

# Police Aviation News



**PAvCon**  
POLICE AVIATION CONFERENCE



**POLICE AVIATION  
CONFERENCE  
BELGIUM 2014**

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## PAvCon 2014 **Belgium**

*The annual Police Aviation Conference undertaken by Police Aviation Research the publishers of Police Aviation News returned once again to its preferred option of being hosted by a police aviation operator this year. Last year was a successful experiment of being hosted by industry [Diamond Aircraft] although actually held within a museum to provide a degree of neutrality for visiting competitors of the host company. That experiment worked well and there were no incidents to lead us to believe that the formula could not work again.*

*This year's host operator was the Federal Police in Belgium. This national police air service provides a airborne policing service across Belgium from a military facility located on the north side of Brussels International Airport and reflects its former guise as a military operation – Gendarmerie. The operator flies two types of MDHI rotary wing and has two examples of Cessna single.*

*In the main PAvCon followed a tried and tested format with the addition of lessons learned in previous years. This year the separation of the relatively quiet conference from the hub-bub of the exhibition floor was assured as the former was two floors above and there were no elevators/lifts. It was sheer coincidence of building design but it completely resolved the 'noise pollution' problems highlighted by the Chairman last year and this, Gareth Davies! This year's problem was that it was clear that some found the two flights of steps a little too far to walk up, a solution is in hand for 2015! We are never short of lessons to learn.*

*Although the police in Belgium took no part in the creation of police aviation 100 years ago they hosted this 100th year event and the artwork reflects that .*

*The first recorded instance of law enforcement going airborne was in January 1914 when police officers in Miami borrowed a private Curtiss flying boat to fly out to arrest a fleeing thief aboard a ship headed for Barbados.*

*The man was flown back to Miami to face justice*







The welcome to the Belgian Federal Police facility came from Mr Olivier Libois Director General of the Administrative Police [PAR]

Over two days presenters from across Europe and the United States provided information, viewpoints and technical assessments on a range of subjects in a conference room setting with comfort breaks of sufficient length to ensure that the exhibition set up by over thirty exhibitors was taken in.

Some experiment was injected into the conference programme in timings of the individual presentations. Hitherto it was rare to allow an hour for presentations and discussions, most items were constrained by a 20 minute rule that assumed that after that time delegates would grow fidgety. This was the timing format that reflected the 2006-08 Shephard Police Aviation event model that PAVCon was based on. Since 2009 just one or two presentations have increased in length to around 50 minutes although they are based upon US practice that allows an apparently massive 2 hours for similar subjects.

This year presentations were generally 20, 30 and 50 minutes long with a well regarded US newcomer, Bryan Smith, being allotted over an hour in the first near US style 'Workshop' on Flight Safety and ex-pat Englishman Bill Proberts a similar time to discuss the pro's and con's of 2 or 3 crew complements. Both workshops succeeded in teasing out interaction between the US facilitators and the multi-national Delegates. The positive result will mould the format of future editions of PAVCon. There will still be a mix of industry and police but there will be a greater concentration on lengthy Workshops and fewer short industrial slots.

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## OLD FACES

Since the recent series of police aviation conferences commenced there have a number of regular faces among the presenters - a line of continuity that pops up from time to time. Some, like former New York Police Department Lieutenant pilot Glenn Daley, have been the staple speakers at most of the UK Police Aviation Conferences since 2006. He brings to PAvCon a range of presentations honed by being presented at the annual Airborne Law Enforcement Association [ALEA] in the USA and presents two each year as well as taking an active part in all the other elements of the PAvCon. Most regular speakers are, or have been, members of ALEA.

Bill Proberts, the 'Undercover American,' is one of those Englishman that proved that the police in the United Kingdom would not allow serving officers to fly operationally. He now runs a police air unit in California having flown extensively as a private and commercial fixed and rotary wing pilot and instructor. Having left Surrey Constabulary over the piloting issue he rejoined policing in 1997 with the East Bay Regional Park District in Northern California as a Police Officer/Pilot. By 2011 he was chief pilot of the Air Support Unit commanding a unit of two AS350B helicopters. He is responsible for the qualification, training and operations of the helicopters, supervising the unit budget and a full time staff of 5.

## ROLL OUT THE ALEA

Europe does not have an effective representative pressure group for airborne law enforcers, although there is PACE [Police Aviation Conference Europe] a fledgling that started off at the air unit in Brussels under a former air unit chief. The problem with its development is a mix of politics and a simple lack of time for members to set up and undertake Europe wide events, it is so small that its operation falls on a very few. No one in any European national air unit is going to be struck off the roster to concentrate on the type of organising that PACE requires to run events.

That factor then offers up an organisation that exists to cover the market sector and is large enough to bring information and advice to like minded aviators across the world – ALEA. This year there was a concentrated effort to interest Europe in joining ALEA and certainly the appearance of a greater number of professional ALEA members drove home that message. Time alone will tell whether that has been successful.



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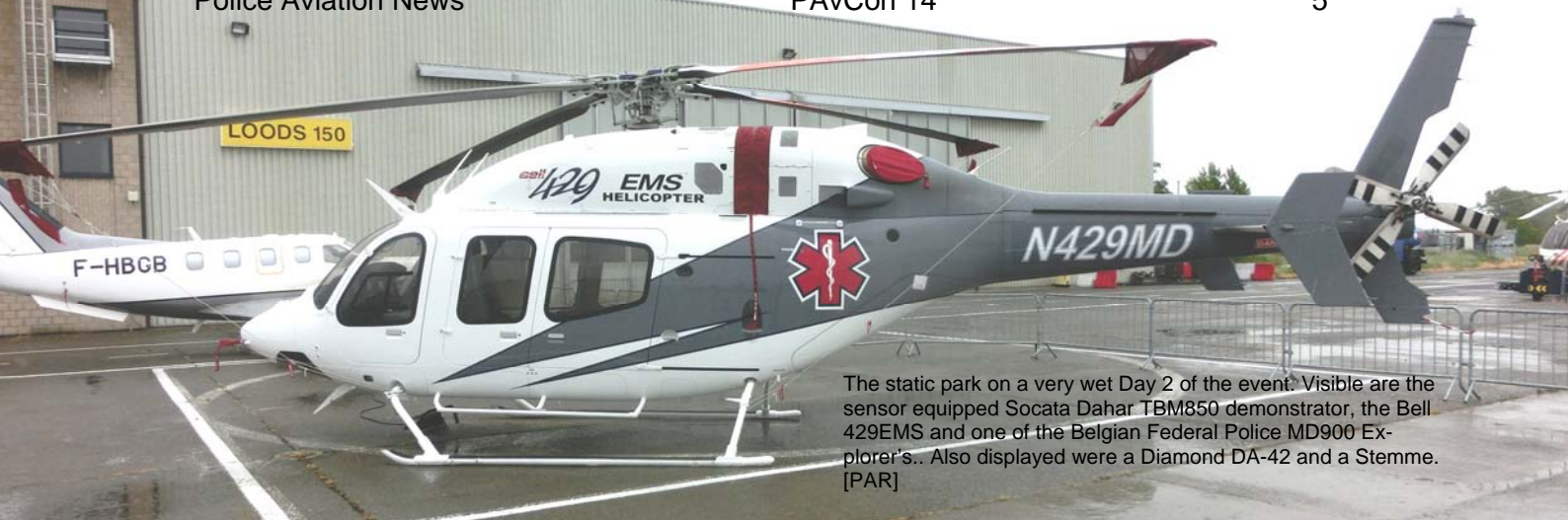
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The static park on a very wet Day 2 of the event. Visible are the sensor equipped Socata Dahr TBM850 demonstrator, the Bell 429EMS and one of the Belgian Federal Police MD900 Explorer's.. Also displayed were a Diamond DA-42 and a Stemme. [PAR]

### NEW ALEA SPEAKERS

For the present PAVCon serves to provide a ready made forum for inter-agency discussion and provides a period of time in which longer term planning for the future can take place. The few editions of PAVCon that have taken place have proven beyond doubt that there is a need for European agencies to meet face to face at all levels regularly. Putting a permanent face on this will presumably be a joint undertaking between ALEA and PACE facilitated for the time being by PAVCon.

The difficulties with running PACE have lead to a greater acceptance of embracing the ready made international option. The ALEA is US based [in Frederick, Maryland] and despite having many non-US members is well known for having quite understandable inward looking US thought processes reflecting the high US membership numbers.

ALEA were at the event in strength. At the core of the enhanced ALEA presence was marketing of the organisation, instruction and interaction on Flight Safety Systems and Operations.

Bryan Smith is police pilot and trainer and voluntarily takes on the role of *Safety Program Manager* for ALEA. He is a member of the International Helicopter Safety Team as well, serving on both the training and SMS committees. Currently a full time pilot for the Lee County Sheriff's Office located in Fort Myers, on the Gulf Coast of Florida USA, where he flies both AS350 rotorcraft and fixed wing aircraft as a unit pilot and instructor his life is full.

Bryan has a M.S. in Criminal Justice Management, is a certified flight instructor and instrument instructor. His various roles have given him the opportunity to work with law enforcement aviation units throughout the world on safety, flight training and operational issues. He makes frequent presentations at ALEA seminars and conferences, Heli Expo and numerous other venues on flight safety, tactics and unit operations. Much of it in his own time.



International Meeting of minds: Bryan Smith [USA FL], Glenn Daley [USA NY], Thomas Helbig [German Federal Police] and Wouter Kaihatu [Netherlands KLPD] at this years PAVCon Police Aviation Conference [PAR]



Pushing the central membership thrust of the ALEA were incumbent President Kurt Frisz [left above] and Dan Schwarzbach [right], now the newly installed CEO.

Kurt, has been President of the ALEA since 2011. He is a Captain with the St. Louis County Police Department in Missouri, USA. He joined the police 28 years ago and commenced his police flying career in 1990, the year he joined the ALEA. In addition to instructing at the Unit Managers courses over the years from 2008 to 2011 he served as Eastern Region Director for ALEA, chairing the Training and Education Committee and Conference and Seminars Committee. This is his first visit to a European Police Aviation Conference.

Dan is still nominally a Senior Police Officer/Pilot at City of Houston where he has been since 1980. He retires this year after 34 years police service. He joined the Houston Police Department Air Support Division in 1995, spending 19 years with them mainly flying MD Helicopters types in and around Houston, Texas.

Dan joined ALEA in 1995 and has held several major posts in the organisation including Regional Director, Secretary, President and Chief Financial Officer. He last spoke to an exclusively European audience at the 2009 PAVCon located in London – at the time he was the President of ALEA during a period 2003-2009.

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At the core of their presentation was membership and the advantages it can offer but they soon realised that what the audience saw as central to membership was ongoing, day-to-day interaction between nations. Acting quickly in response to the feedback they received the pair were back with a live on-line demonstration of a major advantage that the website [www.alea.org](http://www.alea.org) can offer – a range of resources including a members only Forum facility that certainly caught the attention of the viewers.

But it was not all about ALEA. As is customary proceedings were opened by the host country and agency. The welcome came from Mr Olivier Libois Director General of the Administrative Police followed by Jan Verbruggen the Unit Operations manager and the figure who had very ably acted as go-between between the guests [PAVCon] and Manu Leleux the OIC of the unit. Everyone speaks English at these events but some are more conscious of their language shortcomings than others. Jan’s presentation flawlessly covered past, present and a future for the Federal Air Police that seems likely to include unmanned craft.

Oliver ‘Ollie’ Dismore Flight Operations Director, NPAS [National Police Air Service UK] usually attends the event to give an update on progress with the big project. This time was no different except that the NPAS material took a back seat to more pressing material from EASA.

In the early planning for this year’s PAVCon there was an expectation that the event would host a meeting between EASA regulators and the senior police aviators who need to come to terms with new European Union driven regulations that currently leave them with around 40 different interpretations of what Public Aircraft are. There are operations with a wish to fully embrace EASA civil regulation and others that prefer to remain with the military regime they have always known and many shades in between. This politically driven proposal is

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said to be adamant that they will not entertain police aircraft within the wider civil certification regime and allow easements outside strict EASA rules. Currently the police are not yet unified in their defence. The meetings started away from PAVCon and nothing was planned but in the end Ollie used most of his time to give a brief update on the ongoing certification situation.

Hopes by such as the British, Dutch and German's that they can operate their aircraft much as they do now as civil aircraft have been dashed and there is a danger that they will be excluded from their current regime. They are hoping that there may be a path of mitigation for them that allows the aircraft to be operated as Public Aircraft but retain sufficient elements of EASA to enable the airframes to be at least sold off as certified airframes at the end of their working lives. Success will be financially rewarding, total failure could see all end of life airframes scrapped rather than sold on.

There are issues relating to maintenance, pilotage and even leasing in temporary aircraft to be considered. Operators with a military operating regime, including the Belgian's and French, have little or no interest in the proceedings but some indication of the effect that divorcing from EASA can have in the future is represented by the Alouette in the hangar. At the end of their lives the unit aircraft have tended to simply end up in museums and are said to be precious few museums left to pass any further surplus airframes to.

Although it is too early to predict what the outcome of the continued talks between the police and EASA officials will be there are hopes that those 40 or so interpretations can at least be reduced to just two.

Returning to the usual subject matter Ollie provided a briefer than usual overview on NPAS. Currently the United Kingdom is still going through the growing pains of *reconstituting* its police aviation resources as a smaller more cost efficient national resource rather than the favourite toy of a range of chief officers as in the past. Ollie has been coming to the PAVCon




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events regularly to provide an update on how the controversial move is proceeding and on this occasion was able to report the latest news on aircraft upgrades and units joining. Hot off the press is news that Bond is to upgrade older EC135s and that the police in London are to join in October.

Of the contracts so far let by NPAS, the downlink upgrade went to Enterprise control Systems and Vislink, both of whom were at PAVCon exhibiting, the upgrade to another exhibitor Bond and that leaves just the maintenance to be let. On present performance I guess we can expect that to be shared between Airbus Helicopter and PAS but there are sometimes surprises to be had! More details on these will appear in the July 2014 edition of *Police Aviation News*.

More thwarted plans for the PAVCon programme were those seeking to bring a serving member of the RCMP in Canada, Sergeant Dave Domoney, to talk on the operation of light unmanned craft used in large numbers by the police in the region.

In the event the item was dropped at the last minute as the RCMP stopped him taking the flight. It is hoped he might be available next year. Thankfully Paul Trimble, Unit Director, Civil Air Patrol [NI] and UAV pilot flying craft in the province in the last two years stepped forward to fill in. Attendees of PAVCon last year will recall Paul's presentation on unmanned aircraft used by the Skywatch CAP in support of the emergency services in the north of Ireland. This time he was promoting small Aerostat balloons as low cost tactical camera platforms that both police and fire services might see as easier to use and purchase in the face of difficult aviation regulations than free flying unmanned craft. The following day Paul ran an successful ad-hoc workshop on unmanned craft. Perhaps the trick in UAV's is to look from the ground up and not the other way around

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Other regular ALEA member speakers that were not speaking this year include John Osmond [UK], Ken Solosky [USA] and Joseba Mendizabal [Spain], but they will return in future years.

The static was somewhat smaller this year than last, the Belgian fleet more than made up for it with a fine selection of MD Explorer's [a mix of 900 G-10 and 902s G-12 and G-14], two MD520N and the light Cessna's. Socata Dahar brought their French registered 850 F-HBGB with retractable sensor package. This was the same aircraft as the company exhibited at the Paris Air Show last year. Diamond brought a DA-42 OE-VTX, AEC Air Support from the Netherlands a Stemme S-15 D-KAIR, a motor glider with a sensor pod underwing that has seen some use by the Royal Netherlands Air Force an optionally piloted trainer for unmanned flying and finally the Bell 429 EMS configured demonstrator N429MD recently seen touring parts of England and before that at Singapore Air Show.

There were a number of non-police aircraft out there but there is no pretence that the varied airframes were anything more than the National VIP fleet, army and air force craft with a steadily changing background of airliners.

This was the eve of another G7 event in Brussels and the ever changing background of the International Airport also had the added interest of such as US President Obama's Air Force One trundling by to unload just down the apron. There was an invite out but one and all chose not to call in for tea.

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PAvCon is primarily about Networking. Meeting senior police officers is obviously important but as much satisfaction can be derived from interacting with others in industry.

[PAR]

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PAVCon suffered badly with the weather day 2, deluges during which Obama and company sneaked in to Brussels past our front door to play out a G7 Summit. This was both an opportunity to see the police in action and to watch live feeds from the police helicopter's Airbus Cassidian [Zeiss] Leo turrets. Where else could you do that?

The static was washed out but the talking and exhibition were totally separated from that until lunchtime when it was found that there simply were not enough umbrellas to share around for the short trek to lunch in the military restaurant. The few umbrellas brought in to undertake just that role [all eventualities catered for at PAVCon] were snatched up before I



A meeting of minds. Lt. Glenn Daley with Torsten Hallmann and Thomas Helbig. Thomas is the OIC of the German Federal Police air unit and torsten is his Deputy. [PAR]



The natives are friendly. When you are in Europe for the first time you may as well make the best use of the trip.

First time in Europe Bryan Smith travelled to England and France immediately following the few days in Belgium at PAvCon. He is seen here talking with PC Tony Donnelly an observer [TFO] on the EC145s at Lippitts Hill serving London.

