

POLICE AVIATION NEWS

ALEA 2008 Special



**38th Annual Conference
& Exposition
Houston Texas**

POLICE AVIATION NEWS
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INTERNATIONAL POLICE AVIATION RESEARCH
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EDITORIAL

It has been almost a decade since I reported first hand on an Airborne Law Enforcement Association [ALEA] Annual Convention and it is fair to say that the aims and aspirations of today's organisation are somewhat different to that of the closing years of the last Millennium under the leadership of Los Angeles cop and pilot Chuck Perriguy.

But that aside the differences between the 1999 event in Mobile, Alabama and the latest edition, the 38th Annual Conference and Expo of the ALEA, is mainly about size. The overall event is bigger with more exhibitors and instructional slots than were evident nine years ago but that is only part of the story.

During his tenure in the office of the ALEA President Chuck was dedicated to widening the membership and as a result he saw a need to go forth and promote those aims over and above a long standing and inward looking tendency associated with most US organisations. The flavour of the 1999 Convention naturally reflected the sum of his wide travels promoting ALEA as a one organisation fits all for the airborne law enforcement community. It was perhaps the peak of those aspirations and it has if anything waned in recent years.

Bryn Elliott Editor



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Cover image: Bell Helicopter exhibited this 407 for the Orange County Sheriff's Office [OCSO] in Florida. The OCSO is based at the Orlando Executive Airport. The 407 is seen here flying off from the Convention Center after the ALEA event.

ALEA HOUSTON

JULY 16-19 2008

THE SETTING

ALEA Conferences are traditionally set in the southern states of the US in mid-summer and as such the reception is always warm! As a rule this formula reduces the cost of holding the event and associated accommodation but it tends to increase costs getting there because it is travel peak season—even if the number of people actually wanting to visit the venue is restricted.

This year the event was held in Houston, Texas in the July of the same year as the HAI held its Heli-Expo in the same venue five months earlier, so some contrasts can safely be made. Heli-Expo is big stuff and attracts large numbers, even if you had the money you could not get a room in the Hilton next door to the convention venue. Suffice to say in mid-summer the lower numbers of visitors and the special room rate arranged for ALEA delegates allowed for a room at just over \$100 a night, way less than any motel back home. In contrast the flight cost way over twice the winter rate fares into Houston for Heli-Expo. Its all a case of supply and demand. Direct comparison with Heli-Expo is unfair. The majority of the vast George H Brown Convention Center was taken up with the HAI event, where the 150 exhibitors at ALEA barely filled two thirds of one of the five interconnecting halls.

The convention is nominally a three day event costing paid up ALEA members around \$200 in fees but in practice [like most US conventions and exhibitions] there are a number of added value training days to extend the event for many attendees. These cost additional fees but are what the ALEA event is all about—the dissemination of information and mutual instruction.

The Pre-Conference Courses offered at the beginning of the week [effectively Monday, July 14 through to Wednesday, July 16 when the main event kicked off] require separate registration forms and additional payment. Other classes of instruction and discussion groups held from the event opening through until July 19 tend to be free because they are provided or promoted by industry backers although some of the charged events are also industry sponsored.

There is a high level of sponsorship for this event—indeed it is unlikely that it could be run without the sponsors. Out of the classroom most sponsorship is tied to entertainment, the provision of meals and parties for the attendees but additionally there is backing for a range of scholarships for the children of members and other awards. This year the announcement of the scholarships took place at the general membership meeting, an event following a sponsored breakfast on day one.

The number of subjects covered by the 'paid for' courses is too large to recount in full but suffice to mention courses on thermal imaging and tactics, an aviation managers course and accident investigation, mostly items that are sponsored by either the manufacturer or the government through the purse of police authorities in Europe. Also for the record the cost of the thermal imaging course [sponsored by FLIR Systems] worked out at an individual cost of \$300 for members and \$375 for non-members. In most cases the tab for this and the additional accommodation would be picked up by the attendees agency.

Putting on my European policing head I can instantly hear the sharp intake of breath coming from dozens of police lips over the ocean! Hand in own pocket is not part of the culture in Europe, and that is one reason why ALEA has faced so much difficulty in expanding its membership across the Atlantic. There is a sharp contrast in accepted practice between the US and Europe. Thinking about it there is another sharp contrast between the UK and many of the mainland European operations. Until those bridges are built there is little danger of a mass of European visitors attending ALEA conferences in the near future! The same 'difficulties' affect the running of the Shephard Police Aviation Conference in Europe. [PAVCON]. Paid entry does not happen there, police officers are free, subsidised by the



The opening ceremony for the 2008 ALEA Annual Conference & Exposition brought together the Houston PD Honor Guard, a soloist singing the National Anthem as well as welcoming speeches by the ALEA President Dan Schwarzbach, in real life an Officer Pilot with Houston PD, and a number of local politicians.

exhibitors simply because there is no mass culture to pay as individuals either out of the personal pocket or out of employers funding. There is a degree of employer subsidy but that would not make the event available to a wide enough sector of police aviators. The content of European PAVCON is very similar to that available at the ALEA event it is just that the modules are shorter [20 minutes as opposed to around one hour in the US event].

One of the longer modules was that dedicated to the thorny subject of what to do about the intrusion of unmanned air systems [UAV or UAS] on the modern scene.

The US attitude to UAV's was the subject of a two hour presentation on the opening day and was presented by a range of knowledgeable groups drawn from the certification authorities and industry.

It looks like they have similar worries to those existing in the UK but have perhaps over reacted in some areas. Much of this probably stems from the authorities being wrong footed early on when a UAV suddenly took to the air in Los Angeles without any reference to the FAA and this led to a blanket ban being imposed. No one knows who has bought a whole range of unmanned aircraft but it is certain that police chiefs and sheriff's across the country just went out and bought this cheap 'air support' option from only too willing salesmen and then asked local officials 'what can I do with it?' The reactive answer was 'nothing put it away' by authorities who only then got around to formulating the rule book.

In fairness those same authorities [the FAA and the US Department of Justice] have got to grips after that first shock and a number of craft have been trialled from hundreds on offer. In their field the German manufactured quad rotor UAV craft favoured in parts of Europe were well received but there are parts of the temporary rules that make operation of them difficult. Nothing can fly in the open air without obtaining a permit, so the favourably received Air Robot can undertake a security search indoors with impunity but not fly outside a

building to look in the windows. A minor item but indicative of the manner in which the rules were quickly formulated and obviously for the time being stopping US agencies from undertaking the type of operational trial becoming more familiar in Europe.

As seen in the softly softly approach to this new technology in the UK the US moves are all about safety and avoiding a repeat of the fatal Congo accident in mainland USA but it is noteworthy that no mention was being made of that [assumed] UK ultimate in flight safety 'sense and avoid' [fully automatic collision avoidance out of sight of the operator] ... the US version is probably a more attainable 'see and avoid' that presumably is going to require flight in sight of the operator.

Houston is undertaking its own trials of what they see as a fairly sophisticated wide area surveillance system but have had to take stock a little recently after receiving a significant amount of resistance from the 'privacy' industry and some pretty inane treatment from a local newspaper. A reporter took exception to being excluded from an earlier trial [November 2007] and took to making up stories about the event. In retrospect it might be seen as potentially a bad PR move on Houston's part but it is well accepted practice for it being rare for police forces to invite the press to their trials. Just this one bit them.

Houston's primary task is seen as providing an overall view of evacuations. In the recent past the Houston PD air assets were withdrawn in the face of an impending storm. It is hoped that the outcome of the trials will go some way towards answering whether such a craft could replace air support in this scenario. As a disposable asset it might be flown into the worst weather without risk to human life.

The craft they are trialling, and they stress that there is no specific reason for their choice of supplier, is the Insitu Insight variant of the military Scan Eagle fixed wing system. The pilots in this instance are drawn from the Houston PD air section so there is a direct link with police air support.



Over in Miami a different style of craft, a rotary fan lift type is to be trialled and all results are to be pooled so that all potential police operators in the USA can draw upon the knowledge.

Going around the booths there was an element of product duplication among the 150 or so exhibitors and this does not apply just to airframe and engine choice there is a need to decide upon just who to use for your role completion and whose radios to fit and the list goes on. Unlike the situation in the UK there is a much greater use of a variety of completion houses and equipment suppliers. In Europe there is a tendency to use the OEM.

In a fairly low key presence [beyond their sponsorship of various events] AgustaWestland were displaying a comprehensively equipped AW109 demonstrator N94AH on their booth. Just about every item of kits available to the customer was installed on the craft, flir, searchlight, external emergency floatation devices, monitor, EMS interior etc.



Fully equipped in the hall [left] and later at the time of the post event 'fly-out'

Note that nearly all of the additional equipment fitted to the 109 in the hall was absent when they actually came to fly out of the main street outside the Hilton Hotel. There is a lesson there.





American Eurocopter brought two airframes—both AS350s—to the show AS350B3 N911ZZ of the Bernalillo County Sheriff in New Mexico and the latest example of the AS350B2 for the Texas Department of Public Safety c/n 4401 N90TX. The DPS example was 'delivered' in a ceremony on the first day of the show but left marked as being in the 'Experimental' class which suggests that it was not quite ready for service. .

All through the event AEC had been on tenterhooks—hoping that a big new order announcement could make their show even more important. In the event the announcement was made the following week. See the August edition for the reports on the new multi-airframe contract.

Axyss Technologies launched two new items of equipment at the show. The military grade offerings were a HDU-900 high performance computer, HD video processor and power conditioning unit and the TCC-500 touch screen control unit. Both units are designed to be used with the V14 MSII gyro stabilised, multi-sensor camera system.



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Close by Bell Helicopter were displaying a police role equipped model 206L for the Orange County Sheriff's Office in Orlando, Florida [see cover] and a 47 from the Bell Flight school on the booth. I must admit that when the news leaked that they were donating a helicopter to a museum I thought it was the 47, but I was wrong.

The donation relates to a Bell 206B helicopter that the company is going to donate to the National Law Enforcement Museum in Washington in the due course of time. It is not thought to be a specific former law enforcement machine but it may be that this is the gesture and that will lead to the actual selection of an airframe at a later date, in keeping with the actual opening date of the museum.

The museum was authorised by Congress in 2000 but will not open until 2011. The museum will be housed in architecturally inspiring, 95,000 square foot, mostly underground museum located just blocks from the US Capitol and adjacent to the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial in Washington, DC. Upon opening it is expected that the museum will attract an estimated 600,000 visitors a year with a unique and comprehensive look at the law enforcement profession. The Museum will feature high-tech interactive exhibitions, interesting historical and contemporary artefacts, extensive public and educational programming, and a research centre and library.

The reason the Model 47 was on the booth was by way of marking the celebration of 60 years of supplying helicopters to law enforcement agencies around the world. Starting with a Bell 47 flying with the New York Police, Bell today has a range of products performing law enforcement missions, including the Bell 206 which has become an industry standard.

On the Monday before the show kicked off Bell delivered a new 407 to the King County Sheriff's Office in Washington after a role completion undertaken by Edwards and Associates.



Looking pristine in the exhibition hall alongside a new Bell 407 scheduled for delivery to the Orange County Sheriff's Office in Orlando, Florida this Bell 47G-4A N470BH is used by the company to train pilots.

The seed change in technology was apparent when the Bell flew away from the convention centre after the event [below] and exhibited a typical flat lift off profile that resulted in it skimming over the heads of onlookers at a very low height when compared to the climbing profile of modern turbine types.



Breeze Eastern hoist operator Baltimore County Police Aviation [Maryland] are cock-a-hoop following the flying of their first ever real rescue mission just days after they completed training on the equipment that was to play such an important part in the recovery of an injured woman. The operator took delivery of their new Eurocopter AS350B3 aircraft just over a year ago so it was indeed fortunate that the skills were in place by the time the call for them went out. Instruction of the unit was in the very capable hands of SRT Helicopters out of Bakersfield, California [www.srthelo.com]



On June 23 the local rescue resources were called to Pretty Boy Dam Reservoir where a hiker had fallen on rock and having heard a 'snap' in her back believed she might be paralysed. Although the emergency teams on the ground were able to patch her up and secure her on a stretcher brought in by the police helicopter they faced a long and tortuous journey on foot with her out of the location that was assessed as being around two hours in very high temperatures. Faced with that option it was not long before someone remembered the recent multi-agency training sessions the rescuers had undertaken with the police helicopter and offered up the option of undertaking an airlift of her out of the area.

The air unit crew, pilot Roger Young and TFO Jeff Parsons, decided that there was no realistic possibility of lift her from where she had fallen at the base of the rock and in any case the Stokes stretcher she has strapped into could not be accommodated in the cabin.

The AStar landed nearby and a case conference took place with those on the ground. It was arranged that she be moved a short distance to a clearer area and then by lifting her through the tree line and then across to a better location where they could meet up with a land ambulance to complete the journey to hospital. All went ahead exactly to plan.

It was the ultimate success of this lift effort that the hoist manufacturers Breeze Eastern marked on their booth at the show with the award of a crystal globe.

Although none of the original crew was present at ALEA Houston the OIC of the Baltimore County unit Don R Roby and Officer Donald W Coburn a TFO who were attending the show accepted the globe from Terry Ascherin [Breeze Eastern and formerly LACS] on their behalf.



Baltimore County PD purchased three AStars to replace a similar number of OH-58 Kiowa's from 2006. The PD has an authorised strength of 2,545 sworn and non-sworn employees serving a population of more than 770,000 residents, covering an area of 612 square miles, with 210 miles of waterfront.



Cessna Aircraft had hoped to bring in an aircraft to put on their booth at the show but, unlike the helicopter manufacturers, such things are logistical nightmares. At one stage there were thoughts of landing the Cessna on the adjacent Freeway in the dead of night [they do things like that around Texas] but that was eventually vetoed and instead the booth carried on without the added attraction of an airframe.

What the company did have was facilities for conference attendees to flight test a selection of airframes, including the new 400, 206 and 208 at Ellington Field a military establishment a few miles south of Houston operating a mixture of military types alongside NASA test aircraft.

Largest of the types Cessna had on offer was the now familiar utilitarian 208 Grand Caravan with its large cabin and masses of external storage within a ventral pod.

It may be familiar but even that type has undergone a modest systems upgrade since I last flew in it during 2000. Since last year Cessna has offered a glass cockpit which greatly improves the level of information available to the flight crew. The example of display outside Volo Aviation was not an everyday utility offering that might be snapped up by some back country sheriff, this was luxury he might well not be able to afford! Behind the leather upholstery of the pilots 'office' were more rows of opulent leather seats designed for the discerning executive. Perfectly comfortable as a mode of transport the 'cosy' interior belies the rugged exterior and associated rough field capabilities of the type.

The inclusion of a rear seat row hiding a toilet that might be curtained off probably needed to be labelled 'emergency use only' as I could never see an Wall Street exec of either gender squatting there out of choice. If nothing else the headroom is poor for taller beings.

In its true utility form—and there is also a far more basic military specification option—the rear area might be taken up with retractable surveillance cameras that slides out of the side doors, thereby removing knee room for this facility!



The 208 attracted a healthy amount of interest from an MD Apache crew.





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President Bush closed Ellington Field and ultimately major parts of Houston when attending an Republican Party fund raiser in the city on the Friday afternoon, an event which saw the exhibit helicopters scrabbling to leave the venue on time so as not to become embroiled in his motorcade when later driving home from their landing places.

Enstrom were showing the same model 480B Guardian law enforcement helicopter they had delivered to the operator at the same venue but different show [Heli-Expo] just a few months earlier. Still pristine it was tempting to wonder whether it had ever left the hall and actually gone into service at all.

N480PD c/n 5080 is a 2005 law enforcement configured 480B operated by Plaquemines Parish, Louisiana. The role equipment included a cargo hook, a Spectrolab SX-5 searchlight, and a Gyrocam DS infrared camera system. The aircraft was the first delivered with a Chelton Flight System 3D Synthetic Vision EFIS 6.0B glass cockpit.



On the first day of the show FLIR systems launched their new Ultra 9HD sensor turret the latest generation in the small 9 inch Ultra series born out of buying out Inframetrics all those



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years ago. The new piece of kit, typical of the equipment still embraced by most US agencies, features a different 'user friendly' design of control stick said to have been designed by a TFO.

As they have done for many years FLIR tie up with Avalex and Wulfsberg to run the annual Pig Pickin' Barbeque and Bash. The pig meal is preceded by a two day series of 'ceremonies' - basically reasons to entertain prior to the actual communal meal but nominally the lighting of the fire under the pig etc. The finale is the food followed up by the annual FLIR best use of thermal imagery awards, a very popular section of the evening that includes the gathered masses viewing not only the best technical award of the year but also a number other submissions—the most popular being those where the outcome is just plain funny. Funny can win the award but it is unlikely to! As if to underscore the point that quality matters most, this years winning team were from San

Diego Police Dept., pilot Jon Burkhardt and the TFO Kevin Means. Kevin is probably the most respected operator of TI systems in the ALEA and a primary source of training courses run by the organisation. Overall a great fun evening with a TI twist and lots of great video footage.



LoJack Corporation has again redesigned their receiver unit for installation in motor vehicles and aerial assets. The new design will be entering service in the US but there is currently no information on when and if it will be offered to international customers. Becker has also integrated LoJack with one of its units, helping to overcome some of the lack of space issues that affect all markets.





Reims F406 Land & Sea Surveillance

Now settled back into staying in their eyrie at Mesa again after the period of unrest over the cost of staying there MD attended the show with an demonstrator MD900 [N912LH c/n 095] and an Houston PD MD500 [N1576F c/n 106-0867S]. Both Houston PD and MD are of course currently cock-a-hoop after the recent announcements about the major expansion of the HPD air detail [see May edition] and the deal [which also sees Schweizer picking up three sales] was understandably much wondered at. Even without the hard times that have been predicted for the US economy deals of this size are unprecedented and much of it is thanks to the sheer enthusiasm of the local council, three of whom were on hand to extol the virtues of their backing in the moments prior to the show being officially opened.

Meeker Aviation remains an enigma, but perhaps not for much longer. On the face of it Cal Meekers outfit is just one of those small time US operations that never comes across as anything much in the international sense. A black lined booth encompassing a few well machined lumps of metal that undertake the task of bolting on cameras and searchlights to all types of aircraft, products that have a ready market in a US law enforcement market that accepts a fair bit of cost cutting as far as STC's go. Contrasting with some of its competitors the Meeker product that comes out at the other end is often finished to a world beating specification with simple but strong locking mechanisms that allow quick fits and removals of often shared assets like searchlights and sensors. Not rocket science but sound engineering that is user friendly and knocks the socks off the offerings of some others.



What is more Cal is a little different, he goes that extra mile and gets his gear FAA certified so that one day it might be accepted and taken to the world market at the drop of a hat and not be involved in some long drawn out remedial certification exercise later on. You only ever expect to see the diminutive Cal on a booth at some US show, albeit at some of the large ones like HAI, and then surprisingly one year he took a booth right opposite McAlpines at a Helitech show in the UK, only to fade away again but never far. He is always there... walking the aisles at shows worldwide, fleetingly seen walking from Le Bourget station to the Paris Air Show, talking 'bits of metal' back on the flightline at Helitech, an unknown quantity talking his engineering skills into new markets that in fairness many thought he would fail in, plenty do. Only the US market is used to taking an engineering problem to



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Meeker and standing back while it was solved, more recently the Meeker product has gained an international following - as these pages have illustrated from time to time.

And so it came to pass that certain people working for a major manufacturer [OEM] had a perceived problem with the OEM's standard bolster step mounts of an important product in the law enforcement market. The step mount had been around for years but had never really raised any concerns - probably due to a combination of lower weight and that hitherto operators had not put their equipment on them full time.

Over in Europe new operators became concerned about the health of the equipment their aircraft was carrying on a day-to-day basis. The sensor turret was very visible vibrating as they flew. Operationally the problem was minor as the quality of the vibrating sensor was such that all the shake rattle and roll was being damped out by the gyro-stabilisation and the image remained crisp ... but then the manufacturer of the sensor realised that one result of all this unexpected frenetic activity was that the gyros were being significantly overworked and there might ultimately be reliability issue.

Meeker has an answer sitting on an airframe in the USA but it is still short of proving its worth to the wider audience and still needs EASA certification.

Suffice to say that those regular trips by Cal Meeker to the European air shows to get his face and product line known are apparently starting to pay off, the sensor manufacturer and the customer being just two of them.



Meeker has its mount in Europe and it was to be seen in public fitted to an EADS EC135 operating a downlink demonstration for Axys at this years ILA Berlin show.

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Two companies were exhibiting apparently identical surveillance systems at the show and might yet be considered for enhancing crime detection for major crime areas and clamping down on major sports events such as the Olympics.

The two companies have common roots and near identical products utilising the same technology and offering their customers the same outcomes in their marketing of 'Persistent Surveillance Systems,' indeed one uses that as their company name. For the record the other company is a slightly less descriptive 'Logos.' One is based in Ohio and the other in Virginia.

The point in highlighting them is that their technology might just fit in with the aims and aspirations of the security umbrella that must be created to protect the London Olympics in 2012. Ultimately it is for others to make that judgement but the technology is promising and represents one of the purest forms of 'Big Brother' surveillance system I have yet encountered.

The principle is that you fly an aircraft in a set orbit and that aircraft carries the multi-camera system 'common' to both systems. Currently both operations fly a single-engine aircraft to undertake the mission. Clearly we must assume that a twin engine type would be required over London, as long as it flies and orbits it meets the needs to support the all seeing eye outcome.

What you get is a 'live' 3D map of a target area of around 4 miles square. The image is larger than that but quality drops off after a four mile core image. The real-time image offers sight of everything that moves, and a trained observer can clearly see people moving or acting strangely and the ability to zoom right into the section of the image whilst still retaining a recording of the overall target area, and an ability to refer back to it if an incident occurs 'off screen'. The 'stitching together' of the images from the camera array is very obvious but serves to illustrate the quality of the blending that takes place in the final image in these overlapping areas.

Currently the product being offered is in black & white because that offers a crisper image all round but colour is an option and it might be considered as an additional resource to multiple CCCTV cameras on the ground and standard colour/TI images from air support.

In some ways this is similar to the Blom Aerofilms 3D imaging except that it is not a series of blended images put together some time after the flight, it is a real-time 3D video that represents a fully archived version of actuality.

It would not work on an airship due to its low speed. The system requires the regular updating conferred by the circling aircraft to refresh the 3D effect of all sides of a given building.



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Robinson Helicopter was displaying a new R44 helicopter for the New Hanover County Sheriff in North Carolina. The helicopter currently N911SG recently appeared on the cover of Rotor & Wing as N7166J. Black with yellow trim the airframe also carried some unusual marks, including the outline of a battleship and an attack submarine associated with the locality. The R44 was picked up from Houston by Deputy Charles Smith and Lt. Scott Gerow went to Houston to pick up the new

The craft was paid for out of a \$267,000 Homeland Security Federal grant and drug money.

The operation previously had access to a helicopter owned by Lt. Gerow. Local businessman Gerow announced the donation of use of his helicopter back in 2006. Other local law enforcement agencies had banded together under the SABLE program in operating Bell OH-58 helicopters but New Hanover decided to go its own separate way, firstly with the loaned R44 Raven and now with their own police specification machine.

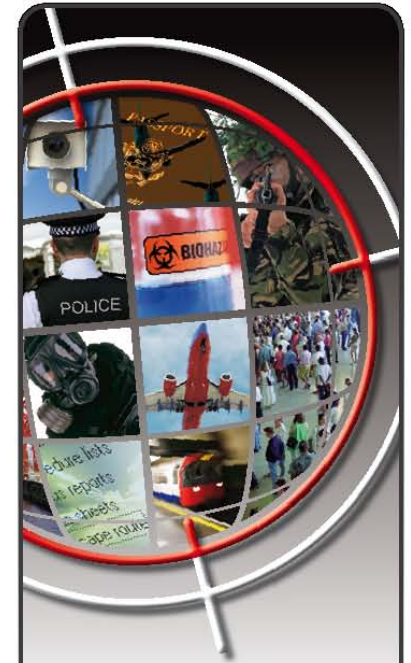
Schweizer Helicopters have picked up on the major new contracts being awarded by Houston PD in renewing the training fleet. With that in mind and to inject an air of change into the proceedings one of the old HPD Schweizer S300s graced the booth and raised many a positive comment.

The newer 434 project announced at HAI this year and based on the Fire Scout UAS technology applied to the S333 turbine helicopter did not feature at the show. This type is now being quietly developed and the sum of its various parts test flown to confirm all the claims made about its future worth to the market. The 333 that it is designed to replace is also in the background for the time being.



Coinciding with the show Texas Aviation Services announced the completion and delivery of the first of three new Bell 407 EMS and law enforcement helicopter completions for the Volusia County Sheriff in Florida. News of other deliveries appear in the August edition of PAN.

Currently remaining an unknown quantity is the new style search-light product being offered by the Australian Trakka Corp. The



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searchlight continues to offer the only real alternative to the standard SX-16 and SX-5 but it still has a way to go before it reaches a level at which it will become accepted as the choice to be made. As carried in Police Aviation News HAI 2007 there is a viable operator out there-Fairfax County has the light fitted to its two Bell helicopters-and another US police operator has one fitted to a Eurocopter but for the moment the jury remains out as far as the wider market is concerned. Some sources question whether the light will provide enough illumination on the ground from a helicopters flying in excess of 1,000 feet. Certainly Fairfax appear happy and they are flying at fairly high altitudes, but it will take one of the high flying European operators to chance their arm and be happy before the floodgates have a hope of opening for this unique Trakka product www.vectorbeam.com




Turbomeca USA and the East Bay Regional Park District are to enter into a SBH[®] contract for engine support, repair and overhaul services. This contract will cover their new Arriel 2B1 engine which was delivered to the customer in a new AS350 airframe during May. The AS350 is currently undergoing role equipping prior to service entry sometime this autumn. The East Bay Regional Park District, Department of Public Safety currently operates two turbine-powered AS350 helicopters that provide seven-days-a-week police patrol, initial attack fire suppression, emergency medical transports and search & rescue coverage. The Air Support Unit consists of four pilots, three Tactical Flight Officers, one mechanic and a cadre of Volunteer Flight Medics. Helicopter crews work in concert with District Police patrol officers and Fire Fighters to ensure the safety of all park visitors. In addition, District Police helicopters will assist any allied police agency requesting mutual aid. East Bay Regional Park District has been a long standing supporter of Turbomeca and its Support By the Hour Program. They have had engines enrolled in the SBH[®] Program for over 20 years.[T]




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Attending the show from 'just down the road' in Decatur, Texas [actually 270 miles to the north so not that close] United Rotorcraft Solutions (URS), and partner Ahlers Aerospace were promoting their recently awarded FAA Supplemental Type Certificate for their Night Vision Lighting modifications. This STC is for the Eurocopter BK117.

The modification design, using new filter material that greatly improves day light readability, utilises external NVIS White filters of glass and poly carbon applied to both instruments and displays.

The filters are externally mounted reducing installation time and cost. The external filters allow the modified component to remain generic thus retaining the advantages of local repair and/or overhaul.

STC's are pending for the Bell 412, 430 and the Eurocopter EC120, EC130, EC135 and EC145 series model helicopters with award expected in the near future. United Rotorcraft Solutions +1 940-627-0626 www.unitedrotorcraft.com

Two companies were offering the management of the long stream of paperwork that now accompanies aircraft ownership. With experienced engineers and programme managers now hard to find and therefore valuable in the time sense both offer to undertake the time consuming paperwork associated with operating aircraft—primarily in the years after the manufacturer has stopped offering the ever guiding hand— scheduling maintenance tasks, tracking AD's, ensuring that training and currency issues do not slip by unnoticed etc etc. Although there are copyright issues with some manufacturers the would be managers offer on-line access to all the upgrade and maintenance task wherever they are needed at the end of a telephone line, worldwide.

Immediately prior to the show Bell Helicopter owned Skybooks Aviation Management Solutions were in the news announcing the number of new contracts it had signed up acting as managers for a range of customers, although Bell owned the company manages craft from all manufacturers.

In direct competition for a section of Skybooks market sector is ATP with their Navigator V product. ATP is independent and has been in the market a long time offering the resale of direct [and quick] digital access to OEM reference books, regulatory authority edicts and timeline reminders at the click of a mouse-button. For operators with a mixed fleet this ability to be somewhat 'hands off' as far as thumbing through the paperwork can be highly advantageous especially as some companies make life difficult in the manner in which they sell their maintenance products. ATP claim that in an exercise to trace all the airframe AD's

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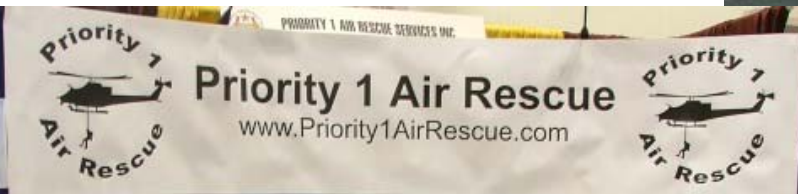
Welcome to the ALEA
38th Annual Conference & Expo



Registration Hours
Exhibit Hours

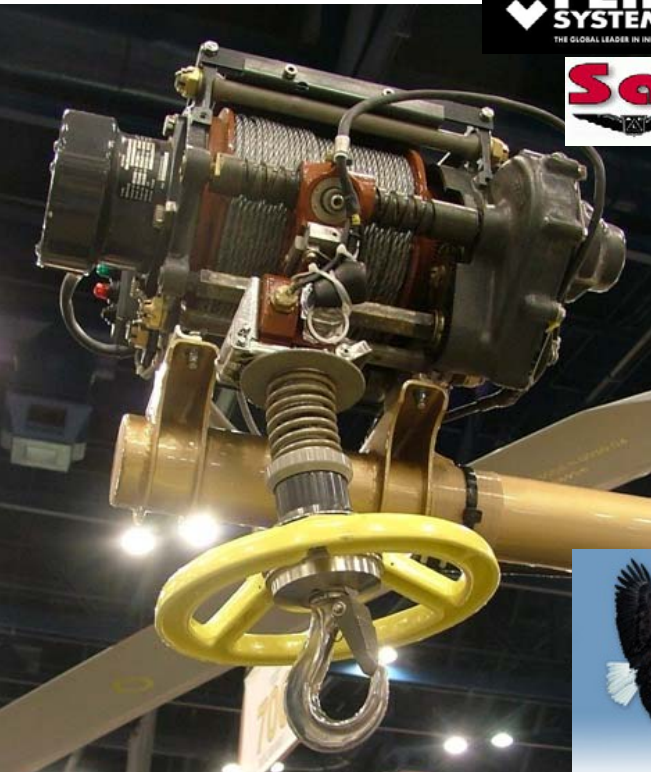


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for a Cessna 310L using their website against the FAA website ATP found everything that was relevant in less than one minute where it took nearly 30 minutes using the official site, plus an additional 15 minutes to weed out three AD's that turned out to be not relevant to the type. All important time in an engineers day, especially with their ilk being very difficult to find and hire in today's market. www.atp.com

FINALE

The highlight of the ALEA conference was always the Awards Dinner. Recent changes have resulted in this being morphed into the final act in the conference timetable and a change into an Awards Luncheon held in one of the vast the Hilton Americas ballrooms and to English eyes was another 'All American' affair with bagpipe invocation, grace spoken by a father imported from Rome, Italy, and a long welcome from the President of the ALEA Dan Schwartzbach.

The after dinner speaker was Congressman Ted Poe and I guess at that point anyone not knowing his background might emit a groan at having to listen to a politician. Wrong. He was brilliant and turned out that in his former life he was one of those typically American Judges that dealt with his customers in unconventional ways. Kill a family in a car crash? Then you share your cell with a photograph of the deceased so that every morning you wake up behind your bars and know just why you are there doing time.



This years ALEA award presentations included The Captain 'Gus' Crawford Memorial Air Crew of the year award [Crawford was the first unit commander and creator of NYPD's first helicopter unit 60 years ago] went to Corporal Kurt Franklin & Deputy Chad Marlatt of Riverside County Sheriff's Aviation Unit in California.

The Robert L Cromier Memorial Award went to Commander Dan Bilton, Winthrop Harbor Police, Illinois. This award celebrated Dan Bitton's involvement in creating a highly successful volunteer air support operation in Illinois.

Because of the manner in which the schedule has been changed a number of sponsored scholarships normally announced at the Awards Evening had previously been dealt with at the members meeting on day one, they were though reprised at the luncheon.



The 39th Annual Conference & Exposition will take place in Georgia next year.

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