

Police Aviation News

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Issue 337

May 2024



A new way in Canada
Chile Carabineros expand
South African fleet renewal
Knives out in the Channel
Europe buys more CL-515s

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EDITORIAL

Migration is getting to be a deadly business. From time to time, we hear of would be migrants losing their lives but rarely are we provided with a front seat on the action. A recent BBC report happened upon a disturbing development in the beaches of northern France.

It appears that the UK funded efforts of the French police are having a detrimental effect on cross channel traffic. The police may be so successful that they are unintentionally driving migrants to an early death. The UK Home Office deny numbers on migrants stopped and boats destroyed but the numbers are getting out there despite their efforts.

The apparent consequence is that more destroyed boats mean far more are getting into those that survive the destruction. Far more people tip the already critical scales of safety over the edge. More are dying in and out of overcrowded boats despite the efforts of authorities on both sides of the English Channel.

Check out the latest report from Tony Cowan (and the BBC) later in this edition.

Bryn Elliott

LAW ENFORCEMENT



INTERNATIONAL: The PAVCon Europe conference and exhibition being held in Austria May 28-29 is shaping up well. Currently, compared to previous years, the number of industry exhibitors has exceeded 40 and is effectively sold out one month before the event is opening! That is a first for the PAVCon Europe event, but we are certain that any additional would-be-attendees attendees will be able to get at least a roller banner up on display in a corner somewhere!

Among the first footing attendees are Chora GmbH from Germany and French company Vitec, these are adding to the regular attendees including Adams Aviation, AD Helico, Airbus Helicopters, ESG Elektroniksystem, Shotover, Smith-Myers and Spectrolab. Both of the local aircraft manufacturers, Diamond and Schiebel will be present and of course Airborne Technologies are the hosts. The 'hidden' exhibitors include such as the European Helicopter Association (EHA) and Airborne Public Safety Association (APSA) each of whom will add flavour to the broader event.

Other attendees already signed up for the event include Anodyne Electronics (AEM); Applied Video Imaging (AVI); Axnes; Babcock International; Becker Avionics; Bell Helicopter; Bucher Leichtbau AG; Canyon Aeroconnect; CarteNav (Palaerospace); Centum Research; Chora GmbH; Commercial Helicopter Services; DH Canada; Flightcell; Flysight Srl; Global Aviation Systems; HENSOLDT; Leonardo; LICO Stahl; METASENSING SRL; Nova Systems; PVL UK/Artworks (Mirage); RMCI, Inc; SAFRAN Elextronics;

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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Shotover; SPX Communication Technologies; SVP Aerospace; Team2applications GmbH; Teledyne FLIR Defense; Textron; Thales Group and Trakka Systems.

The conference programme covers two full days – the Tuesday and the Wednesday – and includes police and industry presented items on subjects from flight safety to aerial firefighting, via technology presentations.

The training programme being run during Monday 27 May at the Hilton Hotel Wiener Neustadt is aimed at Tactical Flight Officers and pilots in both the manned and unmanned regimes. This PAvCon Europe event is based on modules from Teledyne FLIR and Tactical. Flying. Register with additional support from other vendors. Register today at the PAvCon Europe website. Attendance is FREE for pre-registered serving law enforcement officers.

In addition to the PAvCon Europe programme the Airborne Sensor Operators Group (ASOG) a professional aircrew association will be holding classes immediately after the PAvCon Europe event. The venue suits thanks to Patrick Ryans existing connections with ABT but there is no direct financial or organisational link. ASOG will simply take over the conference facilities for training the day after the main event is concluded. This will suit some or all of the police and industry attendees and is similar to the arrangement that took place in 2022.

As with all PAvCon Europe events this is primarily an opportunity for industry and practitioners to meet up on equal terms to discuss practical challenges, safety and to learn about some of the newer technologies emerging in the marketplace. In the main the exhibitors promote aircraft parts and accessories suited to the role equipment and integration of service airframes of all types. The types of aircraft involved in this will include helicopters, fixed wing and drones. So far no one has proposed to attend to promote 'lighter than air' craft – but there is always time.



Check out the details on the dedicated website at www.pavconeurope.eu or click off one of the links off the adverts in this issue.

COVER IMAGE: *First introduced as an amphibian firefighter and utility aircraft using piston engines over 50 years ago as the Canadair CL-215 it has yet to see a viable alternative rival fly. It has morphed into a hugely more capable turbine powered aircraft now manufactured by Viking with De Havilland badging. And in recent weeks operators across Europe have ordered more to replace and supplement those original orders and perhaps move forward into another 50 years of more of the same. Story Page 14*

CANADA

ONTARIO: Four new police helicopters will help fight the car-theft crisis and assist searches for missing vulnerable people, the province and Toronto-area police forces say.

The four police services -- Toronto, Peel Regional, Halton Regional and Durham Regional -- banded together to ask the government to create more air support for the region. At the moment, two forces in the area have one helicopter each that they share with other police forces based on need and timing.

The Ontario Provincial Police will buy four helicopters at a cost of about \$36M and the province has earmarked \$10M to operate them over the next three years.

Details, including which forces will operate the airframes – the OPP or others – have yet to be decided.

Currently there is a lone helicopter in Durham, east of Toronto. Nearby York Regional Police also has its own helicopter, while the OPP already have a pair. Durham Regional police has had its chopper, Air1, for 25 years. [Canadian Press]



CAYMAN ISLANDS

RCIPS: The RCIPS Air Operations Unit shared these shots taken during their routine patrol checks of the Sister Islands yesterday. Approaching the Brac runway for refuel and Little Cayman from above.



CHILE

CARABINEROS: Early last month, at the FIDAE Air Show, Airbus Helicopters announced it had delivered the first H125 to the Carabineros de Chile Air Prefecture, within the framework of a fleet growth plan to expand the air coverage of Carabineros de Chile throughout the country. The Airbus C-28 c/n 9486 is the first to be inducted into the fleet and will be dedicated to training future pilots joining the Prefectura Aerea. This model of single-engine utility helicopter serves with the country's Armed Forces and Order and Security, operating within the Army Aviation Brigade, Naval Aviation, and the Chilean Investigative Police (BAPOL, Brigada Aeropolicial).

Later in the month, Helihub announced that it was aware of further sales to the agency. It is believed that there are plans to add both an H135 and an H145 in the short term. An Airbus H135 is in the process of being procured for the Maule region in South Central Chile, while the H145 is already ordered for October 2024 delivery. This aircraft will cover the Arica and Parinacota region in the far north of the country. New twin turbine helicopters are under consideration for a further three of the Carabineros operational regions – Tarapacá, La Serena and Metropolitan. Each is currently out to tender and the results of these processes are awaited. The addition of the H125 has also freed up a Leonardo A109E Power from the law enforcement agency's fleet, allowing them to create a new base at Rodelillo airfield in the province of Valparaiso. [Airbus/Scramble/Helihub]



FRANCE

NATIONAL: Pilot training for the military and Gendarmerie is an integrated affair in France undertaken by the Défense Conseil International the French Ministry of Armed Forces' operator for exporting French military knowledge, training and technical assistance internationally. The training fleet under Helidax has comprised 36 EC120/H120 Colibri helicopters that continue to provide good service. In addition they look after four DCI Group EC120/H120 and the remaining fleet of AS555N Fennec of the French Army.

The Colibri was first flown in 1997 and ended production in 2017 after 700 were built. The type was deemed too expensive when compared with new upcoming types from Robinson and Bell, but it retains all the qualities it has and Helidax are adding four additional H120 helicopters to the cover offered by #HCare Classics "Part by the Hour" contract. The original fleet has now accumulated over 250,000 flight hours.



OLYMPICS 2024: As highlighted in previous editions of PAN, the French police face numerous difficulties in policing the upcoming Olympics – not least of which was the relative failure of a recruitment campaign in Paris designed to boost the numbers of police available. Additional pressures brought about by the need to police the beaches of northern France in meeting the British financed anti migrant campaign. Bringing in British police onto those beaches to actively aid the French (as opposed to provide a liaison role) has proved difficult for the French to accept but the Olympics will provide a different and acceptable avenue for foreign police from across Europe to serve.



UK law enforcement is coming together in a show of unity to support the Paris 2024 security operation.

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EUROPE

28-29 May 2024
Wiener Neustadt, Austria
The Networking continues
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With less than 100 days until the start of the 2024 Games, UK police and partners, including the UK Ministry of Defence, have confirmed they will be in attendance at one of the world's largest sporting events.

Officers from forces across the UK and Crown Dependencies will be deployed to support the French security and engagement operation during the eight-week event.

The announcement of support comes as the UK and France celebrated the 120th anniversary of their historic Entente Cordiale agreement last month, marking more than a century of the Franco-British friendship.

The UK element of this operation is coordinated by specialist officers from the National Police Coordination Centre and is supported by the Home Office, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office and the Ministry of Defence, Counter Terrorism Policing UK and a range of other partners.

At home, police forces will also be working with local partners to help support Olympic and Paralympic events and fan zones at a range of locations.

Around 35,000 police and gendarmes are expected to be mobilised each day during the games, with a peak of 45,000 expected for the opening ceremony. The exact number of UK officers are still to be confirmed and the deployment will also include volunteer special constables.

The UK officers will help French law enforcement with a range of liaison and engagement roles, as well as specialist search dogs and their handlers assisting with venue security. Their involvement will enhance the security and safety of UK visitors, and the Games as a whole.

Minister of the Interior of France, Gérald Darmanin said:

"France and the United Kingdom have a long tradition of police cooperation, particularly for the organization of major events. In 2012, France provided assistance from its law enforcement agencies to secure the Olympic Games in London.

"This summer, in Paris, we'll be delighted to be able to count on the support of our British friends for this great sporting event, which will attract many spectators from across the Channel."

KENYA

NATIONAL: The difficulties with public service aviation continue in Kenya. After many traumas, injuries and deaths it was deemed wise to place all the aviation assets in the country under the sole control of the military in December 2020.

In the latest negative incident Kenya's military chief, Gen Francis Omondi Ogolla, has died after a military Mil helicopter crashed in the west of the country. Ogolla - Kenya's highest ranking military officer - was in the helicopter alongside eleven other military personnel. Only two people survived.

The helicopter came down in Elgeyo Marakwet county, some 400km (250 miles) north-west of the capital Nairobi shortly after take-off. This was the fifth incident to hit Kenya Defence Forces in the last year.

The frequency of incidents involving the single operator (KDF) within a short span, has raised concerns within the aviation industry. The government and local media attribute the incidents to serviceability concerns and pilot fatigue but no post-accident reports have been published by the Kenya Air Force to substantiate those supposed causes. There is an inference that government needs to be transported in airframes re-purposed for VIP use to meeting across the country places undue pressures on the flight and maintenance crews. Most of the former police helicopters were assigned to VIP use and no longer have a law enforcement or rescue role. They were also stripped of their civil registrations to reduce the pressures of meeting stricter civil flight regulations.

Over the past year, Cabinet meetings have been held in Kisumu, Kakamega, Sagana, and Mombasa, extensive journeys that result in unnecessary expense and workload on the crews. Each of these flights carry aides, bodyguards, and other top officials and normally require the availability of scarce, back up resources. A single helicopter usually has two other airframes in support.

The independent Aviation Safety Network (ASN), attributes 12 aircraft losses to the Kenya Air Force since 2012, with the National Police Air Wing losing five before it was swallowed by the national formation.

SOUTH AFRICA

AIR WING: As this edition goes to press there is no resolution of the type involved in meeting a recent tender by Armscor (Armaments Corporation of South Africa) for a multi-engine transport helicopter for police use.

Since late last year Armscor have been active in assisting the build-up of new air assets for the SAPS Air Wing and the disposal of obsolete platforms. Armscor have been disposing of the thirteen remaining BO105 helicopters, grounded in 2017, with a single private buyer acquiring seven last year. Armscor also facilitated the earlier purchase of six R44 Raven II helicopters for the SAPS, they were delivered from 2008 onwards.

In September last year the Air Wing was operating sixteen older AS350 alongside recently delivered H125 helicopters, with more of the latter due to supplement the fleet in coming months. Other rotorcraft in the SAPS fleet include the R-44s, and two MD500s and a BK 117 dating from the mid-1990s. Fixed wing aircraft include eight PC-6 Turbo Porters, a PC-12, a Beech King Air C90 and a Cessna Citation Sovereign jet. [AirMed/Defence Web]


UNITED KINGDOM

NATIONAL: In a rare move NPAS has released performance figures for the aircraft fleet based on its assessment of the pressures imparted by essential engineering.

Whilst availability of National Police Air Service (NPAS) aircraft in the month of February was 69.2% - due to an increase in essential engineering requirements - average availability for the year was higher than the previous year, at 71.4%. Planned engineering means it is not possible to achieve 100% availability.

In February 2024, the average time to reach the scene of Priority One (urgent) incidents was just nine minutes and 47 seconds. For Priority Two incidents (non-urgent), the average time it took to reach a scene was 19 minutes and 24 seconds.

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Evenlode is a series of equipment providing capability for a range of **information exchange** requirements. The new video and data encoder enables police forces to react to evolving scenarios in real time thanks to the low latency of **<120ms**; equipment can be deployed for air and ground which provides innovative video solutions for **police applications**

In February, 2,520 calls for air support were received, compared to 3,021 the previous month. Year-to-date, NPAS rotary aircraft have flown on behalf of forces for a total of 10,193 hours and its fixed wing aircraft for 443 hours. The fixed wing crews have assisted 38 different police forces across England and Wales.

The proportion of tasks resulting in a positive outcome remains high, at 88.7%. In real terms, this equates to 1,555 missing or vulnerable people located, 4,092 suspects caught, and 1,686 vehicles tracked so far this year, either directly, or with the assistance of, national police air support.

There have also been 763 pre-planned tasks carried out by NPAS since the beginning of April 2023. [NPAS/ADS]

Pilots

The ongoing advertising for pilots from the commercial pool now also includes the need for a Training Captain and Deputy Head of Training. The post offers a salary range of £88,821 - £94,671 plus a Market Factor of £7,000.

Drones

On Linked-In, Brendan O'Neill a National Drone Officer at Mountain Rescue England & Wales, I.T. Solution Design Lead shared a post directed at fellow Mountain Rescue volunteers.

Search and Rescue drone operators are very likely to be working alongside manned aviation resources. It is critical that deconfliction procedures are in place with those agencies. Air Ambulance, National Police Air Service (Fixed wing and helicopter) and Coastguard helicopters regularly attend incidents where drones are legally deployed. Many Mountain Rescue teams operate in military low flying areas which adds another dimension to deconfliction.

Last month saw the drone leads from Mountain Rescue England and Wales and Lowland Rescue spending time with NPAS to discuss each other's operating procedures, equipment and capability. [MREW]

UNITED STATES

CALIFORNIA: The City of Riverside in California has recently listed two MD500E helicopters and a fixed wing on the GovDeals auction site. The rotary pair have been replaced by Airbus H125 helicopters, which were delivered in summer 2023.

One 500E of the pair being auctioned, N651RP c/n 0583E, is a 2008 model with 8,996 airframe hours and 18,693 engine hours, while the second, N811RP c/n 0526E, is an older 1996 model with 16,140 airframe hours and 17,632 engine hours. Both aircraft are currently in storage with main blades boxed for shipment.

Riverside are also selling a 2011 Cessna T206H single N903KA with 1,268 airframe hours and a Rolls Royce 250 engine. At the time of publication none of the bids had met the reserve prices placed on the items. The auction closes on May 9, 2024.

CALIFORNIA: The annual airborne emergency services gathering at the Rose Bowl Stadium near Pasadena took place in the middle of last month. The venue is famous for football but has become synonymous with public service helicopters in recent years.

In perfect weather conditions the 33rd annual Pasadena PD Fly In attracted some 30 helicopters, a slight increase on last year. The event is primarily an attraction for the public, boosting would be public service fans and employees but in that it brings together law enforcement helicopters for emer-



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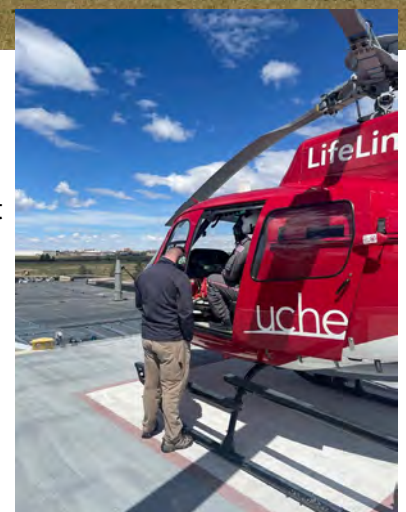
agency preparedness training. it also attracts a limited vendor presence if only because the aircraft are fitted with specific role gear. [images drawn from many appearing on-line from CNC, Matt Hartman and Cal Meeker]

Among the vendors were Canadian company Meeker Aviation, a major supplier of role equipment and already on the majority of attending aircraft, CNC Technologies and, from Norway, Axnes. The latter had Dale Johnson enjoying the sights and sounds of the Rose Bowl. Helicopter Fly-In while manning a tent.

This exercise involves agencies from as far away as San Diego, Ventura, and Riverside Counties (all of which already rely on the PNG Wireless ICS for their critical crew communications).



Meanwhile, the Axnes team were to be found in Loveland, Colorado training the REACH Air Medical Services UHealth Lifeline EMS crews. This is the first HEMS programme in the USA to utilise Axnes new Compact Base Station wireless intercom system technology, which provides a unique cost-effective solution that will enhance their air medical mission effectiveness, productivity, and safety. To learn more visit www.axnes.com.





A great turn out at the Rose Bowl for Pasadena PD in 2024! ©Matt Hartman



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SOUTH CAROLINA: In Chapin the small police department now has access to a helicopter owned by a local operator Gazillion Air LLC. The 2010 Bell N92PN c/n 57033 has had several owners of different nationalities including Canada, Honduras and the USA.

Led by Chief Thomas Griffin, the department includes eight Officers, the Clerk of Court and a Victim's Advocate. With an estimated 45,000 people living within a 10-mile radius of the town, Chapin's Police Department works closely with law enforcement in Lexington, Richland, and Newberry counties to ensure public safety and fight crime. Their main supplier of air support in the past has been the South Carolina Law Enforcement Division Aviation Unit, an operation that provides aviation assets to all law enforcement agencies in South Carolina with a fleet drawn from Bell 407, 412EP, UH-1D and MD500Es.

AIR AMBULANCE

CROATIA

HEMS: The official launch ceremony of the new Croatian Helicopter Emergence Medica Service was held in the city of Rijeka on April 2.

The event included a demonstration of a unique combined rescue system, consisting of the collaboration between a speed boat, a helicopter, and an ambulance, all working in harmony to ensure the quickest intervention time, an approach tailored to the coastal areas of Croatia.

The Croatian HEMS is operated by the consortium formed by EliFriulia, Eliance Aviation, and EliAdriatik against a tender issued in May 2023 by the Croatian Ministry of Health. The contract is to last seven years.

As of March 30, operations commenced across Croatia from four bases: Zagreb and Osijek as vital hubs for rapid response in the heart of the country, operated by Eliance with Airbus Helicopters EC135s; Rijeka and Split to serve the extensive coastline and numerous islands, operated by Elifriulia with Airbus H145s

[Helihub]

GERMANY

ADAC: The non-profit ADAC Luftrettung will remain the operator of the "Christoph 32" rescue helicopter for another ten years. The special purpose association for emergency services and fire brigade alerting (ZRF) for the Ingolstadt region following an EU-wide tender.

The new contract with a term from April 1, 2025, to March 31, 2035 was signed last month by Frédéric Bruder, Managing Director of ADAC Luftrettung GmbH, District Administrator Peter von der Grün as ZRF Association Chairman and ZRF Managing Director Günther Griesche at the station at the Ingolstadt Clinic.

To date, "Christoph 32" has reacted to more than 41,600 alerts since the start of the service in northwestern Upper Bavaria in 1991. The service replaced a military service operated by the Bundeswehr from their base in Manching. A total of 23 team members are currently on rotation in Ingolstadt – in addition to two pilots and one pilot from ADAC Luftrettung, the crew is made up of 14 emergency doctors from Klinikums Ingolstadt GmbH and six emergency paramedics (TC HEMS) from the BRK district association Ingolstadt. After 24 years, the old BK117 was replaced by a modern H135 machine. The big advantages of this Airbus helicopter are the significantly lower noise emissions, its operational speed of up to 230 km/h and an enormous increase in safety for the crew and the patient. [Helihub]

UNITED KINGDOM

NATIONAL: An election is looming in the United Kingdom (as there are in Europe and the USA) and pressure groups are setting out their stalls in readiness to influence the politicians most likely to hold the reins of government in the near future.

Air Ambulances UK (AAUK), the national charity supporting the lifesaving work of the UK's air ambulance charities, is calling upon all UK political parties, MPs, Government bodies and Prospective Parliamentary Candidates (PPCs) to pledge their support for critical policy initiatives ahead of the forthcoming General Election.

With 21 independent air ambulance charities operating across the UK, air ambulance crews bring the Emergency Department to patients, in 2021, the collective missions undertaken by the charities across the UK totalled over 30,100. In 2023, the demand surged by 53%, with over 46,000 missions undertaken, illustrating the growing need for support and resources to sustain these lifesaving operations in local communities.

Air Ambulances UK, in collaboration with its members is seeking to highlight areas of concern to the sector in among what is highly likely to be a seed change in the political make-up the United Kingdom in a matter of months.

They are seeking pledges to ensure that all new and existing Major Trauma Centres and specialist hospitals have 24/7 accessible on-site primary hospital helipads, better access to patient data, support to enhance methods of income generation through distribution of UK-wide grants and capital funding and have stated their opposition to the proposed statutory levy of 0.1% of 'gross gambling yield' (GGY) on lotteries – most of the charities gain significant income from such lotteries.

Editor: The charities are simply protecting their own income streams. The sector has moved on in the last 20 years from a financially struggling and simplistic set up where the charities collected the money and used a contractor to undertake the flying mission to one more where most operations undertake each of the roles in-house and they have become the owners of all they survey. Market forces now drive an interest in politics and ring fencing their income. Fortunately, it does not yet indicate the sector moving from those basic charitable ideals.

HAMPSHIRE & ISLE OF WIGHT: Hampshire and Isle of Wight Air Ambulance is seeking to relocate its base and headquarters. The new preferred base is to be at a site about 25 miles further south of its current base at George Curl Way in Eastleigh, Southampton. The site is on the edge of Southampton Airport and close to the M27 motorway and a commercial development area. Illustrations of the proposed structure suggest that this is to be a repurposed existing industrial unit rather than the type of dedicated base and headquarters favoured by other charities in the sector.

The charity has submitted a planning application to make changes to the site, including a helipad, parking spaces including electric vehicle charging points, landscaping improvements, and offices. Doctors, pilots and paramedics currently operate out of the small airport come racing car circuit at Thruxton, Andover, but the charity says moving to a more central location would drastically reduce response times and minimise flying and travel time. Around 70% of the service's missions are around the Southampton, Winchester and Portsmouth region.



Despite the potential for neighbours complaining about increased noise – introducing the helicopter to an existing undeveloped environment – initial reaction has been positive. The proximity of the noise from the airport and motorway should defer most complaints.



NORTHERN IRELAND: Leonardo Helicopters one of the UK's leading aerospace companies has recently made a modest £3,000 injection to local HEMS charity Air Ambulance Northern Ireland.

The sponsorship has been provided to help the relatively young charity invest in CRM training and meet its vital annual fundraising target of £2.5M.

NORTHWEST: An Air Ambulance Paramedic from the North West Air Ambulance Charity (NWAA) has broken a Guinness World Record while taking on the TCS London Marathon.

Caroline Duncan, from Clitheroe, took on the 26.2 miles along with thousands of others on April 21, however, she had to tackle the marathon in her full flight suit. Finishing with a record-breaking time of 4 hours 36 minutes Caroline has set a new record for the 'The Fastest Air Ambulance Paramedic to Run a Marathon in a Flight Suit (female)'. The full suit weighed 4kg in total and included the flight helmet and boots that Caroline would normally wear while working for the air ambulance charity. ^[Helihub]



WALES: The Wales Air Ambulance Charity has welcomed an NHS Wales decision to move forward with improvements to the service it provides. Currently it is deemed that northern parts of Mid Wales are disadvantaged at night as the service currently only has one overnight crew, based in Cardiff, covering the whole of Wales. The service's highly skilled medical teams based in Welshpool and Caernarfon are underused. The Review sought to resolve these issues by examining, in detail, the most effective and efficient way of delivering the service to patients.

This major service improvement will see the current crews and existing assets in Caernarfon and Welshpool come together in a new base located in the middle of North Wales, near the A55. Reflecting demand in the regions, one crew will operate 8am until 8pm. A second crew will operate between 2pm and 2am. Alongside the current highly utilised resources in Dafen and Cardiff, evidence shows that this development would see improvements for all parts of Wales.

The service will continue to be delivered with four helicopters and a fleet of rapid response vehicles and expects to achieve the new base model in a few years' time.

WILTSHIRE: Salisbury District Hospital officially opened its new upgraded hospital landing site for air ambulances last month. The helipad was funded by a £321,000 donation from the HELP Appeal charity.

Each year approximately 60 patients arrive at the hospital via helicopter. Having successfully secured all the funding required for this work from the HELP Appeal charity the work went ahead. The project represents a significant investment in the hospital, benefiting some of our most critically ill patients.

The new helipad, which is the third HELP Appeal funded helipad to open across the country this year, is larger in size, has been fitted with new lights to support night flights and signage, and meets all best practice and is compliant with latest Civil Aviation guidance. A weather station is being fitted to provide pilots with site specific weather information.



The helipad complies with the latest CAP1264 regulations (Standards for Helicopter Landing Areas at Hospitals), enabling the safe conveyance of patients to the Emergency Department on a regular basis.

UNITED STATES

MICHIGAN: In Traverse City, North Flight AeroMed’s fleet an air ambulance arrangement between Corewell Health in Grand Rapids and Munson Healthcare have added a ‘new’ helicopter to their fixed wing operation.

The 2009 Sikorsky S-76C++ N764MR c/n 760764, owned by Keystone Helicopters, joins the fixed wing fleet of a Beechcraft B250 King Air and a B200 King Air in serving a region with a population of 11,000 people.

FIRE

JAPAN

SHIZUOKA CITY: Kawasaki Heavy Industries, Ltd. Has received an order from Shizuoka City for a H145//BK117 D-3 helicopter for delivery in March 2026. It is destined for use as a firefighting and disaster relief helicopter. This order is the fourth D-3 to be used for firefighting and disaster relief helicopter use, and the twenty-seventh order Kawasaki received overall.

The operation will be in the high mountain areas, one of the characteristics of Shizuoka City. [Helihub]

EUROPE

EUROPEAN UNION: The Spanish government announced, on April 19, 2024, a €375 upgrade of its fleet of firefighting amphibious aircraft.

Spain is ordering seven new De Havilland Canada DHC-515 amphibious aircraft, two of which will be procured through the European Civil Protection Mechanism, set up by the European Commission to foster the cooperation between member states and their readiness to respond to natural disasters.

Within this framework and in response to concerns about larger and more frequent forest fires all around the Mediterranean Basin, the EU has allocated €600M for the joint procurement of 20 amphibious aircraft.



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The production facility ©VikingDHC

These aircraft will be operated by France, Croatia, Greece, Italy, Portugal and Spain. Both Croatia and Greece have recently placed orders for new DHC-515s under the EU scheme

The current fleet of older CL-215 and CL-415 aircraft will also be modernized with European funds.

In addition to these jointly purchased aircraft, Spain will place a supplemental order for five DHC-515s. [DHC]

UNITED STATES



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Aeroflite Aerial Firefighting have their third Dash 8-400AT - Tail 182 -C-FFAQ being completed at Conair Aerial Firefighting. An expanding fleet at Aero-Flite supports US government agency partners across the US.

COLORADO: Last month Colorado's first Firehawk helicopter was on display at Rocky Mountain Metropolitan Airport in Broomfield, as Governor Jared Polis and other state officials presented this year's wild-fire preparedness plan.

The 'new' Polish built Sikorsky S-70 Black Hawk helicopter arrived in Colorado in May 2022, but after multiple delays — partly due to an engine recall — the state's newest firefighting machine is nearly ready to launch. The aircraft was originally transported to United Rotorcraft in Englewood, where the work started but was stalled.

The Firehawk is expected to be operational around May 10 after pilots of the aircraft complete final acceptance tests. The launch of the Firehawk will coincide with what is expected to be average wildland fire activity in most parts of Colorado in late spring and early summer. In an average year, Colorado sees 5,500 wildfires that burn about 220,000 acres, (Denver 7)

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SEARCH & RESCUE

JAPAN

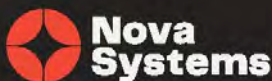
COAST GUARD: Japan Coast Guard (JCG) has placed an additional order for three H225 helicopters, taking its total H225 fleet up to 18. The largest Super Puma operator in Japan received three H225s in December 2023 and one in February 2024 for its growing fleet. The new helicopters will support territorial coastal activities, maritime law enforcement, as well as disaster relief missions in the country.

JCG's H225 fleet is covered by Airbus' highly adaptive HCare Smart full-by-the-hour material support. This customised fleet availability programme allows the national coast guard agency to focus on its flight operations whilst Airbus manages its assets.

NETHERLANDS

COAST GUARD: Smith Myers a leader in cellular communications, have announced the selection by Nova Systems of its ARTEMIS Mobile Phone Location and Communications system for integration into its airborne mission system contract for the Coast Guard.

ARTEMIS will be installed across a fleet of AW189 helicopters, playing a crucial role in supporting SAR (search and rescue) missions.



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Integrator Nova Systems will utilise their EASA approved Part 21 Design Organisation based in Shannon, to ensure a tailored solution that meets the rigorous SAR mission requirements for the helicopter fleet.

ARTEMIS has been in active service saving lives around the world since 2017. The growing global customer base includes programmes in the UK, Europe, North America, South America, the Middle East, Southeast Asia and Australia. [SM]

UNITED KINGDOM CHANNEL UPDATE - VIVE LA FRANCE!

A recent incident on a beach near Wimereux, in northern France was very well covered by BBC TV, by Andrew Harding who, on this occasion, happened to be at the right place at the right time. This was in the early hours of Tuesday, April 23, 2024, ironically the April 23 was also St George's Day, the patron Saint of England!



After week of strong winds in mid-Channel, there were more migrants wishing to cross the English Channel than there were boats available. The BBC footage shows one group of 50 plus migrants who have dragged an inflatable boat from the sand dunes, across the beach, towards the sea. They are then joined by another 50 plus migrants who try to board the same vessel at the waters edge, fighting to gain a place on the boat which quickly becomes grossly overloaded.

MIGRANTS PERISH

In the subsequent melee the large inflatable boat, big enough to carry between 50 and 60 passengers, grounded in shallow water before 49 migrants returned to shore. The remaining 58 migrants then continued their journey across the Channel to be 'rescued' by the Border Force, together with the RNLI lifeboat service, in mid-Channel. Sadly, 5 migrants lost their lives, of which 2 may have drowned whilst 3, including a 7 year old girl, were crushed to death. The total number in the one boat, albeit briefly, was 112! It was subsequently reported that one migrant who was 'rescued' and then landed at Dover had suffered a broken leg. This brings the total number of migrants who have died this year, on the beaches at Wimereux, to 10. The total number of migrants who have perished whilst trying to cross the English Channel in a small boat the first 4 months of 2024 stands at 14.

UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES

What were the French police doing whilst all this were happening? The dozen police officers seen on the same beach were, most probably, doing their best when confronted by over 100 migrants and people smugglers; some were armed with batons, large sticks and knives, whilst others fired flares at the police. The police at the scene were seen assisting those migrants who returned to shore. Could this be a case of unintended consequences? Is it possible that the French police are now destroying so many boats that there is now a shortage with too many migrants in the camps in northern France and too few boats to carry them to the UK?

A further unintended consequence, is the result of new legislation, the Safety of Rwanda Act 2024, which permits illegal migrants, those who cross the Channel in a small boat, to be deported from the UK to

Rwanda, in central Africa, to have their claims for asylum processed in a third, safe country. This has, according to the media, resulted in an increase in the flow of migrants across mainland UK to Northern Ireland, which is part of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. These illegal migrants are then crossing the border into the Republic of Ireland which is a member state of the European Union (EU). Some of those migrants who are leaving France, a safe country and part of the EU, are now travelling across the UK to enter the Republic of Ireland, also a member of the EU.

Presumably, these migrants will be returned to France using earlier EU legislation, the 'Dublin Regulation', which permits migrants to be returned to a safe country, to one where they formerly resided, within the EU. However, the Taoiseach (Irish prime minister), Simon Harris has requested new legislation to permit the direct return of migrants, a reported increase of 80%, back the UK. The response from the UK government is that it, 'won't accept any asylum returns from the EU via Ireland', not until the EU changes its policies and accepts returns from the UK, from the UK to France. The British have an expression, 'What goes around, comes around!'

In the more recent incident, the suspected people smugglers were subsequently arrested by the National Crime Agency after they landed in the UK. Two of the men were later charged with offences in the relation to the deaths of the 5 migrants and they remain in custody. In total, on the April 23, 402 migrants were landed in the UK from 7 boats, an average of 57 migrants per boat. On April 26, a further 141 migrants crossed the Channel in just 2 boats, followed, on the 27th, by 359 migrants in 8 boats.

HOW MANY BOATS ARE THE FRENCH DESTROYING?

Not all attempted crossings were successful. At Gravelines, between Calais and Dunkirk, the French police moved in quickly to prevent another inflatable boat from leaving France, by puncturing the hull with a sharp knife. Nevertheless, at the time of writing, the number of migrants landing in the UK in April had increased to 1,732. The total number who have landed in the UK in the first 4 month of 2024, up to and including the 28 April, is 7,167, a new record in the first 4 months of any year since 2018, when the first migrants crossed the English Channel in small boats.

French police move in at Gravelines, between Calais and Dunkirk, to disable an inflatable boat carrying migrants, to prevent it crossing the Channel.

AFP



In the UK there is no precise figure for the number of boats destroyed by the French police on the beaches of northern France. Whilst the Home Office publicises, every 24 hours, the number of migrants landed in the UK after crossing the English Channel in a small boat, now an illegal route, they refuse to inform the public of the successes of the French police in saving lives. Saving lives by destroying unseaworthy boats, boats that have been described by the UK National Crime Agency as 'death traps'. Without the full picture, the number of successful landings by migrants in the UK, versus the number of migrants turned back and boats destroyed in France, it's impossible to know who has the upper hand, the French police or the organised criminal groups, the people smugglers. Nevertheless, there is a general agreement that when the French police detect and destroy more boats than can be delivered to northern France, then the battle, to 'stop the boats' and, at the same time, to save lives, will finally be won!



UNITED STATES

NATIONAL: The US Coast Guard is working to modernise its fleet of around 200 aircraft in the search and rescue role.

It intends to modernise its fleet – the helicopter fleet being consolidated from 98 short range helicopters (originally inducted into service as the Aerospatiale Dolphin with US built engines) and 48 medium range (the Sikorsky's) to a reduced fleet of around 127 airframes.

the plan would eliminate the long serving short-range Airbus Helicopters MH-65D/E Dolphin search and rescue helicopters, 98 of which are currently in use.

In November last year The U.S. Coast Guard confirmed a “notional” plan to consolidate medium-lift helicopter fleets with an expanded fleet of Sikorsky MH-60Ts, replacing 98 Airbus MH-65 Dolphins with refurbished stocks of retired Navy SH-60s. The acquisition of the first batch of 27 retired SH-60s has been approved based on an estimate that 90% of its fleet will have reached reach the 20,000-hour service limit by fiscal year 2028. The new hulls will provide another 20,000 flight hours of service. The original plan is now modified to take this further by replacing the much-modified MH-65 fleet.

In Alaska the Coast Guard retired one of its the Air Station Kodiak MH-65 Dolphin helicopter fleet last month, The type has been in service covering the Arctic region for 36 years.

Air Station Kodiak currently has a rotary-wing fleet of six MH-60 Jayhawk helicopters. The unit will shift to a rotary-wing ship-and-shore based fleet of nine MH-60 Jayhawks in 2025 and become the fourth Air Station to transition to a single rotary wing fleet based on the Sikorsky MH-60 Jayhawk helicopter. Air Stations Borinquen, Traverse City, and New Orleans all recently completed similar transitions.

The days of the MH-65 may now be seen as finite, but it has a long way to run yet. Safran Helicopter Engines has renewed its contract with the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) to support the Arriel engines powering its MH-65 helicopters.



This new five-year contract will provide in-service support and MRO (maintenance, repair and overhaul) for more than 240 Arriel 2C2-CG engines, under a support-by-the-hour (SBH) contract.

The U.S. Coast Guard's MH-65 helicopters have been powered by two Arriel 2C2-CG engines since 2003. They are used daily for short range recovery (SSR) missions. Equipped with their Safran engines, this fleet has accumulated over 1.7 million flight hours.

In-service support for these engines will continue to be provided by Safran Helicopter Engines USA in Grand Prairie, Texas, which supports more than 400 customers in the United States and a total fleet of 3,200 engines.

INDUSTRY

The Home Office is leading a cross-government programme to deliver the new Emergency Services Network (ESN) critical communications system. This will replace the current Airwave TETRA service used by the emergency services in Great Britain (England, Wales and Scotland) and transform how they operate. We have been learning of this for a decade now and clearly here and there people are simply switching off to the promises.

An example of this appeared locally in Waltham Abbey last month when it was noted that our long-abandoned police station (manned for 140 years but now empty and awaiting conversion into flats) was the scene of engineering activity.

They have now removed the old "Airwave" aerial and large radio shack from the side of the building (not sure where to) and the area is now cleared and nominally more suited to the accommodation conversion process.

Clearly the new multi-millionaire owner of the 1876 building could not wait for the Home Office to get its act together forever! The super new Emergency Services Network (ESN) system based on 4G was supposed to go in National service in 2017 but the latest guess is 2030! Essex police have confirmed that they did not move the kit out and that they are still using Airwave so it is still out there somewhere but it's not clear where!

Who, but the WFH Home Office staff, can wait forever?



(Left) All boarded up but still serving as an Airwave base station complete with aerial and 'radio shack' (right) All that is now gone and we move on to the future. I have little doubt that this is going to be the last ever lame excuse to feature a disused 1876 English police station in an advanced airborne law enforcement aviation publication! But I liked the old place (and Emily its ghost) even if no-one else did! I may yet find another lame excuse to feature it again..

Meanwhile a new user-services vendor to replace Motorola Solutions on the ESN public-safety broadband initiative could be under contract in August, according to a UK Home Office official who declined to provide a timeline for the broader ESN network, which is supposed to replace Airwave.

Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme Director John Black made the comments at the annual British APCO (BAPCO) event. Black declared an encouraging update about the ESN network buildout, which is expected to be largely completed by the end of the year or early in 2025 but similar posi-

tive datelines have come and gone without realisation and not many take that early date as meaning anything.

As if to support the lack of belief in early resolution Black declined to estimate when the ESN would be completed and tested to a point when it can replace the Motorola Solutions-owned Airwave TETRA network.

The National Museum of the US Air Force based at Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio has received Cessna 172P N9344L, newly retired by the Civil Air Patrol.

After the 9/11 terror attacks, this was the only civilian aircraft authorised to fly in and around New York City on September 12, 2001, when the airspace was otherwise closed to civil traffic, performing aerial photography of the area surrounding the destroyed World Trade Center as directed by the governor of New York and the Federal Emergency Management Agency. N9344L arrived at the museum's Ohio, home in March and has gone on display in its Cold War gallery.



Dahar Kodiak The ramped-up production capacity at its Sandpoint, Idaho, facility is in response to high demand – much of it from the special missions sector. Increased production capacity for its Kodiak 100 and Kodiak 900 multi-role utility aircraft has already commenced at the assembly facility in Sandpoint, Idaho.

The production enhancement responds to the strong demand across the customer base – from private owners/operators to government agencies and special mission operators for applications such as wildfire suppression, environmental monitoring, law enforcement and medical evacuation.

Sandpoint's increased production capacity results from the addition of a second final assembly line that "mirrors" the build-up of Kodiaks once the basic airframe has been assembled. As a result, there now are separate, parallel integration steps for the Kodiak 100 and Kodiak 900 from Stages 3 to 6, involving wing and horizontal stabilizer mating; flight controls integration and rigging; engine and avionics installation; first flight; interior outfitting, and customer delivery.

To date, a combined total of 330 Kodiak 100s and Kodiak 900s have been delivered to owners and operators worldwide.



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The visitors © ABT

Last month some 120 high ranking international visitors visited the facility of **Airborne Technologies GmbH**. Austria as part of this year's SERA 35 programme.

SERA offers executives involved in defence equipment and European cooperation initiatives an environment for training and reflection meetings and open discussions with the aim of strengthening the European perspective on defence and defence equipment and improving mutual understanding between partners.

The training is organised by the Institut des hautes études de défense nationale, a French public academic institution for research, education and promotion of expertise and sensitisation towards defence matters. It is located at the Military School, Paris. The course lasts four weeks. This year it has taken in France, Austria and Sweden.



The visitors © ABT

Canadian avionics manufacturer, **Anodyne Electronics Manufacturing Corp.** (AEM), sees its new modern MTP136D forest service radio receive critical Federal Communication Commission (FCC) and Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada (ISED) certifications.

Designed with the USFS and aerial firefighting operators in mind, the MTP136D is a Project 25 Phase 1 compliant VHF FM solution for digital and analogue communication on all channels across the 136MHz to 174MHz frequency band. The MTP136D boasts a robust design to ensure the highest performance in lengthy and demanding firefighting environments. It's easily integrated for tactical systems, platform upgrades, and is a plug-and-play replacement for existing legacy radios.

It supports 40 zones and 5000 channels, features a large NVIS-compatible screen displaying all critical information, performs extended transmit duty cycles for continuous operation, boasts an intuitive menu-driven interface for ease of use and functionality.





©Diamond Aircraft

A new DA62 MPP SurveyStar has been delivered by Diamond Aircraft Austria to **RIEGL Laser Measurement Systems** and it will be immediately implemented for test and calibration flights.

RIEGL and Diamond Aircraft Austria have been collaborating for almost 20 years. Since 2007, RIEGL has owned and operated an example of the proven DA42 MPP GeoStar, which has successfully completed all missions to date with the utmost satisfaction. The increased requirements in recent years have now made it necessary to "upgrade" to the new DA62 MPP SurveyStar.

The new DA62 MPP SurveyStar involved close collaboration between RIEGL and Diamond Aircraft in order to professionally integrate and efficiently utilize the entire RIEGL sensor and system portfolio.

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ITC-AeroLeasing is to step up its partnership with a major US EMS operator, Med-Trans Corporation (Med-Trans), with the lease of five Bell 407, bringing Med-Trans' total helicopter fleet on lease from ITC to seven. The five Bell 407's are configured for emergency medical services and will be deployed to Med-Trans bases in Texas, Iowa, Oklahoma, and Kansas, serving the local hospital systems. All leases commenced during the month of March 2024. [Helihub]

Over the years PAN has not been a great enthusiast of lighter than aircraft in the law enforcement role. They are judged as being far too large to handle and very liable to react badly to the extremes of weather. Little has changed, but still would be manufacturers and operators come forward with plans and money spinning ideas that so far have not proven able to meet their targets.

Up in northern England **Hybrid Air Vehicles** and the City of Doncaster Council have agreed terms on flagship production site for the large Airlander 10 airship.

City of Doncaster Council and Hybrid Air Vehicles Ltd reach agreement for major new Airlander 10 production centre north of Doncaster at Carcroft Common, for production, testing and certification operations. Hybrid Air Vehicles' plans aspire for the Doncaster site to create a £1bn+ per annum export business, over 1,200 high-value green jobs and new supply chains within the South Yorkshire Investment Zone. Announcement builds on a previous agreement with SYMCA, underpinned by a £7M investment by the region.

Ed: This plan is of course in the same region as the closed Doncaster Sheffield Airport (Robin Hood Airport) and involves the same local authorities and investment zone.

Last month **HyLight**, a pioneer of aerial inspection using hydrogen airship drones, announced a fund-raising of 3.7 million euros (\$4 million) from VCs and business angels including Y Combinator, Ring Capital, Kima Ventures, Collaborative Fund, and Marc Tarpenning, the co-founder of Tesla, to decarbonise aerial inspection. This deal will enable the French gem of Y Combinator to accelerate the deployment of its airship drones at an industrial scale to offer the first zero-emission solution capable of inspecting any type of infrastructure from the air. Power lines, gas pipelines, railways.



Ed: The move is being promoted as a decarbonized, low-cost and efficient solution for all industries in need of collecting aerial data! The tool, although no doubt more sophisticated looks just like the Top Shot inflatable presented to police back in the late 1980s as a persistent surveillance tool.

On April 15, 32 **Bell OH-58D Kiowa Warriors** flew in formation from Fort Bragg, in the US, creating a Guinness World Record for the Largest Helicopter Formation Flight in history. The event was organised by 1st Squadron, 17th Cavalry Regiment, 82nd Combat Aviation Brigade of the US Army and marked part of the grand finale for the U.S. military fleet in a spectacular swansong for the platform and those who flew in them.

The Kiowa Warrior's reputation as a capable and rugged aircraft started with the OH-58A, which launched in 1968. It underwent two rounds of modifications and upgrades until the OH-58D flew in 1983, with its upgraded engine and transmission. The single engine, four-bladed armed reconnaissance helicopter was the first U.S. Army helicopter to have an all-glass cockpit and incorporate a Wire Strike Protection System (WSPS), designed to prevent wire and power line strikes due to its typically low-flying missions. The WSPS proved so successful, it was adapted to virtually every other helicopter in the U.S. fleet.



There were around 2,325 Kiowa Warriors produced up until the delivery of the final new-build platform to the U.S. Army in 1989, with the last of them being retired from active service in the US in 2020.

For Bell, and its customers, the Warrior's lineage lives on, in the form of the Bell 407M – the first of a fleet of Bell's Special Missions Aircraft that are based on its esteemed commercial platforms – but with even more multi-mission capabilities.

Editor: The early model Kiowa (the OH-58A) has formed the basis of the US airborne law enforcement helicopter fleet for many years. Significant disposals from that early fleet went some way towards expanding ALE support quickly and cheaply and introduced small town America to the wonders of helicopter use where using a commercial alternative would prove prohibitively expensive. In numerous cases those same operators went on to buy commercial airframes. It remains to be seen where these discarded OH-58D airframes feature in ALE in the coming years. It may be that they are technically too complex to convert to a basic ALE role and it may also be a case that the cheap military surplus era has passed, and eyes will no longer be distracted from the cheaper alternative of small drones.



FlySight is working alongside Patrick Ryan and his team at **Airborne Sensor Operators Group (ASOG)** in their training efforts. The expertise and insights that participants gain from ASOG training sessions could be significant for the advancement in avionics mission management. ASOG is to arrange training in Austria later this month in association with the PAVCon Europe Conference and Exhibition. Although not directly linked to PAVCon the training dates fit around the main event

Helicopter Express, a leading global provider of helicopter services, has announced the acquisition of the aerial firefighting operations business unit and aircraft of Erickson Incorporated, the manufacturer and operator of the S-64 Air Crane® helicopter. Erickson's remaining MRO and OEM business units will continue as a standalone and separately capitalised entity.

Erickson will continue to serve as an independent manufacturer and service provider for the S-64 Air Crane® helicopter fleets around the world without also acting as an operator in competition with other users of the type.

ACCIDENTS & INCIDENTS

6 April 2024 Eurocopter AS355NP Ecureuil 2 EC-LCD. A Eurocopter AS355 NP Ecureuil 2 crashed under unknown circumstances at the La Maliciosa mountain, Sierra de Guadarrama, Madrid, Spain after dropping off two persons for a rescue mission. The machine ended up on its left side with substantial damage to main rotor and rear tail boom but no fire. Both occupants survived the crash

8 April 2024 Airbus Helicopters H145 N483WC Air ambulance of Mayo Clinic flying with three crew and one patient suffered a bird strike. After being struck the pilot undertook a precautionary landing on the Plainview Athletic Field, Rochester, Minnesota [kttc]

8 April 2024 Airbus Helicopters H145 N522ME Air Ambulance of STAT MedEvac with two crew aboard suffered a bird strike while en-route to Fort Meade/Odenton Tipton in Maryland. Minor damage.

22 April 2024 Short C-23B Sherpa N163Z US Forest Service. The aircraft with three persons aboard flew from Missoula-Johnson-Bell Field, Montana and was landing on runway 17 at Hamilton-Ravalli County Airport, Montana, USA when the brakes locked. The aircraft lost control and veered off the runway. [ASN]

24 April 2024 Socata TBM700N (TBM850) N228CH Air ambulance owned by Medical Air Inc. and operated by UNC Air Operations. Aircraft departed Wilmington-New Hanover County International Airport, North Carolina, USA and crashed when involved in a missed approach attempt with two on board. The landing on runway 32 at Raleigh-Durham International Airport, Raleigh-Durham, North Carolina resulted in a written off airframe but the occupants, the pilot and a UNC Health physician survived with moderate injuries. The aircraft remained upright and largely intact, but the wings and fuselage were fractured in several places. [ASN]

25 April 2024 Kamov Ka-32 RA-31111 Civil firefighting helicopter of EMERCOM (Emergency Situations Ministry) damaged by fire in an arson attack allegedly instigated by the Russia-Ukraine war while parked at the Ostafyevo International Airport, Moscow, Russia. [Baza]



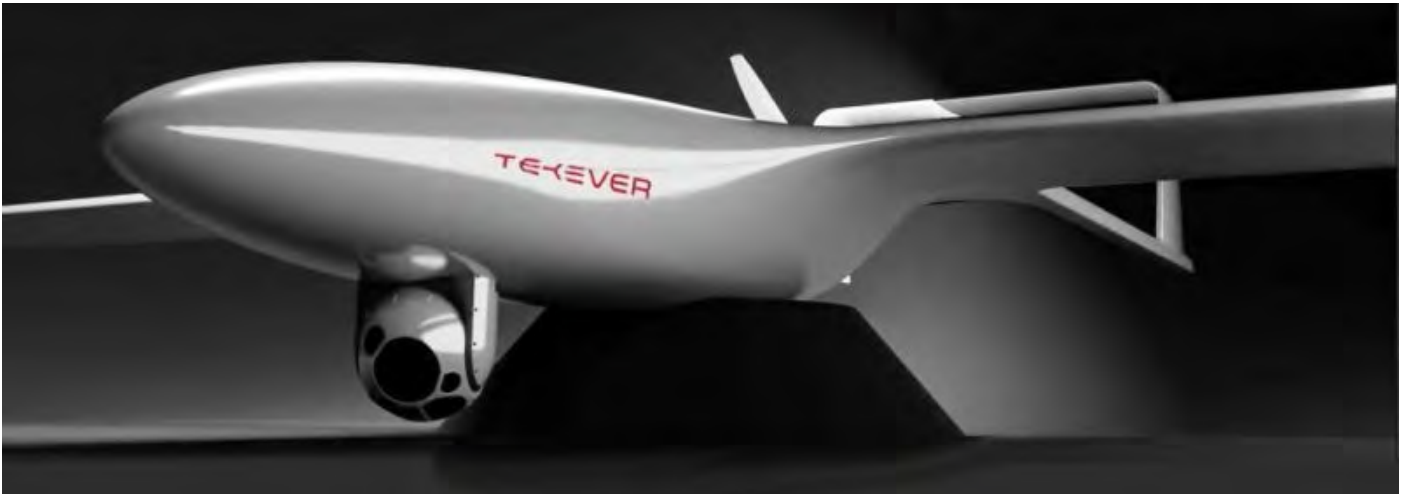
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UNMANNED

TEKEVER, the Portuguese unmanned aerial systems (UAS) manufacturer, presented the forthcoming ARX, a cutting-edge UAS capable of deploying and coordinating a swarm of smaller drones from a primary mother drone for the first time.



With onboard AI/ML capabilities and a fully modular payload configuration supporting sensors and deployable cargo, the new UAS, which is set to have its commercial debut in 2025, will significantly enhance surveillance and life-saving capabilities for both civilian and military organizations.

With an MTOW of 600Kg, TEKEVER ARX promises to revolutionize its class, by offering a combination of long-range endurance, advanced onboard AI/ML capabilities, SATCOM and mesh connectivity, and readiness for GNSS-denied environments.

The ARX will join the existing family of UAS, that already includes the AR3, AR4 and AR5 systems. All systems share common electronics and software architecture, enabling the reuse of ground segment elements, the facilitated cross-training of operators, and highly efficient logistics, maintenance and support processes.

Ed: Meanwhile the Tekever drones operated over the English Channel last year looking for migrants have simply fallen out of view. So far not a word of reply from Tekever or the Home Office. Are they out of favour?

PEOPLE

A Bristow helicopter winchman, based at Stornoway's HM Coastguard Search and Rescue (SAR) base, has been named the emergency services hero of 2024 by St Andrew's First Aid.

Norman 'Nam' Macleod was handed the honour on Friday 29 March at a gala night for Scottish first aid heroes in Glasgow.

The award is given annually to an individual or team who works for one of Scotland's emergency services and who has saved a life through the delivery of first aid in a high-pressure situation.

Paramedic Nam was shortlisted for his role in a demanding rescue at sea, in the early hours of 29 November 2023.

On that day HM Coastguard's Stornoway SAR team received an urgent tasking to the Spanish fishing vessel *Lodairo*, where two men had been involved in an accident with the ship's winching gear. Their injuries included amputated and seriously injured legs, with one man still trapped in the mechanism, and the vessel itself a long way from land – 120 nautical miles northwest of Lewis.

I do not normally report on actual funeral services, but it must be said that that of the late Brian Alinson was notable in the numbers it attracted last month. The chapel was crowded with what appeared to be around 300 people – 100 seated the rest standing. Truly a remarkable crowd drawn from his police, aviation, charity and political contacts.

An on-line extraction of Brian's book can be accessed at <https://stokegiffordhistory.wordpress.com/0214-brians-memories/> v

MOVE ALONG THERE

Not so sure about the Entente Cordiale of late. A few days after the French and the British exchanged the military niceties the London Evening Standard was suggesting that the best place to stay to watch the Paris Olympics was London. They simply have far less bed bugs there. Ugh!



In the wake of the recent story about the UK military leasing off some of its surplus Airbus helicopters to Australia for training it may come as a surprise that the Ministry of Defence has ordered a further six **Airbus H145** helicopters as the next step in renewing its rotary fleet and cutting the number of different types in service.

The new aircraft will be deployed to Cyprus primarily for emergency response duties and to Brunei to support UK military training in jungle warfare and will replace Airbus Pumas currently performing those roles. Prior to the Pumas they used Hueys for the role.

The new helicopters will be delivered next year and will serve in parallel with 29 H135s and seven H145s in the Defence Helicopter Flying School which trains all UK military pilots as part of MFTS at RAF Shawbury. The enlarged H145 fleet brings economies of support costs and substantially reduces pilot conversion training time.

I am not expecting any police air units to be so equipped anytime soon in the future but news that Airbus Helicopters have re-launched the **Racer** may set some pulses racing (after all some police forces have been known to buy Porche sports cars in the past).



The Airbus Helicopters' Racer demonstrator, developed in the frame of the European Research Clean Sky 2 project, has performed its first flight, in Marignane. The aircraft flew for about 30 minutes, allowing the flight test team to check the overall behaviour of the aircraft.

This important milestone launches the flight campaign which will take two years and will aim to progressively open the aircraft's flight envelope and demonstrate its high speed capabilities.

Optimised for a cruise speed of more than 400 km/h, the Racer demonstrator aims to achieve the best trade-off between speed, cost-efficiency, and mission performance. The Racer also targets a fuel consumption reduction of around 20%, compared to current generation helicopters of the same class, thanks to aerodynamic optimisation and an innovative eco-mode propulsion system. Developed with Safran Helicopter Engines, the hybrid-electrical eco-mode system allows one of the two Aneto-1X engines to be paused while in cruise flight, thus contributing to cutting CO2 emissions. The Racer also aims to demonstrate how its particular architecture can contribute to lowering its operational acoustic footprint.



The Volocopter on display in Singapore in 2019 © PAR

Not unexpected to some, the failure rate among the highly experimental eAir Taxi and drone delivery community continues. One of the latest negative stories is that German electric vertical takeoff and landing (eVTOL) developer Volocopter is facing a serious financial crisis. The company has warned that they may be forced to consider insolvency in the near future if they cannot secure additional funding.

Founded in Bruchsal, Germany, Volocopter has been a pioneer in the eVTOL space, developing innovative multicopter vehicles for urban air mobility. However, the company appears to be struggling to turn its technological advancements into a financially sustainable business model.

Recently Volocopter sought a loan guarantee of €300M from their home state of Baden-Württemberg. This request was rejected, prompting the company to approach Bavaria with a similar proposal. Bavaria were opposed to even a €100M loan guarantee proposal matched by the federal government. These figures represent a significant reduction from their initial ask.

With their latest funding attempt failing, Volocopter finds itself in a precarious position. Unless a solution is found soon, the company may be forced to declare insolvency, jeopardising its future and negatively impacting the development of the eVTOL industry.

Historically the project has been a seemingly endless money pit with finding finance being the main storyline. Launched in 2011 it has produced airframes for test and demonstration but has produced no sales to speak of. Recently it has ramped up the finance ask though with €87M in 2020, €200M in 2021 and \$170M in 2022. They had hoped for a commercial launch in Paris this summer. Some day someone had to say no and that time may have come.

EVENTS THIS MONTH

27 May 2024 PAvCon Europe Training Day. Hilton Garden Inn Hotel, Promenade 6, Wiener Neustadt 2700, Austria Book through the www.pavconeurope.eu website.

28-29 May 2024 PAvCon Europe. Victor-Lang Strasse 8, Wiener Neustadt, Austria www.pavconeurope.eu

30-31 May 2024 ASOG Spring Training Week. Victor-Lang Strasse 8, Wiener Neustadt, Austria. Organised by the Airborne Sensor Operators Group <https://aso-group.ning.com>

Next month the Essex & Herts Air Ambulance will again be holding its Aeromedical Conference at the Ford Motor Dunton Technical Centre at Basildon and Essex.

Aeromedical Conference 2024 will explore the theme of innovation within healthcare, the emergency services sector and beyond.

Innovation refers to the process of introducing change, it plays a crucial role in driving progress and is something that has been occurring knowingly and unknowingly around us since history began, now it has even become an industry of its own.

At Essex & Herts Air Ambulance being 'Innovative' sits within our core values and is something we strive to achieve clinically, operationally and as a wider charity.

Throughout the conference we will be hearing from expert speakers from a wide variety of backgrounds discussing current projects and what is on the horizon. We will explore how these examples can support us in the pre-hospital field as well as how they are changing the system we work in and ultimately the benefit to patients and the public.

Within this theme will explore different pillars of innovation including:

Product innovation – introducing new or improved products.

Process innovation – enhancing or optimising existing processes.

Organisational innovation – implementing new structures or management practices.

Register on-line at www.ehaat.org/aeromed for a free place.

FREE TO ATTEND

Essex & Herts Air Ambulance
Aeromedical Conference 2024

INNOVATION

21 JUNE

Exploring innovation within pre-hospital care, the emergency services sector and beyond.

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ASOG
AIRBORNE SENSOR OPERATORS GROUP

ASOG Spring Training Week
Airborne Mission Management System & Sensor Course

ASOG Spring Training Week

Event by (ASOG) Airborne Sensor Operators Group

- 📅 May 30, 2024, 7:00 AM
- 📅 May 31, 2024, 3:00 PM BST

📍 Viktor-Lang Straße 8, Wiener Neustadt, Niederösterreich,

🔗 Event link
<https://aso-group.ning.com>

(ASOG) Airborne Sensor

AIRBORNE PUBLIC SAFETY ASSOCIATION

ADVANCING PUBLIC SAFETY AVIATION

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TO SERVE. SAVE AND PROTECT FROM THE AIR

Amsterdam Drone Week (ADW) has announced the re-establishment of the strategic partnership with Commercial UAV Expo, underscoring their commitment to fostering collaboration for the advancement of the industry. Through this collaboration, future events in Europe will showcase an even more comprehensive overview of innovative and forward-thinking developments within the drone and air mobility sector. This partnership brings together two powerhouses in the Drone and Air Mobility industry. ADW, renowned for its focus on air mobility, futuristic air operations and digital aviation, joins forces with Commercial UAV Expo, the leading specialist in commercial small unmanned aerial system applications under current regulations. The collaboration promises to elevate the conference and trade fair experience, merging ADW's global vision with Commercial UAV Expo's current-use case focus. The events will be co-located 8-10 April, 2025 at RAI Amsterdam.

Registration for the world's leading and most international aerospace and defence event, **Farnborough International Airshow 2024**, is now open. Taking place 22-26 July 2024, the event will see global aerospace and defence leaders return to Hampshire, United Kingdom, for five days of unrivalled opportunities to discover the latest pioneering technology and engineering, announce historic partnerships, and collaboratively work towards the cumulative sustainable aerospace vision. www.farnboroughairshow.com

PAvCon
POLICE AVIATION CONFERENCE EUROPE

28-29 May 2024
Wiener Neustadt, Austria

The Networking continues
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