenance Directorate DMAe to the operator Sabena technics.

The Coastguard Service of the French Customs is a civil administration in charge of the surveillance and protection of the maritime border of France. It ensures a wide variety of offshore and semi-offshore missions, including tax and environmental missions, but also the fight against fraud and offering public service at sea. It also exercises customs and tax control at the maritime borders of the EU and plays a small part in surveillance of the migrant problems.

Created in 1968, Sabena technics is an independent MRO provider offering services to civil and military aircraft operators and includes subsidiaries Heli-Union, Sogerma and Aerotech.



COVER IMAGE:



GERMANY

DELIVERIES PENDING: Noted on the flight line at Airbus Helicopters Donauwörth near Munich are these H145/BK117D3 helicopters for future delivery to the police in Bavaria.

Both airframes wear temporary flight test registrations of D-HBKA above and D-HADL below. The upper image appears flight ready and even has a EO/IR sensor fitted but the lower airframe being towed to the fueling area, is incomplete and without its main rotor blades and head. A small 4 on the tail suggests that D-HADL may be D-HPBD c/n 21196. [© via Michael Mau]



Police Aviation News is published monthly by **POLICE AVIATION RESEARCH**,
7 Windmill Close, Honey Lane, Waltham Abbey, Essex EN9 3BQ UK.
Contacts: **Cell:** +44 7778 296650 **Skype:** BrynElliott or +44 20 8144 1914
E-mail: editor@policeaviationnews.com and policeaviation@hotmail.com

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UNITED KINGDOM

NPAS: The new aircraft process grinds slowly on and PAN understands that Blue Light Commercial are now going to assess the aircraft on offer. The process will include the Bell 429, involving the Swedish Police, as well as the familiar Airbus Helicopters H135 variants (T3/P3). The Swedish were operators of a mainly Bell fleet (including the 47 and 206) from first operations in 1966 then moved to the EC135 from 2001 before again choosing to operate Bell - the 429 - from 2015.

Senior staff turnover continues to blight NPAS. Steve Jones one of the Assistant Operations Director (Regional Manager) has resigned and is headed off to work for Blue Light Commercial where he will no doubt enhance their knowledge of aviation. With Scott Gallagher also recently gone, there is not much talent left. Steve was the North Wales UEO that brought the North West Consortium together in the days before NPAS was created.

A further development is that the Accountable Officer Vicky White has been on her strategic command course. That suggests she will be moving on to 'better' things before long and a new unit head will need to be brought in and trained up from cold. Although she has been with the organisation since 2021, initially holding the post of NPAS Transition, her status as Accountable Officer only came through in the summer of 2022.

As recounted later in this edition (under People) England and Wales police aviation is again without a National Police Chief's Council (NPCC) Aviation Lead after Chief Constable Nick Adderley was suspended on a matter unrelated to aviation.

A new series of National Strategic Board Minutes has been added to the NPAS website covering the first

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three meetings of 2023 (January, April and June). These reveal very little in that they are a summary of matters discussed rather than detail – some of which will have leaked via the pages of PAN over the months. The only noteworthy content is the still massive number of people involved in the Strategic Board meetings. The attendee list is still nearly 50 people of whom 34 actually sat in on the discussions in June, listing them took two and a half pages whereas the content of the meeting amounted to less than two pages! Clearly the documents meet an annoying requirement for open governance but are now strategically without meaningful content.

In mid-October Scotland and the north of England was battered by severe storms (in fairness they were small beer by the standards of some countries, but pretty unusual for the British Isles) and one of the places hit hard by torrential rain was Leeds/Bradford Airport where NPAS have currently parked their fixed wing operation. No doubt NPAS will be somewhat pleased that they are exiting the airport in favour of East Midlands – Leeds Bradford is considered by many as one of the worst airports in the UK, the runway being prone to the effect of crosswinds. The negative vibes about the place were underlined when a Boeing 737 operated by TUI ended up leaving the runway and sliding through the grass. The conditions will have ensured that the P68 fleet will have remained out of service during the bad weather.

Meanwhile, as Police Scotland issue social media releases on their latest in house training course for their new TFO, NPAS were advertising for their next batch of would be trainees. The latest recruitment drive for Police Constables to apply for secondment to NPAS to train as Tactical Flight Officers to work at various bases across England and Wales. The closing date for applications is November 19, 2023.



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UNITED STATES

CALIFORNIA: In the wake of a search and rescue plan published earlier this year the Tehama County Sheriffs Office, located 120 miles north of Sacramento has acquired a Bell UH-1H N911NN from Jefferson Parish Sheriffs Office in Louisiana for use in search and rescue. It was acquired at no cost as a government asset. Jefferson Parish now operates a Bell 429 in the SAR role. The Huey is believed to be the Tehama CSO first air asset.

Located in Northern California, Tehama County encompasses 3,300 square miles with 65,000 permanent residents, as well as thousands of tourists and visitors who enjoy hunting, fishing, and vacationing in the vast wilderness areas throughout the county.



Kern County has taken delivery of the first of two \$6M Airbus Helicopters H125 helicopter N912KC c/n 9252. It started operational patrols on October 19 after a media launch event at Meadows Field Airport, Bakersfield. Kern initially took delivery of the helicopter in March before it was sent for role fit with a modern FLIR 380 EO/IR sensor, searchlight and hoist. Each is a significant upgrade on the earlier equipment available on the MD500 helicopters in service.



Kern CSO H125s will replace MD500 helicopters next year @kcsso

When both new helicopters are in service they will replace two primary MD500E helicopters, but to enable the upgrade the fleet will be reduced to the two new H125s in future. The current Kern fleet is three fixed wing and five helicopters, a mix of the MDs and some OH58s. It is unclear whether the fitting of the hoists to the new fleet will also see the departure of the Bell UH-1 Huey. The second H125 N913KC c/n 9262 is due for delivery into service in around three months time.

FLORIDA: A man accused of shooting down a law enforcement drone being used at a business near his Florida home in 2021 faces a potential 10 years sentence in federal prison when he is sentenced in January. Early in October, Wendell Doyle Goney, 52, of Mount Dora, pleaded guilty in Ocala federal court to possessing a firearm as a convicted felon. The case was investigated by the Bureau of Alcohol Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, the Department of Transportation - Office of Inspector General, and the Lake County Sheriff's Office.

Deputies working for the Lake County sheriff's responded to an industrial burglary in July 2021 in Mount Dora, northwest of Orlando. They deployed a \$29,000 drone to undertake an outdoor search of the premises but the drone came under fire and crashed into a metal roof and caught fire. The gunfire came from a neighbouring residence occupied by Goney. He was arrested and a .22 weapon was seized. Deputies say he fired on the drone because it was harassing him.

Goney had 29 Florida felony convictions, including aggravated assault on a law enforcement officer, resisting arrest with violence, illegal drug possession, burglary, and possession of a firearm by a convicted felon. Federal law prohibits most convicted felons from possessing firearms and ammunition. [Dept. of Justice]

NORTH CAROLINA: The Robeson County Sheriff based in Lumberton, NC have acquired a helicopter through an agreement with Columbus County. The new arrival is Bell OH-58A Kiowa N308HB 71-20764.

Initially, the DoD surplus helicopter was assigned to the Columbus County Sheriff's Office (NC), but following an agreement between Columbus County Sheriff Bill Rogers and Robeson County Sheriff Burnis Wilkins, the helicopter was acquired through the N.C. Law Enforcement Support Office (LESO) has been re-assigned by the state to the Robeson County Sheriff's Office.

The helicopter and mandated maintenance come at no cost to the county, and a fuel truck is also being transferred from the Columbus County Sheriff's Office at no cost.

Prior arrangements involved calling in a helicopter from the Highway Patrol, Bladen County Sheriff's Office and Brunswick County Sheriff's Office over 30 times to deal with a range of mission including missing persons, a murder suspect and stolen property.

The Robeson County Sheriff's Office Aviation Division will use the Bell and two drones to provide air support to the county and surrounding counties upon request. The Sheriff's Office also received another non-flyable helicopter for parts, valued in excess of over \$100,000. The helicopter, believed to be N309HB has since been cannibalized for parts, and the remaining fuselage is set to be returned to the state.

Currently, the Aviation Division consists of an RCSO-licensed pilot, a licensed aircraft mechanic and an observer with decades of experience. The observer is responsible for many valuable functions in the sky, such as backup navigation, field observation, communications and camera operation. The team will additionally provide airborne support to Robeson County's Emergency Services and Fire Departments.



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SOUTH CAROLINA: The Charleston County Sheriffs Office request for up to \$7M for a new role equipped to replace the helicopter it lost in an accident at Charleston International Airport on August 1 has been approved. The accident involved a 2018 Bell 407GXL that was returning from maintenance. Preliminary reports suggest that the cause related to missing parts that resulted in loss of control. The pilot and sole occupant, Lt Scott Matray, was injured. Meanwhile three counties have lost air support cover and now have to rely upon the State air support (SLED). The finance for the replacement helicopter is not all assured and even when the sums from the insurance and loans are agreed it will take 14 months before delivery in made.

The Sheriff's Office is now talking to the manufacturer and role equipment suppliers with a view to finalising a contract. [Post]

AIR AMBULANCE UNITED KINGDOM

GREAT NORTH: The charity's critical care teams, which include a doctor and a specialist advanced trauma paramedic, are based in Eaglescliffe in the North East, and Penrith in Cumbria, and cover an area of more than 8,000 square miles. From 21 June to 23 September they were activated to more than 600 incidents in the North East, North Yorkshire, Northumberland, Cumbria, Scotland and the Isle of Man. This is an increase of more than 50 incidents compared to last year's summer, and it is expected this number will continue to rise as the charity aims to operate 24/7 in the foreseeable future.

Since January, GNAAS has been operating seven nights a week in the North East and hopes to offer the same level of service in Cumbria, where it currently operates four nights a week, soon.

Outside the UK, GNAAS has also been working alongside Manx Care, based in the Isle of Man (an island in the Irish Sea), since March 2022 to trial a new service to transfer seriously injured or unwell patients by helicopter from the Isle of Man directly to the UK for emergency medical treatment. Previously most medical repatriation was undertaken using contracted fixed wing aircraft.

KENT, SURREY, SUSSEX: Air Ambulance Kent Surrey Sussex are marking ten years of becoming the first Air Ambulance charity in the country to fly 24/7, 365 days a year. The ability to undertake this service started on September 29, 2013. Since then, the operation has carried out 4,106 missions by helicopter at night, treating 2,355 patients and flying for 2,000 hours.

Two pilots and the entire medical crew using night vision goggles. This allowed the delivery the same quality of rapid critical care by air to all KSS patients, regardless of the time of day. The aim is to be airborne in no more than 15 minutes at night, compared to within five minutes during the day.

Google Earth is used to help select landing sites, as well as specialist mapping systems which show where hazards such as overhead wires or covered reservoirs are located. There are over 180 pre-surveyed sites that are safe for use, they cover most towns and villages in Kent, Surrey and Sussex. We look for sites that are as big as possible, with a minimal slope, good surface and good access in and out to enable the crew to bring a patient back safely to the aircraft. At night they use a powerful white light underneath the aircraft to illuminate the landing site on approach to ensure it is clear and safe to land the Leonardo AW169 helicopters used by the service.



Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal unveiled a plaque to mark the official opening of the new multi-purpose facility located on the former USAF air base of Alconbury ©MAGPAS



The new multi-purpose MAGPAS helicopter and office facility ©MAGPAS

MAGPAS: On September 12, Magpas Air Ambulance staff, clinicians, former patients and supporters witnessed an important milestone in the charity's history as HRH The Princess Royal opened the new charity airbase at Alconbury Weald, Cambridgeshire.

The building, designed by MCW architects and constructed by Lindum, includes a dedicated state-of-the-art training centre to train the next generation of pre-hospital emergency doctors and paramedics; is equipped for 24/7 operations with well-being and rest facilities for crew and clinicians; and has new community and patient facilities on site—including a new dedicated space for patients and their families to visit the charity and meet with the clinicians that treated them, away from the bustle of day-to-day operations.

To ensure it maximises renewable energy, the building has been designed with the approach of 'be lean, be clean and be green'. This is achieved through integrated design measures such as solar shading and natural ventilation through louvres, and PV panels on the roof.

The location of the new airbase is situated closer to the region's major trunk roads, which will reduce vehicle dispatch times by up to 15 minutes, and the co-location of the charity's operations and support staff—who currently work across two sites—will be more efficient: reducing charity overheads and improving environmental impact.



Magpas Air Ambulance has treated over 70,000 patients in the past 50 years, and this new building will be fundamental to its service going forward saving thousands more lives and keeping families together for generations to come.

Magpas Air Ambulance is one of the first emergency medical charities of its kind in the UK, initially set up by two GPs in 1971. The new airbase is an important milestone in its 50-year pursuit to improve emergency care for patients across the region. For many years, Magpas Air Ambulance has been operating from two sites, with the operations base at RAF Wyton and headquarters in the town of Huntingdon. However, when the charity was served notice on the operational flight building due to the sale of land at Wyton, Magpas Air Ambulance took the opportunity to create a purpose-built airbase, headquarters and training centre—combining both buildings under one roof. The old building was the former base of the Cambridgeshire Police ASU. In late September the move from both sites was completed.

In early October fourteen community & faith leaders were welcomed to the new airbase. An event many years in the planning, for those with a religious faith & for those with no particular religious faith. Prayers,

blessings & positive words from the community we serve, spoken to thank our teams & their life saving work and to bring positivity to the new building, our aircraft, cars and most importantly our people. The energy and kindness was palpable and showed strength in uniting communities and faiths from a diverse group.

Although the new Magpas Air Ambulance visitor centre will be open to the public soon, the charity is not able to facilitate public tours or visitors quite yet. The staff members need time to settle into the new building and ensure the visitor experience is the best it can be before welcoming guests. The mailing and visiting address for the **Magpas Air Ambulance is Barnwell Road, Enterprise Campus, Alconbury Weald, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire, PE28 4YF**

MIDLANDS: Although it has not yet had its official opening the majority of the operational and support staff of the Midlands Air Ambulance Charity, have moved into the new operating base address at **Airbase Avenue, Neachley Lane, Shifnal, TF11 8UR**. The telephone number is 0800 8 40 20 40 and general e-mail E: info@midlandsairambulance.com

The team of critical care paramedics and pre-hospital emergency medicine doctors at Midlands Air Ambulance Charity took part in a surgical skills training day, with support from Simbodies and Staffordshire University.

As the team deliver enhanced patient care on scene on a daily basis, it is vital they regularly practise advanced surgical procedures. The training day, which was hosted by the school of health, science and well-being at Staffordshire University, allowed the clinicians to perform a surgical airway, thoracostomy, pneumofix and amputation, plus were able to practise a thoracotomy thanks to Simbodies' lifelike medical mannequin.

WALES: Gama Aviation successfully bid for the seven-year contract to provide aviation services to the air ambulance in Wales, starting on January 1, 2024. The Gama contract, valued at £65M, covers the operation and maintenance of a primary fleet of four Airbus H145 helicopters, operating from the Charity's current sites in Dafen, Cardiff, Caernarfon and Welshpool. It additionally includes a backup H145 helicopter to ensure service continuity during periods of maintenance for the primary fleet.

Recently the former Yorkshire Air Ambulance H145 G-YOAA c/n 20086 was repainted from its formerly overall yellow and now sports the familiar red and green scheme and new registration of G-LOYW for the Wales contract. The work was undertaken at Cotswold Airport in mid October. Since September the owners are Gama Aviation (UK) Ltd who are now working up to look after and support the needs of Wales AA.

WILTSHIRE: This winter the air ambulance will have an easier time dealing with an iced up landing pad. Instead of the aircrew having to clear away ice and snow deposits manually the pad now had a heated area that will clear automatically. This will be safer for aircrews and enhance response times in inclement weather. The charity was funded by the HELP Appeal charity. The HELP Appeal is the only charity in the country funding hospital helipads and air ambulance base helipads. Their work is aimed at ensuring patients reach hospital within the golden hour, helps to save hundreds of lives every year.

Thanks to a £37,000 donation from the HELP Appeal, Bristol Royal Infirmary has become the second major trauma centre in the UK to benefit from a weather station which provides certainty and real time information for emergency helicopter pilots about weather conditions, ensuring that its patients are seen quicker and with more efficiency.



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Leonardo AW139 depicted in the Trauma Star livery ©Leonardo Helicopters

UNITED STATES

FLORIDA: Late last month Leonardo confirmed an order had been agreed for three AW139 medium twin-engine helicopters to be delivered to Monroe County in Florida. These aircraft will be operated by Trauma Star, a joint effort of Monroe County Fire Rescue and the Monroe County Sheriff's Office and will provide air ambulance support across the Florida Keys from Lower Keys Medical Center and the Florida Keys Marathon International Airport.

These AW139s will be delivered from Leonardo's FAA-Certified Part 21 Production Facility in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, between the end of 2024 and early 2025, after which it will undergo dedicated mission customization before replacing the County's existing fleet of Sikorsky S76 helicopters.

Monroe County is the southernmost county in Florida, and the United States, and includes Key West, Marathon, Key Colony Beach, Lorton and Islamorada. The County is spread across 3,737 square miles, 73% of which is water, and includes large portions of the Everglades National Park and Big Cypress National Preserve.

With nearly 400 AW139 aircraft delivered covering civil, parapublic and military operators that carry out emergency and disaster relief operations worldwide, more than 900,000 flight hours have been logged to date by the AW139 rescue-configured fleet globally, out of a total of 3.7 million FH for all missions. For similar services in USA in a mix of law enforcement, EMS, disaster relief and firefighting on behalf of local administrations, the AW139 is already operating in Florida, New Jersey, Maryland and California.

With more than 1300 units sold, over 1,100 in service for over 280 customers in around 90 nations, the AW139 delivers outstanding capabilities, technology, and safety to meet stringent requirements from operators for tasks in harsh conditions to maximize effectiveness. [Leonardo]

NATIONAL: AIN has reported that it is being suggested that air ambulance provider Air Methods is contemplating a structured Chapter 11 bankruptcy filing. The news, also appearing in a *Bloomberg* story, suggests control of the company would be ceded to creditors that are owed \$1.25 billion.

Air Methods operates more than 400 air ambulances across the United States. It began closing bases last year in a move that is believed associated with the financial situation. [AIN]

OHIO: ProMedica Air have taken delivery of a new Airbus Helicopters EC145e N102AH c/n 9877 to replace an earlier EC135. The EC145e was delivered to Sandusky County Regional Airport, Clyde, Ohio. The medical facility in Toledo has a rooftop heliport, ProMedica Air being one of two air ambulance companies using Sandusky as a base.

The Metro owned and operated EC145e offers upgraded features, including superior flight capabilities and a more spacious cabin and is based on the earlier 145 featuring a tail rotor rather than a Fenestron. Metro has supported a three base operation for ProMedica since 2008. Sandusky County Regional Airport is 45 miles outside Toledo and offers a 5,500 foot runway, it opened as a regional airport in June 2000 and is now the base two air ambulance operations (the other being Leonardo A109 Power equipped LifeFlight) and an aircraft used by the Ohio Highway Patrol to fly over highways in the county mainly to track speeding motorists. [ProMedica/SRA/Helis]



ProMedica Air previously used the Airbus EC135 ©Metro



Since last year Kyrgyzstan have operated a mixed fleet of helicopters ©Kyrgyzstan Govt.

FIRE KYRGYZSTAN

EMERGENCY SITUATIONS: His Excellency President Sadyr Japarov, the President of the Asian country since 2020, officially handed over the MI-8 MTV 1 helicopter to the State Aviation Enterprise of the Ministry of Emergency Situations (SAEMES) last month.

The helicopter is to be used for saving lives, providing emergency aid to rescuers, passenger transport, cargo hauling, and firefighting missions.

Kyrgyzstan received this helicopter as part of a 2022 Russian government order, which allocated funds for the procurement of firefighting and helicopter equipment. This agreement involved the delivery of firefighting and helicopter equipment totalling US\$20M and was executed in two phases. In the first stage, 40 fire tankers worth US\$8 million were purchased and delivered to Bishkek. In the second stage, the MI-8 MTV 1 type, valued at over US\$12M, was also delivered.

President Sadyr Japarov [left] congratulates Alexander Kurenkov ©Kyrgyzstan Govt.



During the event, Japarov bestowed the Order "Dank" upon Alexander Kurenkov, the Russian Minister of Civil Defense, Emergencies, and Elimination of Consequences of Natural Disasters for his contributions to international cooperation and his active efforts in strengthening the friendly relations between the two nations.

Ed: Kyrgyzstan is a landlocked country in Central Asia, lying in the Tian Shan and Pamir mountain ranges north of India and Pakistan. Bishkek is the capital and largest city. Japarov, a former prisoner became the Prime Minister of Kyrgyzstan in October 2020 and within days had progressed to becoming the Acting President.

They have used several Mi-8MTV helicopters in the past. Two were donated by the USA and another by Russia but these have all been retired. In the second half of 2022, SAEMES received two new helicopters from Airbus Helicopters. In August 2022, Airbus H125 EX-88010 (c/n 9255) was handed over, this was followed two months later by Airbus H145 EX-88014 (c/n 21077). The recent delivery of the new helicopters signals the revival of the helicopter fleet in use for disaster response in Kyrgyzstan after many years without assets.

The last Mi-8MTV, a gift from the Russian Federation in 2016, was retired in 2017 after engineering issues. The airframe returned to Kyrgyzstan government service recently after being refurbished to a VIP standard by



Thank you Belarus, President Japarov receives the Mil helicopter

Belarus [left] . Other Mill designs were also returned to military service. [Scramble NL/PAR/Akipress]

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SPAIN

TENERIFE: Eliance Helicopter Global Services SL., have been awarded the €7.7M firefighting contract for Aerial forest-firefighting services for Tenerife the island in the Canary Islands group in the eastern Atlantic.

SEARCH & RESCUE INTERNATIONAL

If you were ever tempted to wonder why migrants were being landed even though the sensible option might be to take them back to their country of origin, part of the answer lies in a story that unfolded off Spain on October 3.

Spanish authorities had arrested 9 migrants on allegations of piracy for threatening the crew of the ship that rescued them off the coast of Morocco.

On the night of Monday 2nd October, the PSV VOS PACE encountered two migrant boats at a position around 50 nautical miles northeast of Lanzarote, the easternmost isle of the Canary Islands. The first boat was found around 2330 hours with about 44 people aboard. The second was located shortly after and had another 35 souls. The majority were men from North African nations, along with a dozen women and children.

All 79 were taken aboard. Since the encounter occurred in waters within the Moroccan area of responsibility for rescue at sea, Vos Pace headed for the port of Tan Tan, Morocco to deliver the survivors.

While under way for Tan Tan, nine migrants "mutinied" aboard the OSV and ordered the crew to head for

Spanish territory in the Canary Islands, where they would have the opportunity to claim asylum on EU soil. The crew changed course for Fuerteventura and notified Spanish authorities in advance that some of the migrants had become "very aggressive" and drew knives when they learned that they were headed back to Morocco, according to EFE.

Spanish police in riot gear met the ship at the pier and arrested the nine suspects. The men face charges of piracy, which would carry a minimum sentence of ten years in prison if they are convicted. The remaining 70 migrants rescued by Vos Pace will be questioned and processed.

Hijackings perpetrated by rescued migrants have been reported before and others unreported but suspected. When a migrant ship sank with loss of life off France recently the RNLi Lifeboat took those it saved all the way to England despite the closeness of the French coast. It is suspected that the small crew thought the move was the wisest course to take as the migrants on board outnumbered them by a large number.

AUSTRALIA

TASMANIA: Following a change in government policy the Westpac Rescue Helicopter Tasmania will lose its sponsorship and community funding support early next year. The State Government made a decision to withdraw the sponsorship licence from the volunteer fundraising body and effectively operate the service wholly utilising taxpayer funds.

Westpac have been supporting the service for nearly three decades and were willing for that to continue and perhaps grow in the future. Early last month there was a presentation of \$150,000 from Westpac Rescue Helicopter Tasmania (WRHT) to fund specialist police training to significantly enhance the safety of the state's helicopter rescue service. The funds will be used to launch an innovative front left seat training programme for Tasmania Police aircrew officers enabling them to provide additional support for helicopter pilots and boost compliance with air safety requirements, particularly important when flying in often challenging operational environments. The specialist training will be undertaken interstate.

This is the largest single funding allocation provided by WRHT. It is in addition to more than \$75,000 recently allocated for other specialist training and safety equipment, bringing the amount provided to the helicopter rescue service over the past quarter to more than a quarter of a million dollars. WRHT estimates it has raised approximately \$10 million to support the helicopter rescue service since its establishment in 2000, with the majority of this coming from Westpac's sponsorship. Westpac has sponsored the service since 1994 and has been the naming-rights sponsor since 2000.

WRHT say they find the Government's decision difficult to understand. They have made a number of representations to enable the continuance of fundraising to support the service, including meeting with the Premier and Health Minister. Unfortunately, this has been to no avail, despite offers to negotiate a substantial increase in Westpac's sponsorship and developed a strategy to raise up to \$2 million and more annually to support the service. ^[Pulse]

JAPAN

COAST GUARD: In September the Japan Coast Guard acquired two additional Sikorsky S76D helicopters to add to twelve similar craft in their fleet. The new additions will be added to the fleet in the coming months after they are converted with a role fit.

The S76D has not sold well in recent years and as a result there are a number of white tail airframes still held by the OEM. In the last five years only three other examples have been sold.

NEW ZEALAND

WAIKATO: Search and Rescue Service Limited has taken delivery of a brand new H145 (BK117 D-2 c/n 20277) helicopter ZK-IXO. This is the first of its type to be added to the fleet.

Search and Rescue Service Limited has a registered fleet in New Zealand that primarily consists of ten earlier model MBB/Kawasaki BK117 helicopters, two Bell 222 and two Mitsubishi MU-2B. Other organisations, including the police, military and private sector, provide assets to the National NZ SAR capability.

Search and rescue services in New Zealand are provided by many different organisations, under the direction of either Police or Maritime New Zealand's Rescue Coordination Centre New Zealand. NZSAR published their 2022-23 Annual Report in mid-September. It reports that between 1 July 2022 and 31 June 2023, the search and rescue sector saw 1,130 people assisted, 744 people rescued and most importantly,

137 lives saved. The latest 40 page report can be downloaded from:- [HERE](#) The website offers similar reports for the last 15 years.

NORWAY

SAR: For a period of five weeks from mid-September to mid-October the UK carrier Strike Group were working with Scandinavian NATO military forces including HMNoS Otto Sverdrup and HMNoS Maud in the Norwegian Sea and High North. Missions included F-35Bs launching from the carrier HMS Queen Elizabeth for air and land missions with Norway and Finland and exercising along the Norwegian coast. The Jets employed common fighter tactics, such as Air to Air Tactical Intercepts.



UK MoD Photograph ©Crown Copyright

On October 11 a Norwegian SAR AW101 helicopter 0278 from Bodo, Norway, landed on HMS Queen Elizabeth of the UK Carrier Strike Group to prove deck currency, meet the Battlestaff and discuss future collaborations with the Norwegian Air Operations Centre (NAOC)

Ed: You may think why is this news here in PAN? Well, the SAR in Norway is operated under the Minister of Justice and Public Security – the civil police authority. Flexible thinking.

SOUTH KOREA

COAST GUARD: It has been revealed that the Korea Coast Guard's utilisation rate of Russian-made helicopters has fallen to under 50% this year. The primary reason attributed to the decline is the disruption in parts supply, which has been exacerbated by the ongoing conflict between Ukraine and Russia. The Kamov helicopters were acquired by the South Korean government as part of a US\$1.47 billion (1.99 trillion won) economic cooperation package provided to the former Soviet Union. Among the 19 helicopters currently held by the KCG, seven of them are Kamov helicopters. Unlike conventional ones, these helicopters primarily utilize coaxial contra-rotating rotors and are mainly employed for maritime rescue operations in



Kamov Ka-32 File image

adverse weather conditions and large-scale wildfire suppression missions.

However, the low operational rate of the KCG's Kamov helicopters this year is at a critical level. Last month the availability figures of the Coast Guard Kamov KA-32 helicopters this year stands at 49.8%, a significant decline.

The primary reason for this has been the prolonged disruption in parts supply due to the ongoing conflict between Ukraine and Russia.

When examining the helicopter-specific operational data by agency, it is evident that the Western Regional Coast Guard, where half of the fleet comprises Kamov helicopters, is facing an even more severe issue with an operational rate of 55.8%. The situation is exacerbated by the difference in spares use. Where a modern western helicopter might fly for 2,000 hours before requiring parts the Kamov's, first introduced 30 years ago, consume parts after just a few hundred hours. The parts are usually cheaper but simply no longer available so easily. [Business Korea]

UNITED KINGDOM

SHETLAND: There are plans to increase the response time for the Sumburgh based search and rescue helicopter and this has raised concerns locally and from Northern Isles MP Alistair Carmichael.

The proposal, part of the Maritime and Coastguard Agency's UKSAR2G programme, is to increase the 'readiness state' to one hour from October 2026 onwards. At the moment it is 15 minutes in the daytime and rising to 45 minutes later on. Discussions relating to readiness states beyond this date are ongoing.

NEWQUAY: The crew of an HM Coastguard search-and-rescue-helicopter has won an accolade from the Shipwrecked Mariners' Society for a brave operation that saved eight sailors during Storm Claudio in October last year.

The initial alert was for an urgent medical transfer, but as they flew to the scene the challenge became more complicated, with the yacht crew considering abandoning ship, insufficient lifejackets on board, and two of them described as being in a "poor" condition. Over the next hour, the HM Coastguard crew battled lashing rain, mountainous waves and extremely poor visibility to save the eight sailors.

The four-strong team based in Newquay, Cornwall, were presented with the Edward & Maisie Lewis Award at the annual ceremony held in Fishmongers Hall, London, to recognise skill and gallantry at sea.

The crew of the helicopter – operated and supplied under contract by Bristow Helicopters Ltd – comprised Captain Debdash Bhattacharya, Co-Pilot Mark Coupland, Winch Operator Jason Bibby and the Winch Paramedic Carlton Real. Between them they rescued eight people from French yacht Gannet which was taking on water after being caught in fierce winds.

The initial alert, just after 9pm on the night of Monday 31 October last year, was to conduct an urgent medical transfer. But as they flew to the scene the challenge became more complicated with the yacht crew considering abandoning ship, insufficient lifejackets on board, and two of them described as being in a "poor" condition. Over the next hour, the HM Coastguard crew battled lashing rain, mountainous waves and extremely poor visibility to winch up six of the eight sailors to safety.

Lifting off the last two brought fresh difficulties as it would leave the helm unattended, losing control of the yacht and ability to keep it steady for the helicopter hovering above. The solution was a manoeuvre known as a triple-man lift – which brought up the remaining pair in one go and completed a rescue mission full of bravery and professionalism. The yacht was towed to Newlyn by the RNLI's all-weather lifeboat from Penlee which supported the operation.



The award winning crew
©MCA

UNITED STATES

WYOMING: Teton County Search and Rescue has taken delivery of a new \$7.25M Airbus Helicopters H125, N91122, c/n 9326, a 2022 built helicopter custom-built for their mountain rescue missions.

Launched at an event in their hangar on October 14 the Ferrari-red helicopter makes Teton County the first in Wyoming to have its own rescue helicopter. The red exterior was chosen for high visibility, which, along with the white and black painted mountainscape, mirrors the team's freshly revamped logo.

It took a nine-month campaign by the Teton County Search and Rescue Foundation to secure the funds needed to bring the year-round rescue-dedicated craft home. Previous helicopters have been leased in for just part of the year and were based on airframe availability, a factor that often meant the airframe was less than ideal.



Ownership brings with it the option to customisation. The new airframe brings greater power as standard and the option to remove unnecessary parts, like the plastic interior, removed to reduce the aircraft's weight. Removing half of the front instrument panel saves weight and provides more space for a stretcher casualty. A lithium battery was substituted for the traditional lead acid battery, which not only saved 20 pounds but hastens the start time of the engine.

There's a crash-resistant fuel tank and several cargo hooks. The latter come in especially handy when short-hauling human cargo out of avalanche country. Thanks to a rear-facing camera, the pilot can see behind when landing in tightly wooded or congested locations. An infrared camera penetrates meteorological conditions like smoke and fog. Vision is also enhanced by the "high visibility window package." There's a lot more window space, improving the crew awareness of the external view. That improves safety and also a search and rescue capability. A FastFin Tail Rotor Enhancement kit was added to enhance stability by taking some of the load off of the tail rotor. It also increases payload to altitude.

Where it used to take 35 to 40 minutes to connect the previous Life Seeker unit — which turns the helicopter into a flying cellphone tower — the newly installed "plug and play" Life Seeker unit is ready in five minutes.

The operation is working with the Federal Aviation Administration to obtain the Part 133 and Part 135 licenses, which will allow the aircraft to contract services with federal and private partners. For example, the helicopter is equipped with water buckets capable of fighting wildfires if the need arises to assist the U.S. Forest Service.

The county owns the helicopter and employs the pilot through the Teton County Sheriff's Office budget, which oversees SAR operations as stipulated by Wyoming state statute.

Rescues will continue to be a free service provided by the 39 volunteers who are on call 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. The allocation of the registration sequence N91122 is significant; the 911 is the familiar emergency number and 22 is the state's numerical designation for Teton County.

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INDUSTRY

Meeker-Airfilm has announced they have received FAA approval for their utility step mount for the Airbus H145 D3 helicopter. The step mount offers the most robust design, dual payload capability and greatest camera stability available. EASA approval is in progress.

Meeker Aviation in partner with Airfilm Camera Systems is the world leader in the design and manufacture of payload mounts for primarily helicopters and some fixed wing applications. With over 3,000 STC'd products in service and more entering into service daily, they continue to develop new products and support existing designs worldwide. There are very few modern emergency services helicopters and fixed wing that do not now contain at least one Meeker mount, fastening, or gadget.



Editor: Meanwhile Cal Meeker the Canadian CEO [centre] has been feeding off his other passion in life, motor racing. Last month he won two races in his Tyrrell at the Masters Historic Racing at the Circuit of the Americas, a FIA-specification 3.426-mile motor racing track and facilities located in Austin, Texas. The same weekend as the US F1 race.



An image of a development **Airbus Helicopter** H135 – currently assumed to be designated the H135 T4 – on test at the factory in Germany. As previously reported the most obvious alterations in the design include the deletion of the rear cabin window, the addition of a five blade main rotor head, the movement of the horizontal stabiliser to the top of the Fenestron and some detail changes to the Fenestron blade arrangements. [© via Michael Mau]



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Airbus Helicopters' demonstrator FlightLab has successfully tested an electric flight control system in preparation of a new human machine interface (HMI) that will equip CityAirbus NextGen, Airbus' eVTOL prototype. This milestone represents an important step towards ushering in a new generation of electric powered urban air mobility aircraft.

The pilot controls have been considerably simplified thanks to the enhanced piloting assistance provided by the electric flight control system. Marking a first in the helicopter industry, one single piloting stick replaces the three conventional pilot controls (cyclic, pedals, collective) and is able to control all aircraft axes. Using the single stick, the pilot is able to perform all manoeuvres: take-off & landing, climb, descent, acceleration, deceleration, turn, and approach.

The single stick takes up less space, offers improved visibility to the pilot and is combined with a revised HMI which uses simple displays, providing a selection of information specifically tailored to eVTOLs. After the success of the flight test campaign Airbus Helicopters is working on finalising the details of this new system before new tests are conducted in the framework of Vertex, a project conducted in partnership with Airbus UpNext that will advance autonomy even further by managing navigation and simplifying mission preparation.

MH65E LATEST

Coast Guard Air Station Detroit, Michigan, received its first upgraded Aerospatiale/Airbus MH-65E Dolphin helicopter in late September to replace the legacy MH-65D helicopters that support Coast Guard missions throughout the Great Lakes region.

The avionics upgrade to the "E" configuration provides enhanced search and rescue capabilities including modern "glass cockpit" technology that increases pilot and aircrew situational awareness and provides commonality with the service's Sikorsky MH-60T Jayhawk fleet. The Dolphin upgrades also include reliability and capability improvements for the automatic flight control system, enhanced digital weather and surface radar, and multifunctional displays with more accurate fuel calculations. The upgrades extend the aircraft service life to the late 2030s.

The transition of Air Station Detroit's five MH-65D helicopters to the upgraded "E" configuration is expected to take approximately two months. During the upgrade period, the unit's 23 pilots will undergo a three-week transition course at the Coast Guard's Aviation Training Center in Mobile, Alabama. Aircrew and mechanics will receive formal training specific to their roles and duties delivered by a team from the Coast Guard's Aviation Technical Training Center in Elizabeth City, North Carolina.

Each MH-65D undergoes a six-month conversion to the MH-65E at the Coast Guard's Aviation Logistics

U.S. COAST GUARD



Center in Elizabeth City, North Carolina. Detroit is the 11th of 13 MH-65 Air Stations to receive the upgraded MH-65E. The Coast Guard plans to complete conversion of all 98 of its Dolphin helicopters to the MH-65E configuration by the end of 2024. ^(USCG)

Editor: The Aerospatiale SA366 G1 Dauphin version was selected by the United States Coast Guard in 1979 as its new short-range recovery (SRR) air-sea rescue helicopter. In total 99 airframes were acquired and given the designation HH-65A Dolphin. The Dolphin was manufactured by Aerospatiale Helicopter Corporation (later to morph into American Eurocopter and more recently Airbus and assembled in Grand Prairie, Texas. It was originally fitted with US Lycoming engines.

The same airframes were progressively modified and upgrade, the last being to MH-65D standard in 2009. It was 2015 before the Coast Guard delivered its 93rd upgraded MH-65D Dolphin to Air Station Detroit May 8, 2015, and completed the programme of re-equipment. Six further upgrades were completed as maintenance spares. The fleet has accumulated in excess of 116,417 flight hours.

The current new MH-65E standard modernises the cockpit by installing the "glass" instruments, replace the legacy analogue automatic flight control with a digital system, and installing a digital weather radar system. Deliveries of this upgrade began in 2017.

MD Helicopters (MDH) is celebrating one year since emerging from bankruptcy, highlighting its growth and future plans.

When they left bankruptcy, they were leaving two or three years of uncertainty due to the bankruptcy and ownership changes. The customers suffered with poor service and support. The goal during the past year was to stabilise the company and grow it while significantly improving customer support. In the period they feel they have come a long way and customers are reaping the benefits.

Under its new leadership, MDH has received orders for more than 20 military and commercial aircraft and is currently filling the 2024 order book, which is conservatively expected to be 22 aircraft. In addition to sold aircraft, additional aircraft are being added to the line as well to ensure customers who need aircraft sooner can take delivery of a new helicopter in as few as four to six months.

To meet these expanded manufacturing goals, MDH hired more than 160 new employees in the past year and is maintaining a 98% retention rate.

MD Helicopters appears to be closing in on a decision regarding the future of its MD902, which could po

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NEWS FROM LEONARDO

The AW169 light intermediate twin engine helicopter's operational capabilities and range of options will grow further with the launch of a 5,100 kg (11,243 lb) IGW kit and an 11-seater configuration fully compliant with the IOGP (International Association of Oil & Gas Producers) Report 690. Both will be made available for the aircraft version with skid landing gear.

The 5,100 kg (11,243 lb) kit for the AW169 skid version, originally conceived to meet government and defence requirements for missions like troop transport and combat operations, will also respond to evolving civil and public service market needs leveraging multiple operational and performance benefits. Key factors to this capability expansion are the inherent growth potential of the type not requiring modifications in the design of critical components, and the performance increase packages, delivering greater engine and transmission power as well as improved aerodynamics in all conditions and for all applications. Compared with the standard 4,800 kg (10582 lb) Maximum Take-off Weight, the extra 300 kg (661 lb) available with the 5,100 kg IGW kit allows the embarkation of three more passengers or the addition of fuel for approximately one hour of operations. Existing operators of the type's version with skids will be able to retrofit the 5,100 kg IGW kit to enhance their aircraft's capabilities.

As an additional option, the 11-seater configuration, fully compliant with the IOGP Report 690 (Offshore Helicopter Recommended Practices), will introduce a new modular fuel tank system and two additional Type IV emergency exits in the cabin, increasing the total number from four to six. The 11 seats configuration will be available for the skid-fitted version in combination with the 5,100 kg IGW kit. This solution will allow the type to satisfy even more demanding offshore transport requirements in terms of payload, range, and compliance with IOGP latest standards.

The Certification of the IGW increase is expected in 2024 while the 11-seater configuration with new modular fuel tank is planned for certification in 2026.

These latest operational capabilities will add to the EASA (European Aviation Safety Agency) certifications of the skid undercarriage and unique IFR, single pilot, Advanced Search and Rescue (SAR) Modes, both achieved in late 2022.





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(from page 21)

tentially see the manufacturer divest the NOTAR-equipped type. Sale of the type is not ruled out, there being several expressions of interest in it. Although not yet finalised there seems to be a parallel intention to drop NOTAR technology in the smaller types based on the MD500 but the company will still support the relatively small fleet of MD520N and MD600N aircraft and has recently restocked spares.

Chief executive Brad Pedersen says the Arizona-based manufacturer is still “evaluating” options for the MD902 line, including a sale. [Flight]

Ed: Once a great hope for market dominance by its various owners, the MD902 failed to keep pace with development mainly through being starved of finance. New examples of the 31-years old MD902 have not been available for more than a decade. Although the most recent airframe, 900-00141, is nominally 2014 900-00139 is listed as 2010. After the first few, main fuselage structures were built in Turkey and eventually the last few built by TAI were taken to the USA to sit in the Mesa facility. No new build structures were completed. Since then, there has been regular talk about resurrecting the only modern type in the production line up, including a fully revised MD969, but no action was ever taken.

As each year passed the development of the type failed to keep pace with its main rivals (the Airbus H135 and Bell 429) and the design was no longer technically advanced.

This leaves MD offering only variants of one product, the MD530, based on the 1960s Hughes OH-6A Vietnam era military helicopter.

Long term enthusiasts of the MD and Notar have been the police in Belgium. The lack of factory support for the 902/Notar has effectively driven them to look elsewhere. ©PAR/PAvCon Europe 2014



Last month MDH received the Arizona Manufacturers Council's (AMC) Medium Manufacturer of the Year Award during a luncheon at Grand Canyon University Arena. The AMC council stated it was thrilled to recognize MD Helicopters, a long-time fixture in Arizona's manufacturing industry and a leader in one of the nation's fastest growing manufacturing sectors. The sector employs more than 600,000 people and positively impacts the state economy by \$77 billion a year and MDH is a significant contributor.

The AMC award comes on the heels of MDHs' participation in an Arizona Defense and Industry Coalition (AZDIC) delegation trip to Ukraine to explore partnership and production opportunities with Ukraine. The group also participated in launching the inaugural International Defense Industries Forum (DFNC1) with Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

During the Forum, AZDIC and the delegation members signed the Ukraine Defense Industry Compact, furthering their commitment and joining defense industry leaders around the world in supporting Ukraine's fight for freedom and independence. This also reaffirms their commitment to the recovery and reconstruction of Ukraine's economy by seeking opportunities to engage in trade and investment, share expertise, and participate in other partnership-based business activities. MD Helicopters Vice President of Sales and Marketing Jason Lindauer joined leaders of four other Arizona defense and industry companies on the delegation.

Beginning with new aircraft deliveries in 2024, **Pilatus** will be offering an upgraded model that has extended the payload-range capability of its PC-24 jet. It will offer a maximum range with six passengers of 2,000 nautical miles (3,704 kilometers).

Pilatus also incorporated an array of new interior amenities, including a large side-facing divan which can be converted into a bed.

The new PC-24 features a 600-pound (272 kg) increase in full fuel payload and maximum payload capacity. This enables operators the increase in maximum range by 200 nm (370 km) with six passengers on board.

All PC-24s from serial number 501 onwards will be equipped with a new feature to enable predictive services. The automated data transmission of key aircraft data directly to Pilatus upon landing will be analysed and, if necessary, a predictive recommendation is made to the operator.

The **2023 NBAA-BACE** is the year's most significant event for the business aviation industry, bringing together business leaders, owners, operators, government. The content is rarely emergency services orientated but it is an event well worth at least one visit in life. The fact that it is also held in Las Vegas is a major positive consideration. In addition to exhibits at the Las Vegas Convention Center and Henderson Executive Airport, the 2023 NBAA Business Aviation Convention & Exhibition (NBAA-BACE) hosts a variety of significant events for the business aviation industry.

This year NBAA 2023 regular **Lifeport** were displaying their new electric reclining seat. LifePort continues to innovate and bring new products/solutions to the market. [Frank

Graham]



DART Aerospace has partnered with United Rotorcraft to develop an advanced aerial firefighting system tailored for the Airbus Super Puma family of helicopters.

The new aerial firefighting system will consist of a fixed, external belly-mounted water tank with a capacity of 4000L (1056 gal) and system controls located in the cockpit. United Rotorcraft will also develop multi-mission equipment packages to extend the year-round value of the helicopter platform for operator-specific requirements. A key objective includes certification by FAA, EASA, and Transport Canada Supplemental Type Certificates (STC).

Currently, the companies produce similar aerial firefighting capabilities for other Type 1 helicopters. The new Super Puma system, an extension of their aerial firefighting solution portfolios, will provide the market with crucial wildfire attack capability for Type 1 rotorcraft where there is an estimated 25% capacity gap globally. With this long-term agreement, the team will identify and meet additional market requirements with a type-certified aerial firefighting system for operators of the Super Puma helicopter family, including new and legacy Airbus H225 and AS332 aircraft. Targeted end users include government agencies and commercial operators worldwide requiring a highly effective multi-mission solution.

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Curtiss-Wright's Defense Solutions Division and **Ultra PCS** have announced a collaborative agreement to develop FortressHUMS, a new compact and lightweight ED-112A compliant Cockpit Voice and Flight Data Recorder with integral Health and Usage Monitoring System (HUMS) capability designed for use on rotorcraft platforms. FortressHUMS uniquely combines flight data recording and HUMS capabilities in an easy-to-install and affordable single-box solution weighing only a fraction of alternative systems. In a typical installation, the overall system weight (FortressHUMS unit + cables and sensors) is reduced from 70 lbs. to 13 lbs. (32 kg to 6 kg) versus currently available alternatives.

FortressHUMS can be quickly and easily retrofitted onto a helicopter to provide a size, weight, and power (SWaP)-optimized single box solution for mandatory flight recording combined with a HUMS solution for maintenance, safety, fleet management, and supply chain interface. Its innovative serial communications network of intelligent sensors, connected via a single cable routed throughout the aircraft, enables rapid integration, significantly reduces system complexity, and reduces the amount of time the aircraft needs to be grounded for installation.

FortressHUMS is ideal for use in helicopter applications where operators are seeking to extend aircraft operational life and implement predictive maintenance programs. It can be deployed as a permanent-installed combined HUMS and recorder system for new aircraft construction, or as an upgrade path for customers who implement an initial Fortress Recorder-only installation.

Universal Avionics (UA), an Elbit Systems company, have announced Performance Package capabilities for Flight Partner Connected Avionics in a new partnership with Aircraft Performance Group (APG). The new package fully integrates with the existing workflows of the Connected FMS and relies on APG's performance for take-off and engine-out calculations, obstacle analysis, landing factors, and more. APG's engine allows for accurate weight and balance calculations that can enhance aircraft ground handling and increase fuel savings for efficient flight operations. By teaming up with APG, Universal aims to deliver the highest level of accuracy and reliability in support of flight performance planning for business jet operators.

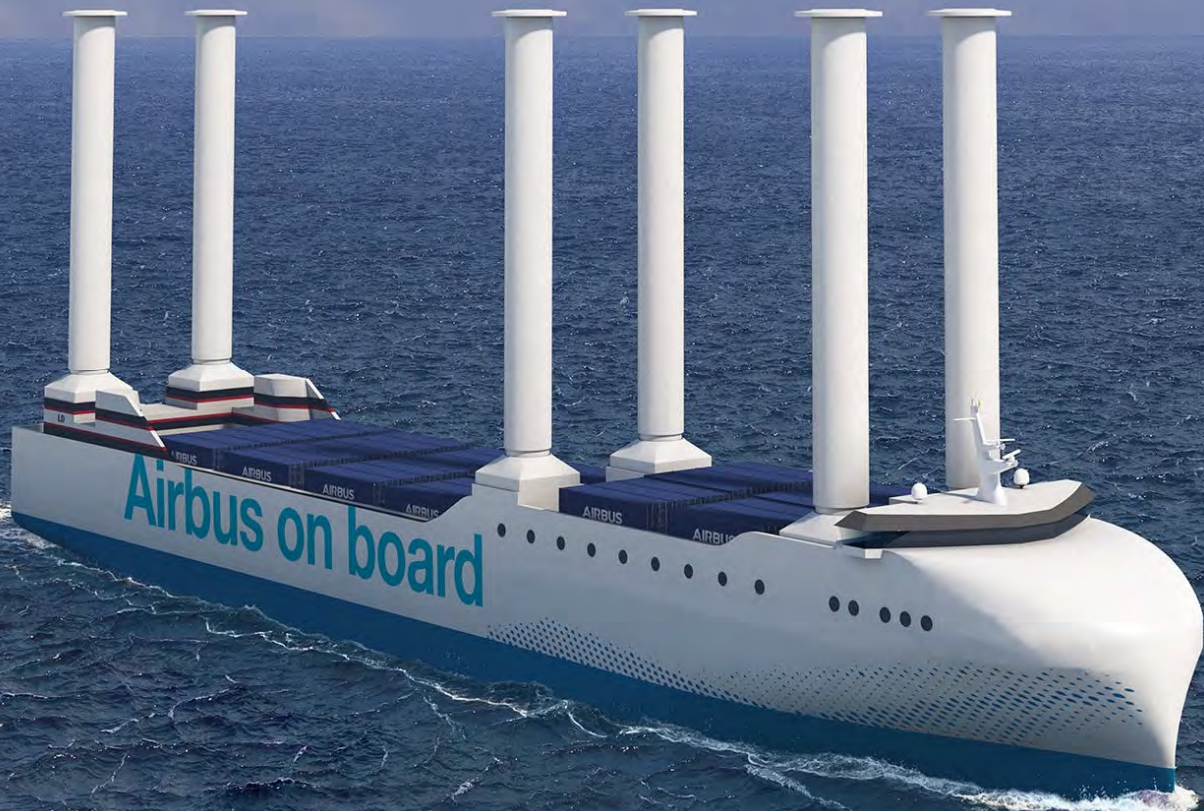
As part of Universal Avionics FlightPartner™ Connected Avionics App, users will now have access to this optional performance package available for most aircraft and engine type combinations. It enables pilots to establish accurate Weight and Balance, Take-off and Landing performance in the context of flight planning conditions, ensure LDTA compliance, and support Alternate and Emergency/EO return calculations including shortened runway situations. This then feeds the Connected SBAS FMS with the associated results in just a few clicks.

The **European Union** has confirmed that the launch of its new travel system for non-EU visitors (ETIAS) has been further delayed until spring 2025. The European Council has endorsed a new timeline for the EU's roll-out of several major new digital IT projects including ETIAS and EES. This new schedule would see EES finally being ready to go into operation in autumn 2024 with ETIAS set to follow in spring 2025. Previously ETIAS had been due to be launched in 2024, that being a three year delay on the original schedule.

With ETIAS in place visitors from outside the EU who currently have visa-waiver status, including travelers from the UK and US, will have to pay a fee (currently planned to be €7) to apply for an ETIAS authorisation to visit thirty European countries. Each ETIAS will be valid for three years or until the expiry date of the travel document. EES will replace the current manual passport stamping regime in the EU with an electronic registration system.

Ed: Many nations, including the USA and EU, will be welcome to just breeze into the United Kingdom but if the Americans, Brits and many others want to travel to the EU they will need to pay a negligible fee to do that. That is until the politicians decide that it is a money spinner of course and ramp up the price. All a bit Third World and the US cannot complain as they already charge a small fee (\$21) to all and sundry to get in on a Visa Waiver (ESTA), far more for a real Visa. Elsewhere fees can be a fair bit more attention grabbing, over \$160 for the UAE, \$50 for Oman, \$37 for the Philippines, \$30 for Indonesia,.





Airbus will renew the entire fleet of chartered vessels that transport aircraft subassemblies between production facilities in Europe and the United States with three modern, low-emission roll-on/roll-off vessels, supported by wind-assisted propulsion.

Airbus has commissioned shipowner Louis Dreyfus Armateurs to build, own and operate these new, highly efficient vessels that will enter into service from 2026. The fleet is primarily aimed at supporting the fixed wing airliner production rather than helicopters.

The new fleet is expected to reduce average annual transatlantic CO₂ emissions from 68,000 to 33,000 tonnes by 2030. This will contribute to Airbus' commitment to reduce its overall industrial emissions by up to 63% by the end of the decade - compared to 2015 as baseline year - in line with the 1.5°C pathway of the Paris Agreement.

Airbus will gradually renew the chartered vessels that ferry its aircraft subassemblies across the Atlantic between Saint-Nazaire, France, and its single-aisle aircraft final assembly line in Mobile, Alabama.

The new vessels will be powered by a combination of six Flettner rotors - large, rotating cylinders that generate lift thanks to the wind, propelling the ship forward - and two dual-fuel engines running on maritime diesel oil and e-methanol. Additionally, routing software will optimise the vessels' journey across the Atlantic, maximising wind propulsion and avoiding drag caused by adverse ocean conditions.

The fleet renewal also supports Airbus ambition to increase A320 family production rate to 75 aircraft per month by 2026. Each new transatlantic vessel will have the capacity to transport around seventy 40-foot containers and six single-aisle aircraft sub assembly sets - wings, fuselage, engine pylons, horizontal and vertical tail planes - compared to three to four sets with current cargo ships



November 14, 1988 and the Gazelle G-MANN is helping out police investigating the murder of Anna Humphries at Much Wenlock. Her body was found in the River Severn in Shropshire
©PAN Collection, from Midlands Air Operations Unit

Although there are still a handful of examples in use for law enforcement across the world the days of the Sud/Aerospatiale/Westland Gazelle are numbered in the United Kingdom. A craft of the mid-1970s the Gazelle introduced the enclosed tail rotor or Fenestron to the market (although many consider it was a very noisy addition in its early days) now a firm element associated with many Airbus Helicopter designs. The British Army has now withdrawn it from service, a little earlier than planned but still after having decades of service. The French Army still retain theirs.

Fifty years ago, and before the carriage of EO/IR sensors was even a dream, the Gazelle and the Bell 206 JetRanger were the two primary helicopter types serving the need for 'top end' helicopter needs in Britain. In those days even a single turbine helicopter was seen as really extravagant compared to the usual operational craft—the Hughes 200 or 300 and Bell 47. That was before there was an strict edict for twin turbines to undertake emergency services work!

In the United Kingdom the civil Gazelle served numerous police services, the military variant was mainly associated with the operations in Northern Ireland during 'The Troubles' but were involved in Aid to the Civil Power elsewhere in the country from time to time.



Circa 1975 this Gazelle saw use with the Metropolitan Police PAN Collection

As we all know *Police Aviation News* has been at the cutting edge of e-magazines for nearly 23 years now as 'other' magazines bent to the inevitable and stage by stage moved from wholly print to partial and then finally wholly digital publications. Some folded along the way in that they stayed too long in print. It sounds a good promotional story, but PAN was never viable as a wholly print publication in the first place so the 'leading edge' was pure chance and circumstance. The latest niche market publication to transfer to a wholly digital future is *Emergency Services Times*. They recently announced that they had 'exciting news' about the digital future of their publication.



Coming in January 2024, the publishers are undergoing a digital transformation, moving away from print publications to adopt an always-online, 365 approach to emergency services news, running alongside our outstanding annual exhibitions. The new digital focus will bring vital content and updates directly to your inbox via daily, weekly, and monthly newsletters. Access year-round, high-quality content through our new series of expert-led webinars, and take an in-depth look at some of the sector's most vital topics through insight papers and themed special edition newsletters.

The December issue of *Emergency Services Times* will be the final printed publication. As the needs of the emergency services sector continue to evolve, they are confident that their move to a more agile, digital first approach means you will stay up to date wherever you are.

Editor: I think Police Aviation News can endorse that. Welcome to the future, where were you?



Lucky strike. It could have been so much worse ©Westpac.

ACCIDENTS AND INCIDENTS

29 September 2023 Kawasaki BK117B2 ZK-HKZ Rescue helicopter of Auckland Westpac (Northern Rescue Helicopter Limited) damaged on landing after a mission when strong and unexpected wind gust resulted in main rotor blades striking both vertical stabilisers. The BK-117, had just landed after completing a mission and was powering down when the incident occurred. [Stuff/NZCAA]

30 September 2023 Sikorsky MH-60 US Navy rescue helicopter searching for an injured hiker in Madera County California crash-landed, injuring four people aboard. In the area of Garnet Lake and Thousand Island Lake, the helicopter from Naval Air Station Lemoore “experienced difficulties resulting in a hard landing,” four people on board suffered minor injuries. Madera County is about 40 miles north of Fresno. [The Sacramento Bee]

3 October 2023 MD500 N91CP. St Louis Metro Air Support. Suffered a bird strike with a duck whilst flying. Bird impacted the right screen, smashing it but not otherwise causing damage. Mixed crew St Charles County and St Louis Metro were bloodied but not injured. [Fox 2]

3 October 2023 Bell UH-1H N114FD Firefighting helicopter of Sacramento Metro Fire District Whilst on a doors open training flight over Granite Bay, California the helicopter lost a door and made an emergency landing. The door landed in the garden of a house without causing injury or damage. Metro Fire said in a news release Wednesday that “both doors of the aircraft were secured open and all systems registered normal.”

When the onboard flight officer noticed the sliding door had begun detaching, the pilot was advised to slow down to prepare to land. Before the aircraft could land, the door had fallen off. The pilot then landed the aircraft in nearby Douglas Ranch Park.

Metro Fire said all necessary maintenance and preflight checklists were completed before the helicopter took off. However, a safety review with a third-party company is now underway to determine exactly what happened.

7 October 2023 Cessna 340A HK-4967 Air ambulance of Servicios Aereos Especiales (SAE), Colombia. Departed from Barranquilla-Ernesto Cortissoz International Airport and suffered a main landing gear collapse upon landing at Olaya Herrera Airport, Medellín, Colombia, veering off the runway. The six occupants were not injured and the aircraft received minor damage.

9 October 2023 Bell UH-1H Huey II PR-FEC ‘3’. Policia Civil Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Two Bell Huey’s en-route on a low level aerial patrol over urban terrain, came under small arms fire near Penha, Rio de Janeiro. The 1967 Policia helicopter was struck in the fuel tank and was forced to make a precautionary landing. The other Huey, a military one, was hit on the windshield. [Media/X]

SAFETY

The UK AAIB has issued a report on an incident affecting one of the Tekever drones operating over the English Channel in January this year.

Lydd based Tekever AR5 Evolution Mk 2, G-TEKV suffered loss of the communications link due to a fault in the Satcom antenna, such that it was not under the direct control of the remote pilot for a period of several minutes.

In accordance with contingency procedures, the aircraft entered a holding pattern and the communications link was subsequently re-established. The remainder of the flight proceeded without incident.

The unmanned aircraft had taken off at 0538 hrs and was conducting a flight in Temporary

Danger Area (TDA) EG D098 over the English Channel, in support of UK Border Force operations. Flight operations were conducted from a Ground Control Station (GCS) where the crew control the aircraft and operate the payload. The aircraft was equipped with Satcom to enable Beyond Radio Line of Sight (BRLOS) operations. Satcom was selected as the primary command and control (C2) link, with a Satcom backup on standby. At approximately 1346 hrs the Satcom link dropped out. The aircraft's Return to Home (RTH) flight mode activated and it followed a pre-defined lost link route, remaining within the TDA. At approximately 1348 hrs the Satcom backup channel went from standby to online and the C2 link with the aircraft was regained.

The remote pilot (RP) flew the aircraft closer to the home location to re-establish Radio Line of Sight (RLOS) in order to gain an additional communications link. The RP carried out the procedures for losing Satcom, including resetting the Satcom page on the GCS. Once the aircraft was within range, additional communication links were established using RLOS and 4G. At approximately 1416 hrs the primary Satcom link was re-established. The remainder of the flight was conducted as planned and the aircraft landed uneventfully at 1521 hrs.

As a result of this occurrence, the operator indicated that all future variants of the Tekever AR5 will be equipped with a feature that automatically enables Satcom backup when fewer than two C2 links are available. It is considered that this change will further mitigate the hazard associated with loss of the C2 link.



UNMANNED

TEKEVER's UK team is preparing for a 50% expansion this year. Around 200 jobs are to be created over the next three years at their two UK locations in Aberporth and Southampton. No mention was made of Lydd.

Regular readers may recall the Windracers UAV as one of the craft undertaking Health Service (NHS) drug and sample deliveries to and from relatively remote medical facilities in coastal regions and even delivering mail to the Highlands and islands. Many will have assumed that the craft is flimsy and not designed to operate in snow and ice but a new project is to send the drones south to work with the British Antarctic Survey (BAS). This will see the new Windracers ULTRA UAV drone being tested in Antarctica as a new platform for science in a potentially tough environment.

Late last month the BAS's held an event at their HQ in Cambridge (on **October 30**) to **promote the** UAV drone and meet the science team, engineers and pilots who are to test it in Antarctica in January/February 2024, as well as exploring how it could be used for future research in the Polar Regions.

The Windracers ULTRA is a proven fully autonomous, twin-engine, 10-metre fixed-winged aircraft with a 100 kg flexible payload and range of up to 1,000km – which, together with interchangeable floors allowing for a broad range of science payloads, makes the ULTRA platform capable for use in Antarctica.

The ULTRA will be used on tasks a world away from carrying medical samples for the NHS including the survey of protected environmentally sensitive areas and assess the marine food chain (krill) using cameras; investigate tectonic structures with magnetic and gravity sensors; assess glaciological structures using airborne radar; test an atmospheric turbulence probe for studies of interactions between the ocean and atmosphere.



The National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) helps the police cut crime and keep the public safe by joining up the operational response to the most serious and strategic threats. They have a sergeant looking after their Drones Portfolio and want UK police forces to be at the leading edge of public safety drone operations. To support this ambition we will develop a Centre of Excellence. It will align drone training and

procedures to a national standard that puts the safety of people on the ground and other airspace users first and enhances operational effectiveness. An Authorised Professional Practice (APP) will provide police drone pilots and senior officers with guidelines that ensure the maximum benefits are gained from drones in support of policing, while templates for Operational Authorisations will help local forces deliver the drone support their frontline officers need.

Leading the portfolio for the NPCC since late last year is a Metropolitan Police sergeant – Stuart Lawless – an officer with nine years service who spent a couple of years flying as a PC TFO with NPAS before seeking promotion to sergeant. He is taking the NPCC word to the world and speaking at numerous events including some new and obscure ones. He was scheduled to speak at the 5th IDDES2023 Interpol Drone Expert Summit held at the Olympic Training Center in Chula Vista California on October 23-24. Initial reports of the event state that ‘The summit addressed several crucial themes, including the role of drones in public safety, security, and law enforcement, their impact on privacy and civil liberties, as well as the potential threats and risks posed by drone technology’ but I have no independent assessment available. The last INTERPOL international expert conference on drones took place in Oslo, Norway in June 2022.



In the middle of October the UK Home Office issued an advertisement for a Police Aviation Senior Policy Advisor on Drones.

As Police Aviation senior policy advisor, leading on Drones and supporting wider police aviation policy, the role will offer opportunities to develop a wide range of skills in areas such as stakeholder management, project management, and financial management. You will develop detailed knowledge of police use of drones and its impacts on the wider police aviation portfolio. Responsibilities will include the development of a new Home Office strategic approach to police use of drones, ongoing assessment of government grant/s, and extensive stakeholder engagement with a range of law enforcement partners. The role will require the successful candidate to work effectively and confidently with policy leads, operational staff and private office. The successful candidate will report to the Grade 7 Police Aviation Lead.

A few days later a post by NPCC Counter Drones on X formerly Twitter messaged all UK UAS and Drone operators to ‘ensure you check UK airspace restrictions and not rely on manufacturers inbuilt mapping software and apps.

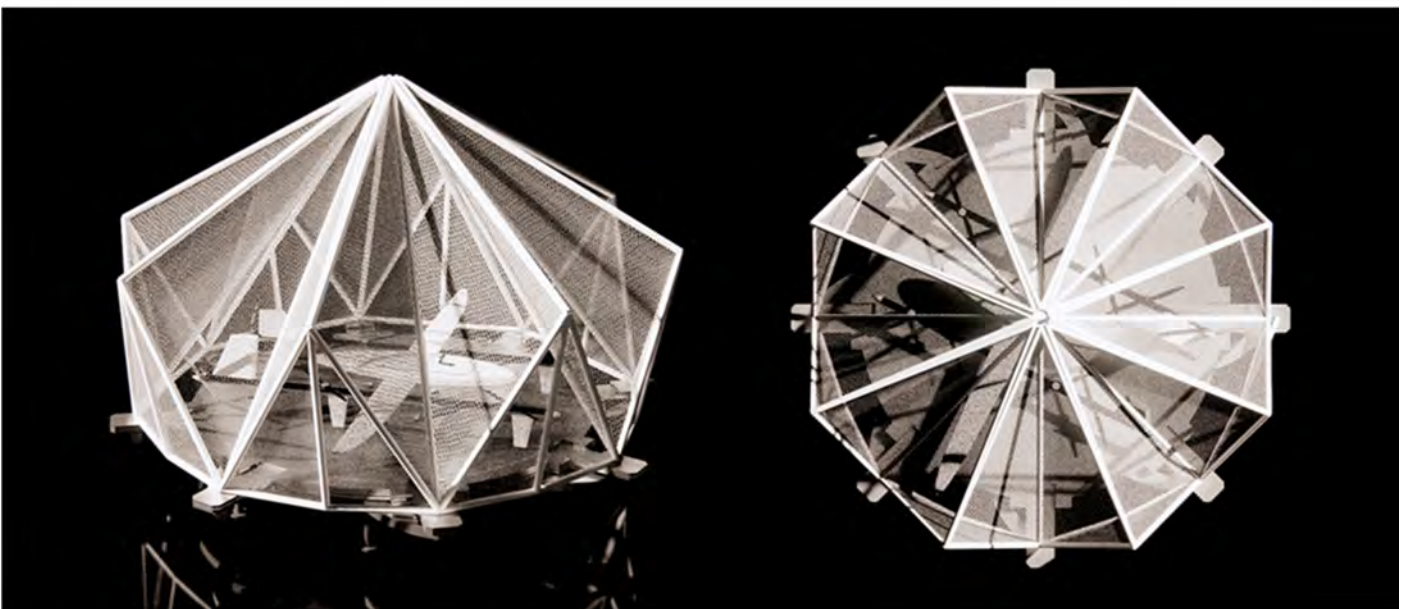
‘Use official source of airspace information such as UK AIP via NATS website’

The driver for the message appears to be a 9/10 CAA notice SN-2023/005 highlighting the inaccuracies after drone operators found their craft flying in restricted airspace that the navigation system was not highlighting.

The PDF for the notice includes useful links to remedial information.

AtkinsRéalis, a global design, engineering and project management company, has revealed its unique and innovative designs for landing pads that will be used by drones delivering vital medical supplies - in a first-of-a-kind project for the UK.

Project CAELUS, a consortium of organisations including AGS Airports, NHS Scotland, University of Strathclyde and AtkinsRéalis, is due to start live flight trials for the UK’s first national distribution network using drones to transport essential medicines, blood, organs and other medical supplies throughout Scotland.



The network, part of the UK Government Future Flight Challenge, will ensure critical medical supplies can be delivered more efficiently. It can also help to reduce waiting times for test results and, crucially, provide equity of care between urban and remote rural communities.

The ground-based infrastructure to support the network is being designed by AtkinsRéalis and the initial concepts for the landing pads have been revealed for the first time. The design is entirely unique, taking its cue from nature to create an origami-inspired structure made of strong, lightweight aluminium, with a lid which will open and close like the petals of a flower.

Innovation and sustainability are at the heart of the design with the intention of making it off-grid by incorporating photo voltaic (PV) panels where possible, to generate the power required to operate its lid and re-charge the drone. And, due to the mobile and lightweight nature of the design, the unit will leave virtually no trace on the environment wherever it is placed.

Chris Crombie, lead designer on the project for AtkinsRéalis said: *“Project CAELUS has the potential to revolutionise how rural and remote communities receive vital supplies in future. The landing infrastructure is an important part of how the network can integrate with those communities.*

“There are a number of considerations in terms of the practical function of this pad as it has to be able to fit into a van or on a trailer to transport it, so it needs to be lightweight. But at the same time it needs to be secure from the elements and strong enough for the job it’s designed for.

“This is the initial design stage but what the team has developed is an entirely unique concept which deliberately echoes the environment it operates in, with its flower-like design. We have essentially come up with a three-piece set of luggage to house the landing pad, the drone and medical supplies safely and securely.

“It has sustainability at its heart and, most importantly will provide NHS Scotland with the infrastructure it needs to operate the drone network and make a real difference to people’s lives.”

The drone landings will be overseen by operators on the ground and separate cases have been designed which enable them to store the medical supplies securely, and to take the drone off its pad for repairs and maintenance when necessary.

The landing pads will be positioned at sites such as GP surgeries, medical centres and hospitals where the drones can land safely, and the unit can be stored securely while supplies are delivered.

The next stage in the development of the pad will be the fabrication of a working prototype which is due to be tested in real world conditions early in 2024. [AR]

PEOPLE

Northamptonshire Chief Constable and Aviation Lead for the National Police Chiefs Council Nick Adderley has followed some of his predecessors in the Aviation Lead role in plunging into controversy.

On 29 September 2023 it was reported in the British media that Adderley had been wearing two campaign medals which he was not entitled to: the South Atlantic Medal for the 1982 Falklands War and the General Service Medal with Northern Ireland clasp. Adderley was only 15 years old when the Falklands War was on. A complaint was made to the office of the Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner. The explanation that Adderley provided was that they had been given to him by his older brothers' to wear. As a result he removed the medals which would normally be worn on the right breast on certain occasions,

Last month the Northamptonshire Police and Crime Commissioner suspended Adderley for possible offences of misconduct in public office and false representation.

[Wikipedia/Media]

Ed: In last June’s edition of PAN the publication announced that Adderley was the current NPCC Lead on Aviation. For uncertain reasoning the NPCC had been shy of announcing the fact. Due to errors in information recorded on him PAN erroneously stated that he had joined the Royal Navy in 1981. He would have been too young. In the image above he is seen wearing the two additional awards in addition to the three rightly issued to him.

His suspension over the medal issue is a further reflection on the inability of the NPCC to get its act together to attract and retain an Aviation Lead at a time when NPAS seriously needs some stability.



www.policeaviationnews.com



London Air Ambulance have announced the appointment of Captain Sam Tompkins as Chief Pilot. Captain Tompkins, who has been flying with the service since 2022, will assume his new role in December 2023.

Meanwhile G-LAAA the first of the two Airbus H135 helicopter that will replace the existing pair of MD902 in London Air Ambulance service (G-EHMS c/n 00068 operational since 2000 and G-LNDN c/n 00125 in service since 2016) has been noted being prepared for flight test in Germany. At the time of publication the markings G-LAAA are not being featured by the UK CAA.



ERRATUM

Last month on page 36 an image was used of multiple German police helicopters. Although the image retained its Aviation Media logo it was wrongly noted as being among a batch supplied by Michael Mau. This was an error.

MOVE ALONG THERE

I guess most of the readership of PAN may have missed out on a Reggae disc entitled *Police in Helicopter* when it appeared for the first time in 1983, and most will probably never have heard of the late artist John Holt who sang it. Fortunately the record company that issued it have other thoughts and they recently marked its 40th anniversary complete with promoting a You Tube rendition (I will leave you to find it yourself if you are into Reggae

I suppose it's the first song I am aware of that features Police in helicopter as a theme maybe it needs to be a theme tune for future editions of PAVCon Europe (if not APSA)?

It does have a serious historic side though and is said to have been an iconic ganja anthems in Jamaica forty years ago. At the time it was a retaliation for the marijuana eradication efforts that the United States Government had compelled the Jamaican government to undertake.

Holt had written the song to address the Cannabis search-and-destroy efforts, undertaken by air and on land, which included 'police' helicopters hovering above burning Ganja farms. The security forces were mandated to undertake to operations by the political leaders pressured by the USA.

The cash strapped Jamaican politicians were described as facing a US Government assault on American drug abuse being waged on Jamaican soil as Operation Buccaneer I.

That operation began in 1974 under the socialist administration of Michael Manley under pressure from US President Nixon, Jamaican police coordinated Operation Buccaneer with the CIA and US Military to eradicate marijuana from the island.

The same process was revived in the 1980s after US President Ronald Reagan began his "war on drugs," which escalated the destruction of marijuana with aerial seek and destroy missions burning fields five days per week.

In each case the pressure was US economic assistance and help in securing continued international loans needed to repay what was then, the island's \$3.5 billion debt, one of the largest per-capita debts in the world.



No surprise of course that *Police in Helicopter*, did not deter the Americans, who went on to stage Opera-

tion Buccaneer II and Operation Buccaneer III in the face of general Jamaican opposition. It was reported that the downdraught from the helicopters in use was ruining crops and lifting roofs off the ramshackle homes of the farmers.

This was all before Jamaica had got its Defence Force together and the money for the attack on the ganga crops was mainly to lease in two Bell 212 helicopters flown by Americans backed up with grass cutters and 50 personal backpack sprayers that antidrug teams used to poison the fields.

Some of the money reportedly went towards supporting Jamaican Coast Guard boats and a few maritime radars. Nearly \$9M in U.S. military assistance was being spent on the operation, carried out by the Jamaican Defence Force (JDF) and the Jamaican Constabulary Force (JCF) and that the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration also shared intelligence with Jamaican authorities "on reportedly widespread police and army corruption"

The government destroyed half of the crop in 1986 but exports to the USA were up on 1985. In short it was not a brilliant success, thanks to the wily farmers and the skill of dealers. The trade brought many benefits to the islands and as a result nearly half the population were against the eradication programme. Not too many years ago nearly every law enforcement helicopter programme in the USA was based on aircraft and funding derived from the war on drugs. Times Change.



I am not sure whether the hard pressed population of those times would be too impressed with the latest from the 'war on drugs USA' - nearly every state has given up on eradication of the weed and 'personal use' now seems to be counted in how many acres you are growing in your back yard. [Dancehall/PAR]

WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO ABOUT PAVCon in 2024?



It is hoped that next year PAVCon Europe will be held in France for the first time in its 14 year history. At the 2023 event held in Bilbao attending French officers of the Forces Aériennes de la Gendarmerie Nationale (FAGN) expressed an interest in the idea. Negotiations are still underway.

Holding the event in the usual mid-year slot has been found to be all but impossible due to existing commitments of the Gendarmerie next summer (training and operations related to the Paris Olympics in July 2024), as a result both sides are considering whether we can make the event work in the Bordeaux region during September 2024. Watch this space.

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STORM BABET

In the United Kingdom Storm Babet lasted just 4 days, 18 - 21 October, although flooding continued after several rivers burst their banks, including Britain's longest river, the River Severn. The storm is reported to have claimed 8 lives. In Scotland, one lady, aged 57 was swept into a river in Angus. Also, the body of a man was found in a car after he was trapped by floodwater in Aberdeenshire. In England, a man in his 60's drowned in fast flowing flood water in Shropshire and an 83-year-old grandmother died in her flooded home in Derbyshire. Other fatalities included one person killed by a falling tree and there were a number of weather related road accidents. Forty five workers were airlifted by HM Coastguard rescue helicopters from the North Sea drilling platform, Stena Spey, 146 miles east of Aberdeen, after it lost 4 of its 8 anchors due to it being battered by the severe weather.

At the height of Storm Babet, the North Sea drilling platform, Stena Spey lost 4 of its 8 anchors.



Stena

The beginning of the storm saw heavy rainfall with winds gusting 70 mph in the north east of Scotland. However, severe flooding also took place in England, in Bedfordshire, Derbyshire, Lincolnshire, Nottinghamshire, South Yorkshire, Suffolk and Shropshire, which was reminiscent of the very serious floods of 2007. These floods, those in 2007, were described as the most serious peacetime emergency in the UK since World War 2. In that year, 55,000 properties were flooded, 7,000 people were rescued and 13 lives were lost in the summer months of June and July. The lessons learned were captured by Sir Michael Pitt in his government sponsored independent review, 'The Pitt Review (UK Floods)' published in 2008.

Fast forward to 2023 and, at the time of writing, Storm Babet has, in addition to the loss of 8 lives, resulted in 2,146 properties being flooded, together with an estimated 96,000 properties protected as a result of the response by the Environment Agency (EA). This response included, from the EA, its tried and tested warning system with a choice of warnings by telephone call, text, or e-mail; some 300,000 messages were sent. At its peak more than 300 flood warnings (flooding is expected) were issued, together with several hundred flood alerts (flooding is possible) Also, 20 high volume pumps and 5 smaller volume pumps were deployed. In the meantime the Met Office issued 2 'Red Warnings' for exceptional and persistent heavy rain in eastern Scotland..

Houses flooded in Retford, Nottinghamshire



Nottinghamshire FRS

FLOOD PREVENTION

Every life lost and every property flooded is a personal tragedy. Moreover, after 15 years, many of the lessons that were learned in 2007/2008 would now seem to have been lost, or ignored. Despite improved flood defences, rivers are still breaching their banks and houses, particularly those built on flood plains, are still being flooded! Too much reliance is still placed on sandbags when, 15 years ago, the 'Pitt Review' recommended flood boards, also called floodgates, to cover doors, together with high level air bricks, or covers to prevent water entering a house through the walls. Unfortunately, some home owners, those with houses in danger of flooding, are, in fact, still using sandbags. That is, if sandbags, together with sand, can be sourced, often at short notice and often after a flood warning has been promulgated by the EA.

Floodgates, together with high level air bricks, were recommended by the 'Pitt Review' provide a first line of defence to prevent houses being flooded.



Stormguard Floodplan

VISUALISATION

A further recommendation, by the 'Pitt Review' was the use of aerial reconnaissance, described by Sir Michael Pitt as, 'visualisation' to assist incident commanders to manage their resources, manpower and equipment, including the deployment of high volume pumps to lower water levels. Moreover, since 2007 many police forces, together with the fire and rescue services have formed drone units to gain a 'birds eye' view of an incident. The most popular drones, those that are currently available, include the DJI Mavic, the Inspire and the Matrice.

However, these drones, without the capability to be operated beyond visual line of sight (BVLOS) are limited to fixed point operations with the drone and its crew arriving at the scene of an incident by road. The London Fire Brigade deploy their drones with a minimum crew of 2, a 'pilot' and a camera operator. Whenever possible a third crew member will act as an observer. Moreover without the ability to 'see and avoid' it may be agreed that drones are best suited to an urban environment with manned aircraft used in a rural setting. With current technology to fly a drone BVLOS requires the operating airspace to be closed to manned aircraft to guarantee safe in-flight separation between the drone and other aircraft.

The London Fire Brigade operates its drones with a crew of 2, 'pilot' and camera operator with, in addition, a third person acting as the observer.



London Fire Brigade

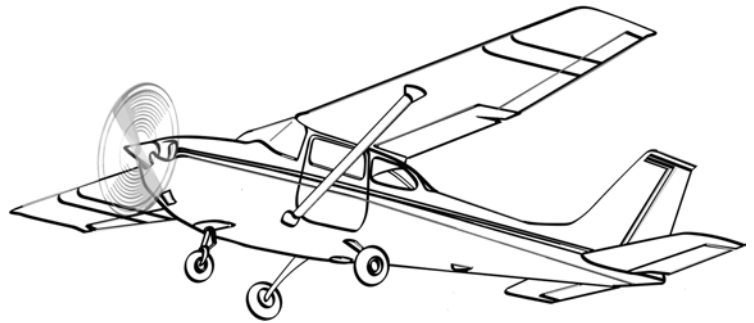
MANNED AIRCRAFT

Although the UK has very effective fleet of search and rescue helicopters, operated by HM Coastguard, together with a small fleet of aircraft, mostly helicopters, belonging to the National Police Air Service it has, unlike others, including Canada, the USA and Sweden, never promoted a voluntary sector air support service. Volunteers flying their own aircraft to support the 'blue light' emergency services, police, fire and

rescue service and HM Coastguard with air support with light aircraft, or 'spotter planes'. This is surprising as the UK has a very effective lifeboat service, the Royal National Lifeboat Institution, mostly crewed by volunteers, which in 2024 will celebrate its 200th Anniversary. The UK's mountain and lowland rescue services are also voluntary sector organisations and, moreover, HM Coastguard, with a nucleus of around 500 regular coastguard officers has, in addition, 3,500 volunteers who man the Coastguard Rescue Service with 352 individual coastal rescue teams.

By comparison, in Sweden, the Swedish Volunteer Air Corps, the Frivilliga Flygkaren (FFK) with its headquarters at Stockholm's Vasteras Airport, has some 2,400 members distributed throughout Sweden. These volunteers fly light aircraft, those belonging to flying clubs and others in private ownership, typically the Cessna 172 and the Piper PA-28, to check for storm damage, including power line inspections, to identify areas in danger of serious flooding and to search for missing persons. Moreover, drones, those without BVLOS, lack the those features that permit the manned aircraft to become a 'game changer', a 'force multiplier'. These unique features, the principles of air power, include, height, speed, reach, agility and ubiquity.

Volunteers of the Swedish FFK fly light aircraft, typically the Cessna 172, to check for damage following storms, to monitor serious flooding and to search for missing persons.



CONCLUSION

Despite the proliferation of drones in the UK, many of them operated by the police and the fire and rescue services the recent devastating storm, Storm Babet has, yet again, highlighted the absence, in the UK, of a national voluntary air support service. A service with light aircraft, with 'spotter planes', manned by volunteers, those with a flying licence, supporting the 'blue light' emergency services. A service that would be complementary to the voluntary sector lifeboat service, the RNLI, and the volunteers of HM Coastguard, those belong to the Coastguard Rescue Service, together with the voluntary sector mountain and the lowland rescue teams.

James A Cowan MBE

Note: The author, a former Royal Air Force senior officer flew, in military service, a range of aircraft including the C-130 Hercules and the BAe Nimrod, the 'Mighty Hunter'. Also, the smaller training aircraft, the DHC1 Chipmunk, the Scottish Aviation Bulldog and the Grob Tutor T1. After retiring from the RAF he flew the iconic BN Islander with the former police North East Air Support Unit and the Scottish Air Ambulance Service. He currently has a share in a classic Victa T5 Super 150 Airtourer.

EVENTS THIS MONTH

14-17 November 2023 Milipol Paris Paris-Nord Villepinte, France. www.milipol.com e-mail sales@milipol.com

22-24 November 2023 Air Expo India, Delhi International Airport. Asia's biggest general & business aviation exhibition will take place at Delhi International Airport. The three-day event will feature more than 300 international exhibitors, 80 aircraft, from ultra-light to heavy business jets covering 100,000 square metres of exhibition space attracting 20,000 trade visitors and attendees. www.airexpo.in

27-30 November 2023 European Rotors Madrid. Hall 9, IFEMA Convention Centre, *MADRID, Spain*. The organisers are preparing for their biggest show yet, expanding on and learning from the two previous events held in Cologne, Germany, to make this third edition even better. For the first time, the show will be held in Spain. Beside the European Helicopter Association EHA and the European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA), the Spanish Helicopter Association ATAIRE is co-hosting the event this year, approximately 10 minutes from the Adolfo Suárez Madrid-Barajas Airport (LEMD).

After PAVCon Europe in Bilbao it is back to Spain and it will be interesting to see what the turnout is for certainly the biggest helicopter show in the Iberian Peninsula in a long while.

EUROPEAN ROTORS will cover all aspects of the rotorcraft industry: its many stakeholders; new technologies, innovations, and methodologies; and all mission types, including air ambulance services and search-and-rescue (SAR), police and public safety, aerial work and disaster relief, passenger transport, and advanced air mobility (AAM).

The organisers are convinced that EUROPEAN ROTORS will benefit from the strong support of market-leading VTOL original equipment manufacturers Airbus, Bell, Leonardo, and Safran. Robinson, Boeing, Pratt & Whitney, and a host of others.

Last year's edition in Cologne, Germany featured more than 211 exhibitors from 57 countries and nearly 4,000 attendees.



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Home base of the Norwegian Air Force 1941-5

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The home base of the US Eagles 1941-2