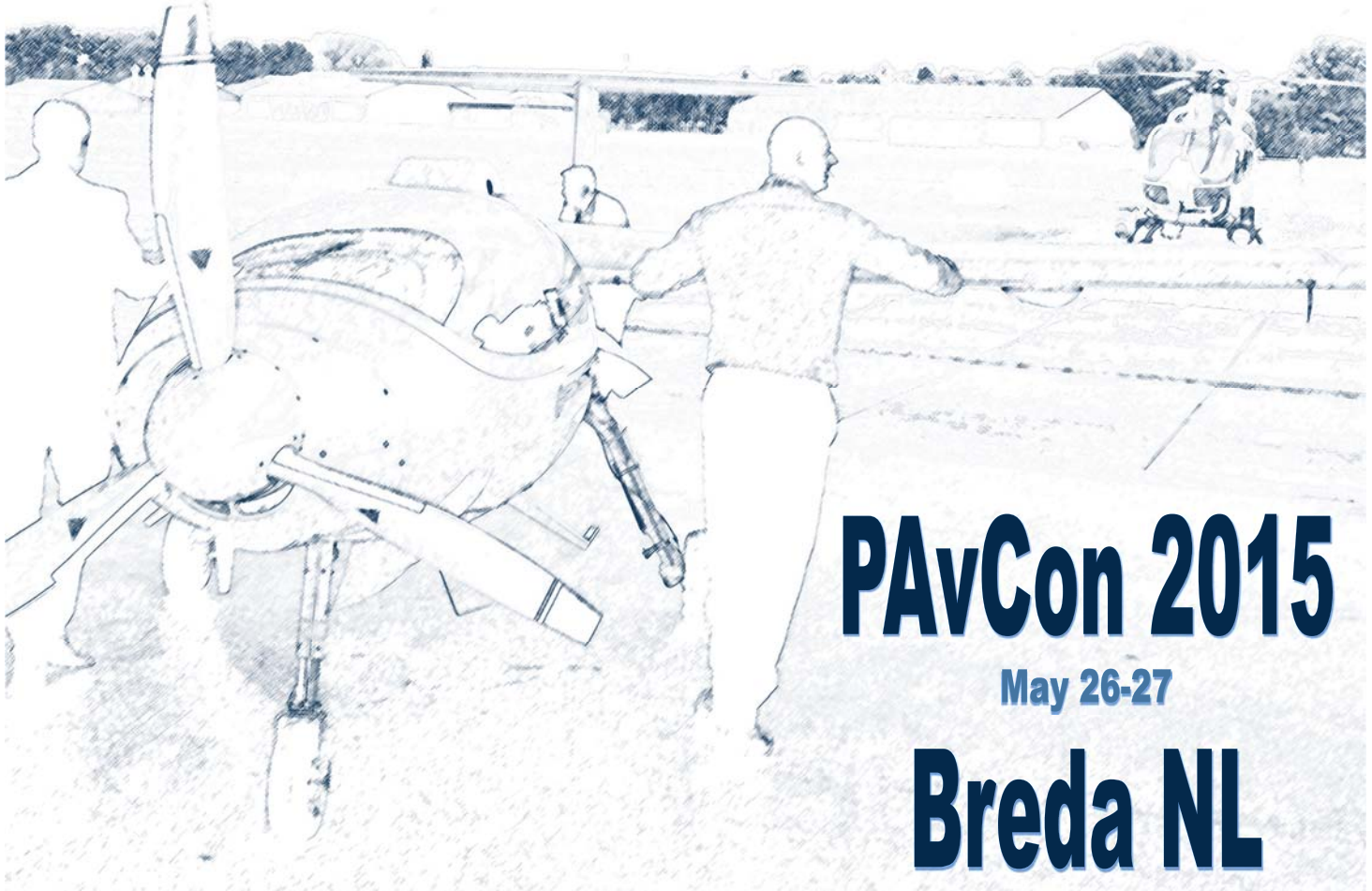


Police Aviation News

PAvCon
POLICE AVIATION CONFERENCE

REPORT 2015

**NEWS & VIEWS
ON THE BREDA
NETHERLANDS
CONFERENCE**



PAvCon 2015

May 26-27

Breda NL

It seemed that I had no sooner said welcome to the greatly increased audience for the latest PAVCon than I was again packing my boxes and bags and planning the next one. In between was a packed programme that largely worked well for all.

Location, location, location

When we were first presented with the venue some months before all the roof was put in place there was some sucking of teeth and doubt. As the months passed it got better and the worries receded and on the day it was a great location with all the right facilities in place. So why did we worry in the first place! Even the grass was trying hard to grow where not so long ago there were only vast pools of muddy water.

The final event, though apparently 'perfect' did stray from the original plan for a Unmanned Air System flying event simply because no-one had realised that such flying by non-Dutch Nationals was banned! That pretty draconian prohibition side-lined the initial plan but surprisingly the event still majored on the unmanned world.



After the brief organiser welcomes the event was opened with a Keynote Address by Pieter Cobelens a retired General with the Netherlands Air Force who declared he knew little about police aviation but even his copious helping of humour failed to hide some significant links with the security world and that alone bridged any gap there might have been between policing and the military. It was left to the Chief Pilot of the host police force, Sebastiaan Jansen to start off the aviation show with an introduction to policing and aviation in The Netherlands with an item entitled "Patrol and FLY"

Last year it was decided that PAVCon would move a little way towards the preferred USA ideals of long time periods being allotted to a single subject to see how it was accepted by the apparently different European culture. Where this faltered a little last year in Brussels the audience had clearly got over their unfamiliarity with the idea and this year and both lapped up and took part in the concept.



Bryan Smith gave a short introduction to his Day 2 Workshop on the first day.

The support of a good IT suite is a must have feature

In a repeat of last year Bryan Smith a Police Officer Pilot with Seminole County Sheriff and the volunteer Safety Officer for the ALEA introduced the plans for the morning of Day 2 in a short presentation just before coffee. He handed out short questionnaires on the plans for the morning of Day 2, crossed his fingers and hoped.

In Brussels last year few of these forms had been returned and Day 2 dawned and nothing much had happened overnight so it was something of a struggle when that hour long session on Flight Safety commenced. This year was very much a case of trying again with much the same audience.

This year was entirely different, the concept had taken root last year and the audience understood where it was going. The questionnaires had been returned in significantly greater numbers and there was 'meat on the table.' At the end of that session it became clear from a straw poll that more of the longer interactive sessions are to be part of the formula. This year flight safety, next year tactics as well.

PAvCon has grown and over the years since 2009 the number of exhibitors has clawed its way upwards to a point at which it can be expected to plateau if not fall back. Last year in Brussels there were over thirty exhibitors, this year the number leaped up to over forty. Lots of regular faces and a number of new faces. In fact the increase in numbers outstripped the space in the main hangar and meant a



move into the next one. That was not too popular as the overflow [late arrivals of course] thought they were in the wrong place to do business. That was until they realised that they were between the presentation area and the coffee. A premium position, and the mutterings died very quickly.

It is the exhibition area that makes these events work and the numbers [43] gave the delegates plenty of opportunity to vary their conversations over the day. The 8 hour day included 3 hours of face to face Networking interaction and there have been reports that for some that simply was not enough and as a result they missed out on some presentations they might have wished to take in. Quite a good position to be in it might be said.

So we have an event that attracts front line police aviators from across the world – the new people to PAvCon this year were from Botswana, Africa – to meet with industry and exchange operational ideas in an open forum. Other events charge exhibitors for their stall space and then charge again for the opportunity to take in the presentations. The PAvCon idea on this is that getting industry into the presentations enhances the chances of industry learning what the police want. They may have a product that meets a need mentioned within that hallowed arena they might be unaware there was a requirement for. That is the theory.

Beyond that Networking extends across the day and into the night. Everyone [not just a chosen few] is invited to partake of food and 'water' together to further boost the interaction. Dawn until dusk interaction requires that we get together a large hotel that allows us to live in near proximity for two days. I know of no other conference event that offers that formula.



The Novotel and its bar and the iconic Café De Beyerd used for the evening events prior to the conference were all part of the experience that is PAvCon.

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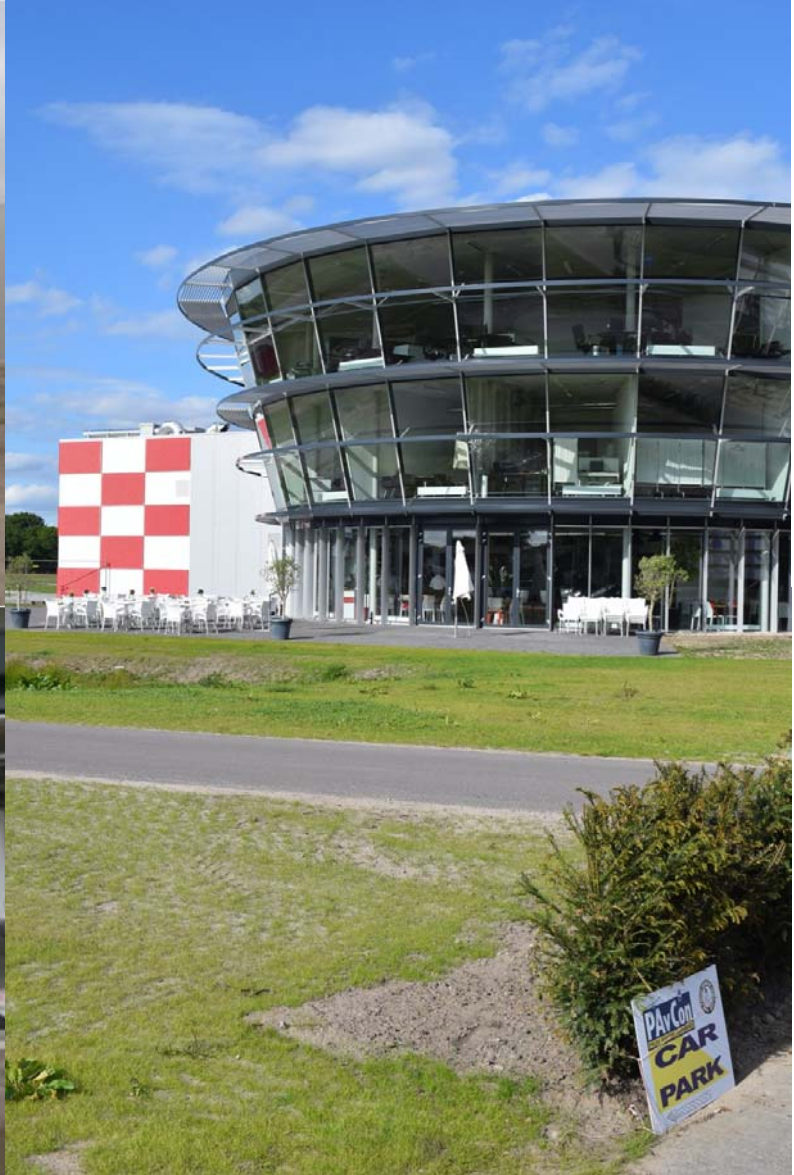
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The Flight Safety theme of the conference continued through both days with items on the dangers of bad weather interspersed with flight planning. All potentially dry subjects but presented by a professional team of ‘facilitators’ with many years of experience in coaxing the best out of their audience.

And still we tried to inject some information on unmanned aircraft despite not being able to give audience a flying demonstration.

I do not know who originally found Sergeant Dave Domoney of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police [RCMP] but he certainly has done the industry proud. I found Dave speaking to the September 2013 Police Aviation Conference [similar name but no more] in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia and decided that his words on unmanned aircraft needed a wider audience. I could not get him to Brussels last year but succeeded this time. In the meantime he has grown in status and is now the OIC of all the RCMP craft spread across much of western Canada. In Kuala Lumpur he had a ‘lot’ of police UAVs, last year he had even more and this year he has a veritable air force under his control. In each of those years I am pretty certain that the RCMP had the largest number of unmanned craft of any police service. The Canadian position is unique in that all their manned resources tend to be in the east and the west of the country leaving the vast central areas without any air cover until the tiny quad rotors arrived.

As the leading exponent of light unmanned craft probably within any police service he captured the attention. This was someone who knew about the subject but it required a transatlantic air ticket to bring him in to pass on the knowledge he had built up. It is clear that although the RCMP has a large number of craft they are not flying every day with each craft possibly undertaking an average of two missions each month. We hope Dave will be back next year, he joined ALEA while at PAVCon because he could see that the organisation was the glue that keeps all the widely differing aspects of police aviation together.

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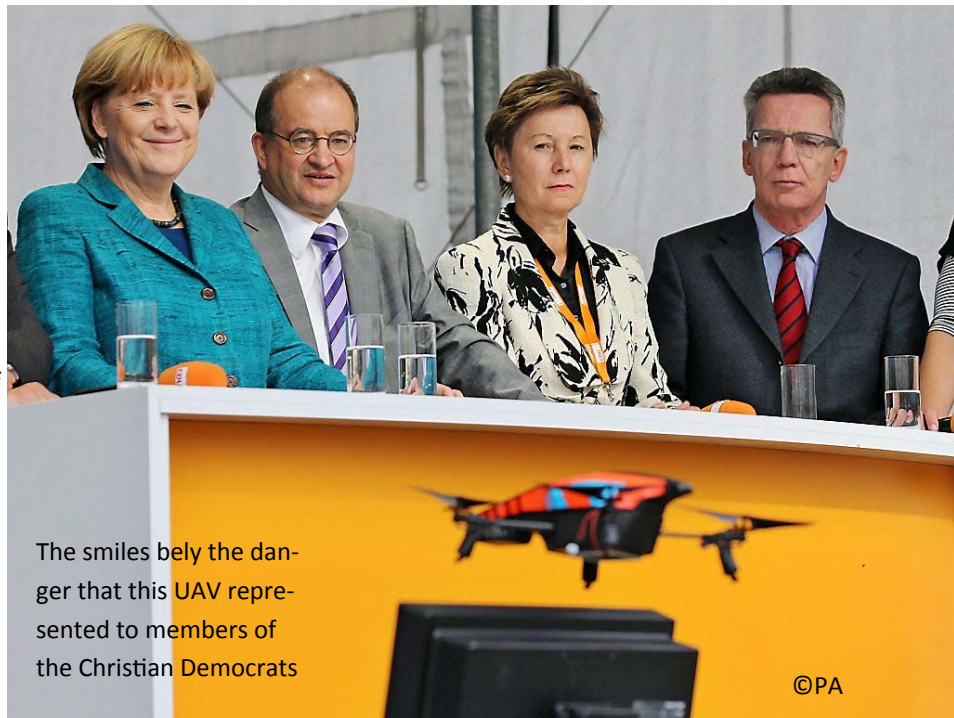
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Also from this 'lost cause' and 'irritant' subject of unmanned craft and what they might be able to do for police is the work of Paul Trimble from Northern Ireland. He works with the authorities in the province but despite the successes it remains very much a low key activity and certainly not yet a day to day interaction.

Most of Europe and America knows very little about the capabilities of a type of machine that is barely in service but the apparent threat presented by them is already causing disquiet among elements of the National Security industries and even well informed members of the public. There have been instances of craft making uninvited appearances at high profile locations and events – fortunately these have not been destructive episodes. Already a number of products have been proposed to disable these craft before they can undertake any real attacks. Some are fairly basic and unsophisticated, simply physical means of disablement. The latest offering is in another league of sophistication and is the result of three British companies, Blighter Surveillance Systems, Chess Dynamics and Enterprise Control Systems joining forces to combat a perceived threat.



Happily flexibility in the overall programme allowed a short presentation on this 'high end' point defence device to be given to the gathered delegates.

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Generally though commercial presentations are pretty much frowned upon and seen as of less interest than hands on presentations using exactly the same equipment that the commercials might want to highlight. To that end, despite the obvious relief they give in day-long deep discussions commercials are few and far between and require deep thought by the potential advertorial presenter to get a less commercial slant on the images and words. The anti-UAV was clearly in a different position in being brand new and on message.

From these sources we have learned a great deal more than previously known and hopefully we can continue to keep up to date in placing these 'toys' in roles currently not realised. The opinion remains that we are still a long way from these craft taking a major role in law enforcement.

International Police Cooperation

Every year there is a PAVCon [or indeed any ALEA meeting] we come back around to getting Europe into a 'talking shop' club. At one time the preferred model was PACE [Police Aviation Conference Europe], a somewhat secretive organisation with the ALEA shunned simply because it is American and, for some, too wide open to public interaction. My thinking on that is there is no need to reinvent the wheel. There is a need for nations across the world to interact and if nothing else PAVCon has shown one solution whilst pushing for ALEA to be the means of talking together in the longer term.

Whilst all nations can join and do interact with ALEA and PAVCon, PACE is by its own admission a European institution and extremely difficult to talk to. And maybe that is the problem. They, the members of PACE, spend so much time talking to each other behind closed doors and asking whether they should even talk to each other that they forget to talk to the rest of the world! Too many ideas and no action, meanwhile PAVCon [which is far younger] has temporarily filled the need.



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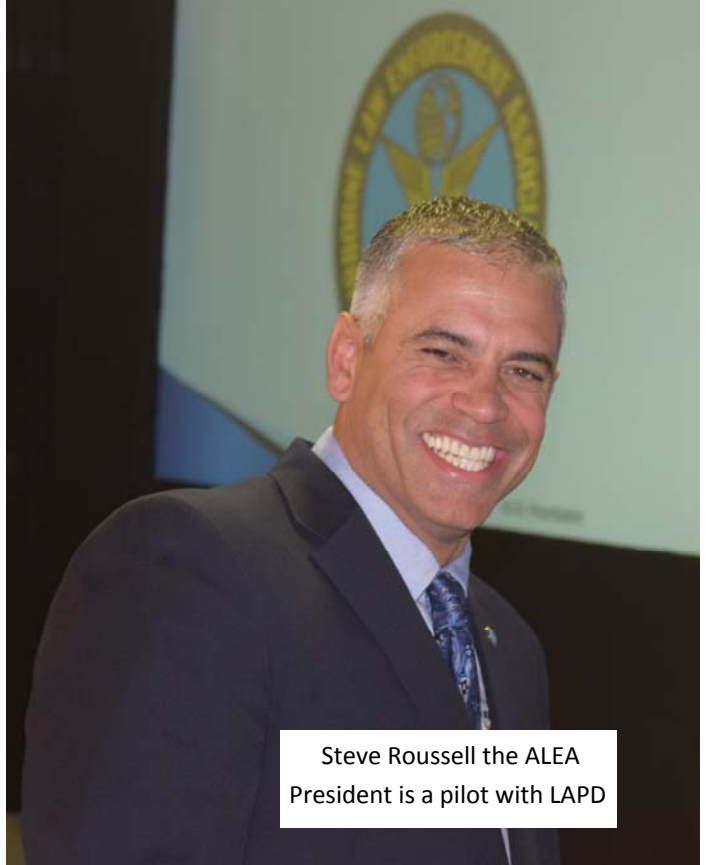
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The record for PAVCon is pretty good. It has an annual event at which more than a handful of police forces from across the globe talk to each other as equals and this usually leads to mutual interaction away from the event including base visits.

Mihael Avbelj from the air support of Slovenia is again trying to restart PACE from a position where it is all but dead but he is aware that he may well be trying to breathe life into it pretty much alone.

This year ALEA sent over CEO Dan Schwarzbach and the President Designate Steve Roussel to lead a "Roundtable Discussion on ALEA International Operations." There may be a general feeling that ALEA is an inward looking organisation but they can disprove that through their decades long connection with PAVCon and its predecessors as well as Europe and impending connections in the wider world. It is commercial companies and the ALEA that has met recent requests for ALE trainers to Europe, Africa, Australia and Malaysia, no other body.

The afternoon of Day 2 is always difficult in that there is a general perception that the quality of the presentations tails off and after lunch it's time to head off home. I must say this has not been a major problem with recent editions of PAVCon thanks to the quality of the speakers and keeping the subject matter fresh. PAVCon has a secret weapon in one officer pilot Joseba Mendizabal – who we had to do without last year because of a Special Mission he had in the tropics – he was back with us and on form. If there is a script to his presentation - "Safety before and after duty shift" – it is a well guarded one. His ad-libs are among the best and I can only recommend you attend next year and hope he is yet again at the top of his game!



Steve Roussel the ALEA President is a pilot with LAPD

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The last slot of the day – the ‘Graveyard’ presentation – is usually played out to an empty room. This simply did not happen and the subject was again unmanned aircraft and the security aspects they present. There were seats available but not that many.

Even if they personally will never fly a UAV or even have to defend an important person from the potential effects of one that incident in Germany with Angela Merkel gave much food for thought.

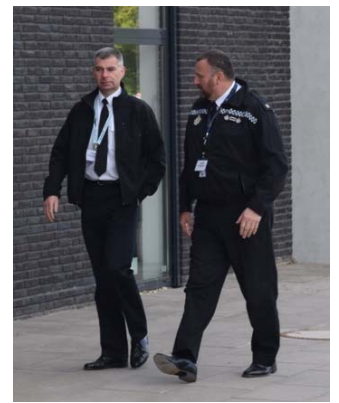
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Finally thanks to a whole host of people including the speakers who gave so much of their time even if the cost of transport was covered, the supporting organisations AEC Air Support our immediate hosts, Hangar 1 Restaurant for great food, Airbus Defence, ALEA, Bell Helicopter, and REVUE Thommen who sponsored elements of the programme and entertainment the Breda Novotel for housing most of us and even the Delegates for actually attending the event to make it all worthwhile. To the KLPD the National police of the hosts for their input and the number of their officers who joined in.

Feedback has been good this year and that relates mainly to the quality of the speakers and the attendees, PAVCon is just the forum and it is the content that matters not the vehicle. The number of feedback forms this year has been high and the content largely positive. Anyway talk of an 'excellent PAVCon' speaks volumes about the attendees as does 'Networking was great, met some new faces and learned a lot....' 'a conference that gets better and better each year' ... 'the must attend police aviation event in Europe' set the stage for next year.

A week after the PAVCon event the hosts held an official opening ceremony for Breda International Airport. The main event was held in Hangar 1 – the multifunction hangar - by Director Stef Have with support from other speakers including Martin Schröder formerly of Martinair, Giel Janssen Mayor Of Halderbergen and Henk Camp Minister of Economic Affairs Support.



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Breda International Airport
26-27 May

The Networking continues

