

# Police Aviation News

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Special Edition—Heli-Expo 2012

PAR



# HELL-EXPO 2012

**AgustaWestland take charge of the 609**  
*In flight at Arlington TX with the promise of a certain future*

**A review of some of the exhibits  
and aircraft attending the largest  
annual gathering of the helicopter industry**

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## Heli-Expo Special

As ever this was the best helicopter event of the year by far, but this year I heard someone call it soulless and they were right. There was something missing and its difficult to say exactly what.

The downturn in business may be part of it but it may also be the venue—the hall was long and thin and it looked a bit empty in places. Business may be down for some but there was no real sign of that for the major companies present as they all ended the three day show with a good crop of sales as did many of the smaller exhibitors. There is little real sign that there is a major slump going on in a helicopter industry bolstered by a need to serve the oil and gas industry - recovery may be starting here. We can only hope!

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## AGUSTAWESTLAND

After years of being overshadowed by Eurocopter in the timing of its HAI Heli-Expo press events AgustaWestland successfully continued its recent tactic of getting in on the act first with increasingly tempting offerings.

Previously the show was put on the road early on the opening day of the Heli-Expo but that was always in the coat tails of Eurocopter so the new prevent slots serve AW well.

Having taken over the 609 project from BellAgusta late last year this year's HAI in Dallas was a perfect opportunity to transport the media to their facility at nearby Arlington, Texas to give the newly restyled AgustaWestland 609 a near perfect photo-opportunity.

Bright blue cloudless skies were a perfect backdrop for the slow developing tilt-wing project – it is a pity for those gathered there that the bright conditions belied the near freezing temperatures!

It is nearly a decade since the 609 first flew and its

identity has reflected interests by a host of apparently half hearted past project leaders including Boeing and Bell. AgustaWestland now alone as project leaders promised to make up for lost time although it will still be years rather than months before the end game is realised. The current estimates state that the certified product will be available in 2016. As ever no-one really knows what the aircraft is for but the defensive stance for that apparent continuation of indecision is that the aircraft remains such a new concept that it will create its own markets. The grey areas are probably price and cost to own; perhaps the dark clouds may yet be whatever Eurocopter might do with their advancement of the X3 concept – potentially a cheaper road to rotary speed.

Whatever the outcome AW are predicting the AW609 will eventually sell around 500 units into the uncertain market.

Only 650 hours have been flown since the first flight in 2001, the annual average suggested there is depressing but in fact AW say that some 85% of the original flight envelope has been explored in that protracted testing effort.

The project has taken over three prototypes [two flying and one still in production], the intellectual property rights, certification credits, production tooling and test rigs from BellAgusta and will undertake the development in Italy and the USA. Although most staff will be based in Italy the workload will be fairly evenly spaced between the two countries. AW are pursuing the FAA certification route as a lot of work has been directed towards that end and there are many synergies with the US Authorities in that it is they that have been involved in the hybrid concept from the start. The concept of the 609 takes elements of a whole raft of aircraft construction legislation across both fixed wing and rotary sectors.

The basic prototype displayed is very much a flying test bed with a mixed and messy analogue and digital pilot's workstation that reflects a decade of changes. Currently test equipment fills the cabin space behind the two pilots seats but the final production offering will include seating and a modern fully glass cockpit and other features that were barely part of the original concept. Another new area to be investigated is the expected improvements in payload range when operated in the STOL mode.

On the day the pilot in command was Italian Test Pilot Pietro Nanzani but AW are forthright in stating that this remains very much an international project with many of the original Bell team retained under sub-contract in their original roles. The team encompasses many of those involved in the design, technical, engineering and piloting in the past few





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years. There is no intention to dispense with the vast well of knowledge just because the name on the masthead has changed.

The pre-show AgustaWestland Press Conference was buoyed up by the clear effect of the highly successful AW139, this single aircraft has turned the fortunes of Agusta and moved them from a defensive organisation offering a mainly heritage designed product line to one that exudes a well deserved positive outlook riding on the back of some of the most modern and desirable airframes.

Still the renewing attitude seems to be primarily one residing with the European helicopter industry, for reasons which they can alone answer and resolve the US MRO's simply do not have either the modern products or the confidence. Europe still retains its share of heritage designs but they are increasingly being outnumbered by new designs.

The press conference was a statement of confidence in the product line, although some of them have yet to appear in a form beyond the promising mock-up.



Garavaglia - Spagnolini - Russell

It was clear that the market over the last year is and was considered to be 'Challenging' but even in these supposed worst of times the group can look upon a 25% market share which indicates significant growth and significant sales. At the forefront of this activity the AW139 has seen 100 sales last year, so far 600 examples have been sold and 450 delivered. It is a performance matched by Eurocopter but in the commercial sector the US industry simply is not yet competing and no-one I have spoken to has yet offered a sensible reason for why Bell Helicopter are not still in that programme and reaping the benefits. Similarly, are we expecting to be asking the self same questions about the pull-out from the 609 or maybe yet congratulating Bell on a timely escape?

The upcoming new technology airframes include the AW169 due for a first flight in the spring and 2014 certification. There is an expectation that the type will sell 1,000 units over 20 years and its pre-flight sales performance at this years show has done nothing to dispel the confidence exuded by the team from AgustaWestland.

With all this positive work in the background there is little wonder that the replies to the inevitable media questions were presented with a supreme confidence.

Although this was not its launch event, a mock-up of the new AW189 was introduced to the US market on the afternoon of the first day. The launch was of course at Paris and the prototype flew late last year will an expectation of initial certification taking place by mid-2013



All of the AW types – including the legacy designs - were able to show a good order book but by the time the next few days had passed by those numbers were pointless as new order followed new order at this the favourite event for announcing most helicopter sales successes.

As part of the apparently unending good news AgustaWestland and Bond Aviation Group announced that they have signed a Framework Agreement for 15 helicopters comprising ten firm orders and five options. The Framework Agreement, which includes AW169, AW139 and AW189 aircraft, was signed by James Drummond, Chief Executive Officer, Inaer Group, and Emilio Dalmaso, Senior VP Commercial Business, AgustaWestland. This agreement follows a MoU signed in September 2011 to establish a Global Framework agreement covering all the Bond and Inaer companies to establish a multi-year contract covering the purchase of AW139, AW169 and AW189 helicopters for offshore oil and gas support, HEMS, SAR and emergency service missions, together with support to the emerging offshore wind-farm market.

It is unclear whether this is a sale to Bond as such, some voiced suspicions that this and other orders announced at the show are actually for the wider Inaer Group but that 'Bond' was the window dressing. If this is truly Bond on a lone buying spree it signifies major expansion for the company.



# PHOENIX

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On the company stand alongside the mock-ups were 'real' examples of the AW139 and the AW119Ke Koala. Thanks to unfortunate timing of its introduction the latter was not a big seller within a European Market now leaning towards twins and it initially failed to find much favour within even the single engine orientated USA. It is based upon a legacy design, the A109, and its sleek lines belie that background; it is now built in Philadelphia for the World market. Almost surprisingly the Koala has seen something of resurgence with significant orders being announced at the show.

Life Flight Network has signed a contract for 15 AW119Ke helicopters to meet its future air medical helicopter transport requirements. Aircraft deliveries will start in late 2012 and continue through to 2014 operating from bases in the North-western United States, in Oregon, Washington and Idaho.

The aircraft will be equipped with a comprehensive medical interior with two stretchers. In the cockpit the Life Flight Network aircraft will be equipped with the Garmin G1000H "glass" flight deck to enhance pilot situational awareness and safety by integrating the control and presentation of virtually all flight, sensor and instrument data onto the two large area displays.

In spite of its relatively slow start over 200 AW119 helicopters have now been ordered to date in more than 30 countries by almost 100 customers. The AW119Ke is well suited to perform many tasks including utility, fire-fighting, EMS, VIP/corporate transport, offshore transport, law enforcement and military duties.



The image incorporated into this magnificent paint work for an example of the Koala intended for sight-seeing in Nevada was completed by Straube's Aircraft Services [www.airstraube.com](http://www.airstraube.com) With the Heli-Expo due to be in Las Vegas next year we may yet meet again.

Press mindsets may have been distracted by the positive messages coming out of the press conference and facility visit but in the background of many enquiring minds was the apparent potentially detrimental connection between AgustaWestland and the ongoing and particularly negative Ornge EMS debacle in Canada.

Before the show all sorts of allegations were surfacing and among them was a statement by Ron McKerlie, interim chief executive officer of Ornge, to the Canadian press that the previous management had quietly ordered two more AW139s with taxpayer's money without any announcement either in Canada or within the helicopter industry. The airframes had not physically been taken to Canada, or fitted out as air ambulances. According to statements attributed to McKerlie '...they were purchased with the idea of making quick cash....'.

The two AW139s sit in a warehouse in Pennsylvania where AW have a manufacturing facility for the type but it seems that they have not been there very long – certainly not long enough to have already caused disquiet within the ranks of the manufacturer. HeliHub.com reported that the pair is serial numbers 41258 and 41259, neither of which has yet reached the Canadian register.

Another element of this sad tale is that it was suggested that AW might have been involved to an awkward degree relating to the medical interior that Ornge had fitted. The equipment fit supplied by Aerolite was supposed not fit for purpose in that its height made it impossible to undertake CPR on the patients in the 1.42M/4ft 8inches high cabin. In addition the tender for the fit was said to have been hidden from view of all except Aerolite. The latter aspect could not be investigated for the company staff present in Dallas were not surprisingly referring all enquiries to a beleaguered Ornge. The joy of an event the size of Heli-Expo is that most of the interested players were present in the same building in some cases they were willing to discuss the issues.

As manufacturers AgustaWestland advise their customers but generally leave the decision on interiors and the tender process to the customer and then agree the technical niceties with the supplier. The majority of the promotional documentation and technical guidelines illustrate possibilities but cannot really be said to be promoting one style over another. It is clear that a wide range of different configurations and suppliers can be found across the AW139 fleets of their customers; each reflects the varying needs of the many customers.

Although it is not an EMS show there were plenty of exhibitors in Dallas displaying their air ambulance interior wares varying from simple floor mounted stretchers to expensive suites. It seems that the row surrounding Ornge has served as a wake-up call to the industry. There were plenty of examples of the type of built up bench suites that might be considered too high for some helicopter interiors when it comes to performing airborne CPR. It seems that they mainly came straight from the fixed wing sector where headroom is less of an issue. Designed by engineers they look good and efficient and it can be accepted that someone simply did not grasp the clearance implications until prompted recently. Those in the hall now say that lessons are clear and revisions will appear with a few inches trimmed off their height to allow for the now highlighted problems. The row broke too late for the in show exhibits to reflect answers to the problem.

Meanwhile it has been reported that Ornge, Ontario's air-ambulance service, has won the go-ahead to temporarily fix the problem with its helicopters that restricts paramedics from performing life-saving CPR on patients.



*Aerolite [above] were showing images of the Ornge equipment but no actual hardware.*

*Below:  
Interior of the EMS fit in the rear of the Bell 429*





AgustaWestland state that the delay of the first two multipurpose Medevac helicopters in the Maryland State Police's new fleet is not directly related to the Ornge situation. It is a medical equipment issue but not related to the height of the stretcher. Earlier enquiries direct to the customer, Maryland State Police, resulted in them being tight lipped and not for the first time the reticence to talk through the problems simply fed media assumptions that the two events were linked.



United Rotorcraft, an Air Methods Division, were at the show and unveiled their Medical Transport Module (MTM), which is an smart all inclusive cabinet that attaches to the floor of an aircraft and includes advanced life support systems such as oxygen, compressed air, vacuum and AC/DC power.

The MTM also integrates a pivoting loading system that can be adjusted forward and aft and pivot greatly simplifying the loading process. The MTM is designed to fit in airframes that have flat floors and enough space for a standard litter. The MTM unveiled was in an AgustaWestland AW169 mock up which AgustaWestland provided for United Rotorcraft.

The medical interior mock-up for the AW169 includes several design features including a machined aluminium floor, modular medical cabinet, the MTM with a standard litter, a roll-on-roll-off solution, window well equipment racks, and NVIS lighting kits. The new products and mock up displayed many of the now suspect elements of the Ornge revelations. We can expect that it will be modified if the perception of the medical advisers is that clearance is a problem.

AgustaWestland announced the signing of contracts for four additional AW139 in Japan through its distributor Mitsui Bussan Aerospace. Two of the AW139s will be designated for the civil market and two will be operated by the Japan National Police Agency (JNPA) to perform multi-role law enforcement missions in Miyagi and Niigata Prefectures. Both currently operate Bell 412s.

The JNPA helicopters are scheduled to enter operational service in 2013. These latest orders bring the number of AW139 medium twin-engine helicopters ordered by customers in Japan to 37, with nine dedicated to law enforcement missions. Law enforcement operators for the AW139 in Japan include the Tokyo Metropolitan Police, Chiba Prefecture Police, Osaka Prefecture Police, Nagano Prefecture Police and Hokkaido Prefecture Police. AgustaWestland's strength in this market sector is underpinned by 23 light twin engine AW109 Powers and the Tokyo Metropolitan Police AW101.

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The major news of the show fell to Bell Helicopter when they announced what they termed the world's first "super-medium" helicopter, the Bell 525 Relentless.

"Today, we celebrate with our customers – not only the launch of this new product – but the result of our collective efforts to define a new class of helicopter that raises the bar on innovation in the industry," said John Garrison, President & CEO, Bell Helicopter.

Truly new aircraft – rather than warmed over Huey's are rare as hens teeth in Bell so interest was high. The 16 passenger Bell 525 defines a new airframe class – supposed positioned at the upper end of the medium class and designed to offer best-in-class capabilities – not difficult when the in-house publicity for the 525 repeatedly claims it to be the only contender. In the first instance it is aimed at the oil industry but could arguably quickly see use in the SAR world if customers are able to clearly identify it as overcoming any perceived flaws in the main competition.

It features payload and range, cabin and cargo volumes only normally seen in the military sphere of operations. Whether the 525 succeeds in joining the military remains to be seen; currently it majors on crew and passenger access, egress and visibility in the civil world.

Petroleum Helicopters [Phi], a long standing a loyal launch customer for Bell and other customers engaged with the manufacturer on the design of the new aircraft which should ensure an eased path to market. The problem is that Phi has long been seen as a serial launch partner – they need to be seen to stick with the 525 for it to be a worthwhile exercise.

The new Bell 525 will be powered by the GE CT7-2F1; the latest version of a highly successful family of engines. It is designed with an emphasis on low fuel consumption, low cost of operation and with other technical features to ensure aircraft meet the requirements of long range, high payload missions. The CT7-2F1 engine includes a state-of-the-art FADEC plus advanced materials, primarily in the turbine section.

It is too early yet to comment seriously on what is currently a mock-up which I uncharitably immediately christened the 'Banana' but Bell will hopefully pull this one off and get back at the top of their game. It has interesting features, not least a unique escape system involving

the seats swivelling out of the door less cockpit for the pilots [see right]. Bell has done large before with disappointing overall sales figures, hopefully the 525 will be Relentlessly different.

The launch ceremony for the 525 was predictably a spectacular and American affair and whoever set it up for Bell did a really good job. Lots of flashing lights and smoke that turned out to be so good that they went ahead and did it all again the following day! My understanding is that this unprecedented re-run was primarily for the staff undertaking it on day one to witness from the audiences point of view. Mark 2 was not quite so well attended as the first day event but in fairness the new audience still lapped it up.

Then there is the matter of the Canadian factories and workforce. The 525 is to be built in the USA in breach of an earlier agreement to always build, or complete, helicopters [only in] Mirabel, Canada.



Recently Bell Helicopter announced the delivery of the 4,000<sup>th</sup> commercial product since it began production at its Mirabel, Canada, facility 25 years ago.

During a small ceremony at Bell Helicopter's facility in Mirabel, long-time customer, Air Medical Group Holdings (AMGH), took delivery of the 4,000 aircraft – a Bell 206L4. This 4,000<sup>th</sup> aircraft will add to the current fleet of 155 Bell products flown by AMGH.

Bell Helicopter has delivered more than 6,300 Bell 206s, including all its variants, since it began production in 1967 and much of their good name in support relies upon it. As yet we have not heard what the unions in Canada think about the intention to move construction of the 525 to Texas.

Bell still has potential production, manufacturing and development unknowns to test the mettle of the management. Both AgustaWestland and Eurocopter have a need to defer to Finmeccanica and EADS respectively but manage to hide much of the deference. In contrast to the apparently relaxed European CEOs it is very clear Garrison is not his own man. Even if they are equally constrained and it is all smoke and mirrors there is a massive contrast in style.

Garrison comes across as a nice enough but he continues to be evasive and there is a tendency to suspect the pressure of the unseen manipulation of Textron as a root cause. Not his fault no doubt but it does not embed confidence in all his words. Slipping in statements like '...this has been approved by Textron.....' are frankly depressing his personal image. And, reflecting on his reaction to a seemingly simple question from the press pack, why does he not know whether [he can say] metal has yet been cut on the 525? They have built



a mock up which would suggest something probably has been 'cut' but he appears unable to say so.

In the 525 Bell seem to have invented a helicopter in class of its own that does not tread on the toes of any of the new European offerings but we do not know whether it is a real class of Bell's own or, as they claim, a result of 'customer requests.'

You remember customer requests don't you? I recall that history records that most of UK aerospace went down the pan on the back of customers shaping the wrong specifications and projects like the Brabazon, designed by a committee, and both the DH Trident and BAC VC-10 were restricted by the choices made by one airline rather than an industry. Worryingly Bell has had airframes that did not really fit. I clearly recall hearing at an earlier HAI that the customers 'wanted' the Bell 210. We can only wish them good luck and hope they do not need too much of it.

On the positive side Bell Helicopter's exhibit area featured the first multi-mission configured Bell 429 – operated by Fairfax County Police– as well as a newly-completed Bell 407GX – operated by Helicopter Flight Services. As a much loved producer of all American classic helicopters other booths in the Convention Hall were well sprinkled with earlier designs that have brought Bell many accolades – especially in the field of product support for a mainly legacy product line. I think we can expected some of those long standing support accolades to slip away temporarily if spares for the new types appear less readily available in the early years of their production.

The silver and black Fairfax 429 was a very attractive exhibit for the visitors and provided them with an excellent example of a well equipped dual role police and air ambulance airframe. The last time HAI was in Dallas Fairfax had recently taken delivery of L3 Wescam's high specification MX-15 sensor turret and were displaying the new acquisition on their Bell

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206 LongRanger. It demonstrates the power of the MX-10 now fitted to the new 429 that the customer, Fairfax, felt able to downsize to it.



Recently there have been reports about the Bell 429 being selected as the future police aircraft by the police in Turkey but of that there was little in Dallas. I guess negotiations are at a critical phase and that although the fat lady maybe humming she has yet to sing. All too often aviation promises in Turkey turn to dust.

Bell revenue increased \$35M in the fourth quarter compared to the fourth quarter in 2010. The company delivered 7 V-22s, 6 H-1s and 62 commercial helicopters in the quarter compared to 7, 7, and 71 rotorcraft, respectively, in the same the year before.

Backlog at the end of the quarter was \$7.3 billion, up \$981M compared to the end of the third quarter.

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## EUROCOPTER

Eurocopter's 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary was the basis of the company's promotion at the Heli-Expo. Unlike recent years there was no major programme to launch so the industry need for large sheets, smoke and lights fell to the newly revised EC130. Last year a similarly updated AS350 was launched with far less pomp.

Amid some secrecy Eurocopter unveiled its newest upgrade, the EC130 T2, which features enhanced comfort, improved operational performance and increased versatility for this popular member of the company's lightweight single-engine product line. Eurocopter announced a number of launch customers for the T2 that took its order total over the 100 mark at launch.

Devoid of a real star Eurocopter followed a well tried formula and filled its booth with news and information – as well as free coffee and cookies for those bold enough to seek them.

Innovation was the information subject line this year, the blue and green copter themes of last year having receded somewhat. They ranged from an obstacle detection system and hybrid helicopter concept for improved flight safety to the latest in manufacturing techniques for lighter-weight structures and enhanced efficiency.

In addition to the evolved EC130 T2 helicopter unveiling, the stand hosted both the new EC145 T2 version of its popular twin-engine EC145 and a military UH-72A Lakota equipped with the Security and Support (S&S) Battalion mission equipment package for National Guard units, an EC175 and an example of another evolved type the EC135T2e.

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Mike Stanberry, CEO of Metro Aviation & Marc Paganini, CEO American Eurocopter

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Dr. Lutz Bertling, Eurocopter President and CEO releases news about the EC130T2 to the gathered press

Eurocopter generated a record high annual turnover in 2011 as the company benefitted from long-term strategies of investing in innovation to keep its helicopter product line at the forefront, growing the international footprint, developing services businesses and optimising internal operations.

The delivery of 503 rotary-wing aircraft in 2011, along with Eurocopter's enhanced support and services activities, generated a turnover of 5.4 billion euro's – representing a growth of 12.5% from last year. Deliveries included the 1,000<sup>th</sup> Dauphin, which was received by Indian operator Pawan Hans; the 1,000<sup>th</sup> EC135, provided to the German ADAC automobile club – one of Eurocopter's longest-standing customers; and the 100<sup>th</sup> EC225, accepted by the Bristow Group.

New helicopter orders picked up last year, with the 457 net bookings compared with the 346 helicopters sold in 2010.

Eurocopter continues to expand its EC175 order book with Noordzee Helikopters Vlaanderen's [NHV] ordering ten of this new seven metric ton-category helicopter during the show.

Deliveries of the EC175s will begin next year for NHV and are to continue through 2015, with the rotary-wing aircraft equipped for missions that include transportation flights for the oil and gas sector. Future applications include search and rescue missions.

Created in 1997, the privately-owned NHV is specialized in business-to-business helicopter transport. It provides services for the Belgian and Dutch Maritime Pilot Service; search and rescue missions for the Dutch Ministry of Defence; oil and gas industry transportation in Europe, South America and Africa; along with emergency medical airlift for various European hospitals.

The NHV aircraft fleet is located in nine countries on three continents, and includes 17 Eurocopter Dauphin family helicopters and one EC145.

*Dr. Lutz Bertling, Eurocopter President and CEO (right) presents Commander Edward Sheppard, USCG H-65 Product Line Manager, a plaque in celebration of their 1,250,000 milestone.*





Eurocopter were not making much of a recent Far East press report that the Philippine Coast Guard were to have seven Eurocopter helicopters. The company put in a bid with seven EC145 helicopters but as yet have not received any confirmation from the Philippines – let alone a deposit. It does look promising though.

Before the show Boeing Defence Australia (BDA) and Thales Australia named the Eurocopter EC135 as the preferred platform for their bid on the Australian Defence Force (ADF) Project AIR 9000 Phase 7 – Helicopter Aircrew Training System (HATS). Most observers would have expected the Boeing elements to have steered the bid around a US product it has some links with – the Explorer.

On a practical front, and in spite of the passions expressed by a relatively small number of MD proponents, the presence of more than 1,000 EC135 aircraft worldwide - and the 2.2 million flight hours the fleet has amassed to date made the bid a no brainer.

The Boeing and Thales team conducted a rigorous evaluation of available twin-engine helicopters to identify the aircraft that best met the Commonwealth's training systems goals.

Overall the Dallas experience of Eurocopter was that it represented an acceptable presence for a company saddled with being 'Number 1' in the commercial field, for those at the top the only way is down and they certainly only want to keep going up. Eurocopter completed another successful Heli-Expo 2012 logging another 191 sales and options so they seem to be keeping up appearances.

Metro Aviation a major air ambulance operator and role fit facility for the Eurocopter product was marking its own anniversary with a party on its booth.

Metro has signed an agreement with American Eurocopter to use the AS350 Flight Simulator as part of the operator's pilot training program. American Eurocopter owns the only AS350 Level B full motion flight simulator in the world. It was manufactured by Indra.

"We are strong advocates of simulator training for EMS pilots," said Mike Stanberry, President of Metro Aviation. "In fact, we have been using simulator training for all our pilots for the last three years. The availability of the AS350 simulator will allow us to put our AStar pilots into the actual model they fly and practice emergency procedures that you couldn't perform in a real airframe."

The arrangement with American Eurocopter is a dry lease agreement with Metro Aviation providing its own instructor pilots. The operator has a long-standing relationship with American Eurocopter, whose helicopters represent the core of their fleet.

"We continue to add new Eurocopter helicopters to our fleet and have accumulated training credits, which we are utilizing with this program," continued Stanberry. "The fact that this was a full motion simulator was very important to us. We are also going to take advantage of the additional capabilities this simulator offers such as training for inadvertent instrument meteorological conditions (IIMC)."

American Eurocopter has developed a new IIMC course which is not model-specific. Metro Aviation pilots will go through IIMC training, practice system failures, and perform emergency procedures as part of their time in the simulator. Preparations for the program are underway, with the first instructors arriving in Grand Prairie this week. At first, the AS350 simulator will be used for recurrent training, but Stanberry expects it will be used for some initial pilot training as well.



## MARENCO

For a second participation of the SKYe SH09 at HELI-EXPO, Marengo Swisshelicopter Ltd. unveiled a unique High-Visibility Cockpit concept. This pretty and fairly flimsy looking project has a long way to travel before it attracts some serious airborne emergency services interest but it has issued some artwork to suggest a future in that market.

The Swiss developers envisage a pretty standard fare of users including surveillance flights, sight-seeing operations, private passenger transport and external load carriage. The aircraft is to be fitted with top of the line SAGEM 10" displays and an adapted efficient air conditioning system.

With a Maximum Take-Off Weight of 2,800 kg (6,170 lbs) the new helicopter offers exceptional hot and high performance, a flexible engine concept and a low noise signature thanks to the newly developed dynamic assemblies and a shrouded tail-rotor that so far has not attracted the attention of Eurocopter lawyers. The modular cabin makes the most of the flat floor and the unique high ceiling concept, offering multiple seating arrangements of 1 Pilot + up to 7 passengers, all with individual crashworthy seats. The rear access to the cabin is facilitated by the large clamshell doors; addressing the transport and evacuation roles of the helicopter.

The developers talk of offering a fast cruise speed of 260 km/h (140 knots) and very long range – in excess of 800km (430 nautical miles) with standard fuel tanks but for the moment this is very much a project in the wings that will amass more credibility after flying and meeting its claims.



## MD

MD Helicopters, Inc. still styles itself as a leading manufacturer of commercial and military helicopters but for the time being that status remains largely in cold storage as it resolves continuing 'issues' with production and most importantly customer confidence. The company also claims that the MDHI family of rotorcraft is world renowned for its value, versatility and performance but that remains an area where the jury is still out considering its verdict.

But all is not lost, there are chinks of improvement in fortunes for the legacy 500/530 ranges and a continued promise of a '540' and a new

set of electronics in the front end of the 902. They were due this year but neither appeared and they still look at least year off. Perhaps someone is going to make use of a Las Vegas magician next year – it will be magic if it happens. The 540 is expected to be a development of the 530 with the 6-blade rotor of the MD600N and aimed at the same foreign military trainer market that has provided the company with success in recent months.

The current MD Helicopters family continues to include a range of single engine versions of the MD 600N, MD 520N, MD 500E and MD 530F a few of which are enjoying a degree of



resurgence in popularity that is putting some cash into the company coffers thanks to the important military contracts slipped through the US military for foreign military customers. There may be other improvements associated with this line but they remain a design with an inordinately long history deeply wedded to the Vietnam War.

The MD stand included a two years old 500E in the colours of a police unit, Metro Air Support based at the Spirit of St. Louis Airport, Chesterfield, Missouri, and an 600N in the apparently spurious colours of an Alabama Sheriff's office. The airframe was until recently N603BP c/n RN029 one of the US Border Patrol examples put out into the desert as unwanted but now carries the marks N2638S. The third airframe displayed was a 902 c/n 00135.

The supposed pride of the NOTAR® system products is the twin-engine MD Explorer® which is simply not selling as a new product at the moment – in fact all recent sales announced by MD relate to non-NOTAR® lines.

Nonetheless the 902 remains a highly popular air ambulance airframe, particularly in Britain where some 20% of the world fleet of the 902s operate; even in Britain tempers are getting short thanks to poor overall serviceability – and that includes both poor parts availability and support. Operators moving their support business elsewhere and yet staying with the aircraft may endorse the airframe but it should be ringing alarm bells somewhere.

When the problems are sorted out in the factory there is some technology to catch up on. Fifteen years ago the 900 was launched as a modern twin that sought to offer only the best in performance and availability. And at that time it 'ticked all the boxes' and arguably offered the best cabin in its class. Now a lack of ongoing development has left it lagging behind. The 902 seems to be alone in requiring some maintenance operators to insist on a massive minimum of 6 weeks off-line for an annual maintenance where its main competitors suffer no such restrictions. On a good day with everything falling into place – and it does happen – a modern helicopter can sail through an annual inspection in less than a working week. Two weeks offline is rare. When busy customers are given the choice between a type guaranteed to be missing from earning its keep 10% of the time and another with the potential to be missing much less there is little doubt where the decision will lie. Across Europe there are a handful of 902s awaiting the same part and some have been AOG for weeks. It seems that there is no stock of the Vertical Stabiliser Actuator to be had. At one time MD could point to outside suppliers delivery problems; now almost everything is supposed to be in house so I assume the buck stops in Mesa.

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Straight after the show MD announced that the 902 had gained Transport Canada approval for day/night, VFR operation in Canada. With this Canadian approval, the MD900 has now been certified for operation in fifty countries, since its introduction in 1994.

The certification t is a significant step forward towards earning full approval for the newer MD Explorer 902 configuration with Pratt & Whitney 206E and 207E Engines and IFR STC operation. This approval for the upgraded aircraft is expected in the next few months. At best this is a surprise development 18 years after the type flew!

The long suffering proponent of MD is Lynn Tilton and seven years on in her rescue mission she remains amazingly positive about the future of the overall company – she needs to, she has sunk a small fortune in its long term survival. There were two main Tilton ‘meet the public’ events scheduled for Heli-Expo and they tend to be crowd pullers. The first was the standard MDHI press conference and that is always a crowd puller with all comers attending beyond the strictly press pack.

They have always been great fun events – with ‘what will she be wearing today’ at the core. On this occasion she freely admitted, “They come more to see what I am wearing than what I am saying” and that, perhaps unfortunately, is a very fair assessment. Disappointment with the performance is rare – it is usually worthy of an Oscar although the subject is serious enough.


In the past attempts have been made by the good lady to give an indication of the expected sales performance – sadly these have been wildly wrong quite consistently but what the



# “SIMPLY UNBELIEVABLE”



WESCAM's MX-10 continues to take the industry by storm! Who would have thought that footage captured from a demo would have created the buzz it has. As the saying goes... You have to see it to believe it!

Check it out on  [www.youtube.com/watch?v=s703HcD6\\_Zc](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s703HcD6_Zc)

WESCAM's MX-10 is a small ball that is visually as powerful as its predecessors – the MX-20 and MX-15. With 6 sensor options, and weighing in at under 37 pounds, this turret would be your best investment to date. For more information visit [wescam.com](http://wescam.com) or call 1-888 668 4355



heck she always tried to please.

Switch to Dallas 2012 and to everyone's surprise the speaker seems to have taken on a mantle of very serious and selective memory over sales numbers and where her production plants are. Most in the room knew she was wrong when she denied ever giving numbers of expected sales in the upcoming year but were ill-equipped to dispute her assertion that she never gave numbers in earlier meetings. She took that as a 'victory' but it was pretty hollow. Very soon the meet the press diatribe drifted off into jingoisms about the right of the American people to work and to work in her factories – one of which is firmly in Mexico. There was much virtual waving of US flags and very quickly the usually attentive international audience started studying the chair or bit of carpet in front of them – the cause was lost.

Just to make matters worse she took a very similar tirade to the CEO's meet the public gathering later in the day. She was in fact the only 'real' company head to attend this previously eminent gathering but the jingoism was not popular even in front of a largely US audience. Coffee was taken early. Whether the event will ever get back to being a true 'meet the CEO occasion remains to be seen.

#### ROBINSON

Small numbers of the piston R44 serve as police helicopters across the world and in the past even the tiny R22 has undertaken the role but it remains to be seen whether the latest Robinson will see an exponential growth in police interest in the type based upon the turbine engine. The R-66 Police [interior seen right] is a turbine powered helicopter that is part of the Robinson family of aircraft, and arguably a modern match for the venerable Bell 206 and the basic examples of the Eurocopter AS350 series. It may be lacking in space and sheer lifting power but it has the arrival of a turbine engine and price on its side. Robinson wanted to go with a "Tried and True" system for the R-66 Police version



unveiled at Heli-Expo so the airframe displayed was primarily a minimal growth five seat variant of the earlier piston powered Police airframe. The type is currently awaiting certification in Europe and Canada – there are said to be issues relating to the hydraulics delaying the finalisation of this.

Flight Management Systems of Calgary, AB, Canada announced that the FMS Moving Map has been chosen by Robinson Helicopter Company for their Law Enforcement Demonstrator, R-66 helicopter.

Despite the turn down in the small private sector Robinson delivered almost one helicopter every day in 2011. A truly impressive accomplishment despite the big manufacturers looking upon the numbers in disdain.



### INSIGHT DESIGN

Insight Design is based in Burnham and specialises in Aircraft and Helicopter paint scheme design, Brochures and Leaflets, Advertising and Publicity, Corporate Design, Logo Design and Illustration

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## SCOTT'S

The Bell 47 may be an historical craft but a number of team of engineering enthusiasts are intent on keeping it flying years after Bell decided not to further support the type that lifted police aviation across the world into the air.

IAC are working with Scott's Bell 47 Inc in developing new composite main rotor blades for the model 47 fleet. IAC is an internationally recognised main and tail rotor blade repair & overhaul service provider in Texas with FAA certifications to inspect & repair all major OEM's rotor blades. In addition to repair activities, IAC and its affiliates are currently developing new blade designs for several helicopter models.

The new main rotor blade will consist of a custom selected airfoil for improved performance and will be developed using the latest composite materials design & manufacturing technologies. SB47 anticipates this new airfoil will provide increases in hover performance and a reduction in fuel burn. The development plan also includes fatigue & damage tolerance testing planned to demonstrate a service life increase over the current 5,000 flight hours for the Bell designed metal blades. SB47 also confirmed that the composite blade will be designed to retain the Model 47 helicopter's best-in-class Autorotation capability. It is intended that these new blades be interchangeable in pairs with the current metal blades in-service.

Scott's launched a Model 47 Upgrade Program at Heli-Expo offering customers the choice to have their existing Model 47 upgraded or to purchase a refurbished/upgraded 47G-2A configuration (narrow body) or 47G-2A-1 (wide body) configuration helicopter direct from the OEM.

The upgrade will apply to all Lycoming powered 47G type helicopters from the 47G-2 through to the 47G-5A, excluding the Franklin powered 47G-3. These upgrades will include a new Instrument Panel, Interiors & the composite MRB.

I guess no-one is expecting it to make a major comeback in the law enforcement role but it is a bit of history that has not yet been grounded.

## SIKORSKY

In his press briefing the company CEO Jeff Pino likened his company to its equal Eurocopter. Such a concept had never even occurred to many in the room! The great Sikorsky being acknowledged as a match on the international stage by an upstart Franco-German manufacturer.

The parity was different of course, Sikorsky remain pre-eminent in the military field and relatively weak on the civil side – EC are a mirror image and it was this that Pino was alluding to at what was a civil show. In terms of numerical output and turnover he considered that they are equals. The fact that both are dwarfed numerically by Robinson's output did not seem to feature!

Much of his civil presentation related to the latest variant of the S-76, the 76D. In some ways this year's message was similar to that of last year in Florida for he was then convinced that the D would already be in service now. This year, as last, he predicted this is the year. There have been development problems with the fully revised model but now Sikorsky has burned its bridges and taken its predecessor the 76C++ out of production in preparation for the arrival in service of the 76D. Orders for the type have not been breathtaking but a long standing government agency in Japan added four more to the total during the show. The Coast Guard lost some 76C models in last year's Tsunami and chose the D because the earlier variant had served them so well.

Bond Aviation Group, the British helicopter operator and subsidiary company of the World Helicopters Group, signed a contract to buy 16 S-92<sup>®</sup> helicopters. The purchase is the largest one-time acquisition of S-92 aircraft ever received by Sikorsky Aircraft.

The introduction of the S-92s represents the next stage in Bond's growth and fleet development for both UK and International operations, such as Oil & Gas and Search and Rescue,





for which the S-92 is ideally designed. The first delivery is expected in 2013.

All Bond S-92 aircraft will feature equipment and systems necessary for operations in the North Sea in accordance with the EASA's requirements. These include five flotation devices, two auto-deployable life rafts, satellite flight following communications, and a main rotor blade ice protection system. Currently, helicopter operators based in five North Sea countries are flying 47 S-92 aircraft configured for offshore transport and search and rescue missions. Sikorsky is well into a programme of replacing gearboxes in the S-92 fleet; the reason for this major change was not spelled out but is unlikely to be far removed from the loss of a Cougar airframe.

A dark cloud appeared over both the S300 and S434 models. The latter was not displayed in the hall or even mentioned in the presentation but proponents of the former Hughes/MDD/Schweizer 300 line were quick to latch on to an apparent downgrading of the status of the well loved training helicopter. The production of the former company has been moved from Elmira and replaced with original Sikorsky projects; the popular CB variant has been dropped from production. It is said that the Schweizer family are suing Sikorsky for failing to honour details of the deal that saw the company and its facility taken over.



The situation relating to the 434 appears more terminal – although a death sentence has yet to be announced. There is only one major customer for the ugly duckling 434 and that is the Saudi Border Guard. When pressed Jeff Pino said that it had to be certified to meet the terms of the Saudi contract but its future was then to be 'assessed.'

#### SAFRAN/TURBOMECA

The French engine manufacturer is doing well on the world market but it is clear that areas where they have lost ground to such as P&WC including the UK emergency services arena and the new AgustaWestland fleet line up rankle. Such negative developments will make them try even harder to do better.

At the company press conference fronted by the recently appointed CEO Olivier Andriès there were clear signs of an intention to at least match the best of the best in ramping up the TBO's of each of their engines. TBO's in the range of 3-5,000 hours may look good on paper but in many cases by the time they come to pass all but the most intensively used airframes never reach them before some other date related maintenance becomes necessary.

#### POWERVAMP

One class of vendor there never seems to be a shortage of at the annual Heli-Expo Shows is the suppliers of ground power units. Everyone has a battery that is more wonderful than the competition, but unfortunately battery technology is not quite like that and a battery is still a battery so all the vendor



Shortly after Heli-Expo finished the results of the 2012 **Pro Pilot Helicopter Support Survey** arrived in the February issue of the magazine.

According to this year's survey Bell Helicopter has maintained its prime position after 18 Consecutive years.

The other positions in the turbine group are 2. Sikorsky 3. Eurocopter 4. MD 5. AgustaWestland.

In the Piston category Robinson took the prime position, some manufacturers/models did not receive sufficient number of responses to be taken into consideration.

can sell the customer is the style, support or extra features that each has. Oh and of course you can usually choose between yellow and red.

It is against this background that Powervamp has thrived in the aerospace and motor vehicle markets over the years and obtaining regular ground support contracts for such as Helitech, Paris and Farnborough and widening the product range simply put the food on the table.

Earlier this year a strategic move UK based Powervamp consolidated its technical lead over competitors with the acquisition of Effekta UK Ltd a manufacturer of advanced solid state 400Hz aircraft converters and standby lighting systems.

The acquiring of Effekta has added technical and commercial strength to the financial reserves to improve the company strength when tendering for major international projects. It will retain its brand name but broadening the ability of Powervamp to add capabilities beyond simple battery powered Ground Power Units.

With Powervamp now having control over the supply of the production of Effekta software and electronics it will reduce the ability of direct competitors of the Powervamp brand to continue to buy in from Effekta and produce 'badge engineer' products in competition.



AERO SIMULATORS

Last year at the PAVCon Police Aviation Conference in Bilbao Churchill Navigation gave a tremendous presentation to the gathered delegates on its Augmented Reality System [ARS] – a 'Next Generation' mapping and visualisation system that has since been snapped up by both Paravion and Aero Simulators. At the Heli-Expo both Churchill and Aero Simulators were displaying the system that adds street information directly upon the displayed image of the streets below the searching police aircraft. There is a great deal of interest in the system as it allows increasingly national air services to display a degree of local street knowledge without the need to remove the observers eyes from the screen.

Aero Simulators has also been working with a range of EO/IR manufacturers and Euroavionics GmbH in enhancing their simulation products across the industry. All of the companies have expressed an interest in exhibiting at the 2012 PAVCon in June.



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Eurocopter EC155 N156UM of University of Michigan Health System Completion by Metro

 A promotional poster for the PAvCon 2012 Police Aviation Conference. The background features several police helicopters in flight and on the ground. The text is as follows:
 

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 Details of how to attend and exhibit at this not to be missed aviation event are available on-line at [www.pavcon.org](http://www.pavcon.org) and [www.policeaviationnews.com](http://www.policeaviationnews.com)  
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 In the top right corner, there is a blue box with the **ZEISS** logo and the text **EVENT SPONSOR**.





Police Aviation News

MD500



Heli-Expo 2012

Mi-24



24



indra

525



Bambi



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A109



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N350KN



Donaldson



## ASU

Aviation Specialties Unlimited, (ASU) announced the award winners for the Second Annual Night Vision Awards before the show and a short event was held from 5:30-6:30 p.m. on the first day of the show to honour the recipients.

Travis County STAR Flight won the Mark of Excellence Award. Texas Department of Public Safety won the Community Awareness Award. A 10-Year Service award will be presented to the Los Angeles County Fire Department Air Operations Unit. REACH Air Medical Services, STAT MedEvac and Collier County MedFlight will be given the 5-Year Service Award. The Night Vision Awards were established in 2011 to recognise operations using night vision systems to safely protect and serve communities while championing the call for safe night flights. Since 1995, ASU's goal has been to implement night vision in the civil aviation market to increase operational safety and improve mission capabilities. To date, ASU has performed 600 aircraft STC installations in the United States and sold over 4500 aviator systems worldwide.

Aviation Specialties Unlimited announced that they have now surpassed 600 aircraft STC installations in the United States. This gives ASU more domestic installations than any NVIS Modifier in the country.

ASU's first installation was on an EC-135 for St. Vincent Hospital in Billings, Montana, now operated by Metro Aviation. The 600<sup>th</sup> installation was on an A119 for Tristate Careflight located in Bullhead City, Arizona.

## BECKER

Becker Avionics displayed the latest communications, navigation, surveillance and search & rescue equipment for airborne and ground applications.

Westchester County (NY) Police Department recently decided to equip their new Bell 407 patrol helicopter with the Becker Avionics Digital Voice Communication System, the DVCS6100.

The aircraft currently is undergoing completion at Bell Helicopter Piney Flats, TN and will deliver in the first half of this year. Westchester County's aircraft is the first Bell 407 to be equipped with the DVCS digital audio system.

Westchester County's new 407 will be a multi-purpose aircraft capable of rescue, personnel insertion and extraction, and law enforcement missions. It will also be equipped with microwave downlink capabilities, thermal imaging and night vision equipment, and a searchlight.

The Becker DVCS6100 was chosen by their Aviation Unit due to its unique ability to effectively manage and control all audio sources in the aircraft. Becker's Digital multi-channel audio and intercom system, with its software configurable profiles, provides the flexibility to specifically customize the system to meet the demanding operational requirements of airborne Law Enforcement organizations. [www.becker-avionics.com](http://www.becker-avionics.com)

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## DONALDSON

Donaldson Aerospace & Defense announced that Intermountain Healthcare's (IHC) Life Flight in Utah has installed and is operating the world's first AgustaWestland AW109SP Inlet Barrier Filter (IBF) system. Longtime air medical operator IHC Life Flight selected the IBF system to reduce direct engine operating costs and safeguard engine operation.

Donaldson's AW109 IBF was on display. The IBF represents the maximum engine protection package available in the industry, preventing engine damage in adverse and ramp environments alike. Applicability covers three of AgustaWestland's AW109 series aircraft: the AW109E Power, AW109S Grand and the AW109SP Grand New. Operators of these helicopters benefit from reduced operating costs, without experiencing engine performance or helicopter drag penalties.

Providing the most comprehensive line of IBF solutions, Donaldson Aerospace & Defense is the industry leader in the design, development and manufacture of high-performance engine IBF systems for commercial and military propulsion systems. Through its St. Louis, Missouri location, Donaldson provides certified IBF solutions for the AgustaWestland AW109E/S/SP, AW119 Koala, AW119Ke and AW139; Bell 205A1, 206B, 407, 206L-3/4, 206L-1(C30), 429 and 430; Eurocopter EC130, AS350 B/BA/B1/B2/B3/B3e, AS350s with Soloy or Heli-Lynx Honeywell engine conversions; and MD Helicopters MD 369H Series, MD 500D/E/F and MD 900/902. [BDN]

## DART

DART Helicopter Services (DHS) maintained their usual large presence on the Exhibition Hall floor and issued a veritable cascade of press releases for the multitude of original and replacement parts.

They announced Transport Canada, FAA, EASA and Brazilian approval of DART Aerospace Ltd' (DAS) Deluxe Skidtube for both the Eurocopter AS350/AS355 aircraft and the Bell 206 series [including the Bell 206L/L1/L3/L4 and 407].

DART's Deluxe Round-I-Beam™ Skidtubes come straight from the factory with the most popular options pre-installed to save installation time and increase customer convenience. At this show the company was undertaking a new attractive interest getter on the front of

their booth area demonstrating the strength of the Round-I-Beam product under pressure. Those passersby that paid attention could see and hear the crushing of the tube section as the young lay demonstrating gritted her teeth in the expectation of the crack as it failed long after the standard OEM tube section. A clever and interesting bit of marketing although the much reduced footfall on day 3 did not work too well with the concept – there is nothing worse than an attractive blonde talking to herself!



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## FERNO

The company was displaying their new lightweight Baby Pod II on their booth and attracting a great deal of interest in the new market place. With the majority of incubator equipment being cumbersome and heavy the Baby Pod II is designed to offer a lightweight alternative solution. To safely transport a paediatric patient to or from a medical facility, between facilities or between departments within a single medical facility without requiring a cumbersome



wheeled device is a real alternative option. This 20 lb/ 9kg device consists of a lightweight carbon fibre outer shell, which is lined with a shock absorbent foam inner layer and transparent shields for viewing the baby. The 39 inch [99cm] long Baby Pod II contains a patient positioning vacuum mattress, stretcher-fixing straps to secure the device to standard stretchers for transport and safety straps to secure the infant inside the device.

This is the sort of simple kit that makes missions possible. For too long the baby mover business has been stuck with the perception that you need a mass of equipment that invariably fails to fit in the carrier craft and you end up with issues when transferring from aircraft to land ambulance. The Ferno allows you to package the small patient very easily in the paediatric department and then move to the helicopter with little or no disconnect reconnect using kit that is readily available. <http://www.ferno.com>

## FRASCA

Frasca International has contracted with the NATO Maintenance & Supply Agency (NAMSA) to deliver two new Helicopter Flight Training Devices (FTDs) to the German Federal Police (BPOL) for the Eurocopter EC155 and AS332 helicopters and to upgrade BPOL's existing Frasca-built Eurocopter EC135 FTD to have common technical standards with the new FTDs.

All three devices will get a qualification according to the new EASA rules by the LBA after being installed by Frasca at BPOL's new Simulator Centre in Sankt Augustin, Germany which is scheduled to open in July of 2013. BPOL received dual certification for their existing EC135 device as a JAR-FSTD H FTD 2 and FNPT III MCC in July of 2009. This will be available for inspection by attendees at the PAVCon in June. The first new device will be delivered in 2013.

Features of the two new FTDs will include; NVG cockpit, visual display and Instructor Operator Station (IOS), control loading, realistic vibration cues, daylight illumination, 200° x 68° visual display with auto alignment, geo-specific visual database for all of Germany including airports, hospitals, and maritime features, civil SAR & police mission training, cockpit video (full frontal view), 3rd IOS monitor for video, chase plane view, instrument repeaters, etc., separate debriefing stations, and more. The upgraded EC135 FTD will include all of the features of the new FTDs except NVG compatibility.

The Korea Forest Service, Republic of Korea, has completed factory acceptance of their Level 7 AS350B2 Helicopter Flight Training Device (FTD) built by Frasca. The FTD is currently being installed at their training facility.

The FTD will include Frasca's TruVision™ visual system with a 120° x 80° spherical visual display system, custom visual database including eight forest aviation stations and NVG compatibility. A mirror view channel of the visual system will provide visual scenes in the mirror including: sling load, bambi bucket operations, aerial spraying and water dump from belly tank. Other features include enclosed Graphical Instructors Station (GISt™), sound simulation, vibration platform and more.

NEMSPA

The Utah based National EMS Pilots Association is offering a standard design of 24x18 Heliport Warning Sign is made from aluminium for maximum rigidity and is screen printed with UV resistant paint to ensure the greatest durability. Larger sizes can be special ordered if needed. For a small additional cost signs can display either a unit or company's logo. Each sign costs \$49.95 in the USA with local shipping included. The custom logo adds a one off \$15 setup fee + \$7.50/sign

Check out their web site at <http://www.nemspa.org/mc/page.do?sitePagelid=101398> or call +1 (801) 450 6912. A portion of the cost of each sign is tax deductible and supports NEMSPA's efforts to promote the safety and success of the air medical transport industry.



ONBOARD SYSTEMS

Since 1975 Onboard Systems has focussed on the design and supply of efficient cargo hooks to the industry. The product lines have expanded but in a crowded market place Onboard have remained one of the leading brands in concentrating on all things hook related. Hooks may be apparently simple but the price list can come as something of a shock. You can buy some hooks from a few thousand dollars but the final bill is just as likely to be \$40,000 in some cases – fitting extra – so it is never an impulse buy.

On the booth Onboard were featuring a multi-drop Spider Carousel – one attachment point on the airframe but the ability to individually drop up to eight independently releasable loads. That will cost you \$25,000 even without addressing the small matter of the provision of an attachment point on the airframe itself.



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## PEOPLE

Social helicopter pilot group, Twirly Birds announced the 2012 Les Morris Award Recipient as Mr. Elfan Ap Rees. Mr. Ap Rees is a noted aviation historian, author, pilot and founder of The Helicopter Museum, the worlds largest dedicated collection of military and civil rotorcraft located in Weston-super-Mare, Somerset on the southwest coast of England. After his first helicopter flight in 1960, Ap Rees went on to become a helicopter pilot with experience in over 80 model type aircraft over his long career. He launched *HELICOPTER International*, in 1977, followed by *HELiDATA News and Classified* in 1980 and afterward, *Military Helicopter News* in 2005. Mr. Ap Rees has received several prestigious awards to include the British Helicopter Advisory Board "Eric Brown" Trophy in 2002 for his contributions to the industry and also the American Helicopter Society (AHS) "John Schneider" Historical Award, in 2007 for his tireless work promoting the rotorcraft industry. Mr. Ap Rees received the HAI "Excellence in Communication" award in 1987.

The Les Morris Award signifies the pioneering spirit of Twirly Birds and the award is reserved for members that have made an exemplary contribution to the helicopter community over their lifetime.

## AWARDS DINNER

At the Annual Awards dinner during the HAI Heli-Expo Master Police Officer James J Greeves was awarded the MD Helicopters Law Enforcement Award. Officer Greeves has accrued more than 4,000 flight hours operating with the Fairfax County Police Helicopter Unit based in Virginia. He is directly credited with the apprehension of 330 suspects, is a qualified paramedic and is credited with saving the lives of at least two injured fellow police officers.



Officer James J Greeves [left] is feted on the Metro Aviation Booth.

Officer Greeves was manning the Bell helicopter stand exhibit of a Bell 429 recently delivered to the air unit and in recognition of his status with HAI this year was a guest at a variety of events on other booths.

The Fairfax County air unit is currently changing its fleet from the Bell 407 equipped with the MX-15 EO/IR turret to the new Bell 429 equipped with the MX-10 EO/IR turret. Both aircraft types undertake the dual police and air ambulance role.

## ABLEAC

The Airborne Law Enforcement Accreditation Commission (ALEAC) and the Airborne Law Enforcement Association (ALEA) held a special Accreditation Awards ceremony and media event honouring the first two law enforcement agencies to successfully complete the Airborne Law Enforcement Accreditation Process. The Presidents of both the ALEAC and ALEA presented Accreditation Certificates to the Columbus Police Division Helicopter Unit and the Houston Police Department Air Support Division. In addition to the accreditation certificates, each agency was presented a cash scholarship award courtesy of American Eurocopter for being the first two agencies in the US to become accredited.

Assessors from the commission evaluated the helicopter units on compliance with more than 70 standards in several categories, including maintenance, operations, safety and training. The scholarship award to the Columbus Air Unit was \$5,000.







Asia Pacific and Middle East regions with a full suite of support and services, from training to major inspections and heavy structural repairs.

The AS365 N3/N3+ FFS at ESEA will be Eurocopter's 17th FFS around the world, and is slated to begin operations in April 2012. In its international MRO capabilities deployment plan, the designation of ESEA as an MRO hub will be Eurocopter's first in Asia, after this concept was introduced with American Eurocopter in November 2011.

Other news released at the show by ESEA includes that Southern Vietnam Helicopter Corporation of Vietnam (VNH South) signed a contract for its fourth EC225 heavy helicopter. This acquisition follows closely on its last purchase of the same aircraft type six months ago, as it continues to expand its fleet for offshore oil and gas operations.

The great growth potential of the Vietnam helicopter market has prompted Eurocopter's long-standing partner, Vietnam Helicopter Corporation (VNH), to set up the VNH Training Centre in Vung Tau, Vietnam, with the support of Eurocopter.

With an initial aim of providing ab-initio training to develop a pool of rotary-wing pilots to cater to Vietnam's increasing needs, Eurocopter will be leasing its popular light aircraft, the Colibri EC120 B, to VNH Training Centre. The partnership also entails the training of Vietnamese pilot instructors by Eurocopter, using the EC120 Flight Training Device housed in the Eurocopter South East Asia Training Centre based in Singapore.



Images; Top general flight line and crowd view of the popular Singapore Air Show.

Top right: Bell 429

Right: Beriev Be-200 amphibian water bomber 21512.

Below: Left Sabah Air EC145 9M-CMD and Embraer 1000

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