

Police Aviation News



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Number 197 September 2012

PAR

EMPTY SKIES The Olympic Effect

Queensland to privatise fleet?

East Anglia launch night ops

FAA say 'No' to 429 growth

Bell deliver the support

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LAW ENFORCEMENT

AUSTRALIA

QUEENSLAND: Only months after gaining positive press for agreeing to set up a police helicopter for the state the Queensland government has been denying accusations of extreme cost-cutting in setting up the purchase. The threadbare plans are said to be putting the safety of police officers at risk.

On one hand the political opposition are claiming that basic safety equipment, including life jackets for crew use over the sea, are being deleted from the purchase plans.

In return the government are accusing the opposition of taking an inaccurate article and assuming that the content is accurate. They say that every piece of equipment required for aerial policing and safety will be provided. The new helicopter will be equipped with night vision goggles and a mapping system and each crew member will have safety vests that include everything from floatation to oxygen, and the crew includes highly-skilled emergency pilots.

Political squabbles are one thing but it seems that the politicians are not the only ones wading into the war of words, news reports are quoting the Queensland Police Union president Ian Leavers as appearing on ABC Radio claiming that the aircraft was chosen based on the lowest quotes rather than capability – pretty much what the opposition are saying.

And that same new Government in the state seem to have wrong footed aviation organisations in the region by issuing a report setting out its wishes to privatise all their air units if savings can be demonstrated. Proposals are to be in by September 28.

The Government currently owns and operates eight fixed wing aircraft and a decision on a rotary wing addition to the wholly fixed wing Queensland Police Air Wing [QPAW] is waiting in the wings in the wake of recent discussions.

Two fixed wing aircraft, a Hawker Jet and a King Air turboprop, are operated by the Government Air Wing and six fixed wing aircraft – a Cessna Citation jet and two Cessna Caravans; a Beechcraft B1900; Cessna Grand Caravan; and a Britten-Norman Islander – are operated by the PAW.

COVER IMAGE: It is not over until it's over—and as these words are being written the ParaOlympic Games are in full swing but some comment can be made on the effect that the 2012 Olympic Games has had so far on air policing and aviation in and around London.

Based on an item by a US writer PAN gives you an idea what living under the immediate threat of terrorist attack has meant to the immediate area of East London surrounding the Olympic Park. The image starkly portrays just what was flying most of the time, the airship and a few helicopters from the Olympic Broadcasting organisation. [image PAR]

There are four PAW bases in Queensland:

Brisbane: This base accommodates both the Government Air Wing and the PAW in shared office and hangar space. This location houses two police aircraft.

Cairns: This base is a police facility and is shared with the Cairns Traffic Branch. The base houses two aircraft.

Horn Island: This base is a police facility located on airport property. The base accommodates a pilot (with housing provided – located in the Township) and one aircraft (housed in a hangar at the airport).

Mt Isa: This base is also a police facility located on airport property. The base accommodates a pilot (with housing provided – located in the Township) and one aircraft (housed in a hangar at the airport).

The Government owns and operates five helicopters.

Emergency Management Queensland (EMQ) operates three AgustaWestland 139 helicopters based in Brisbane and Cairns and two Bell 412 helicopters based in Townsville. Emergency Management Queensland Helicopter Rescue (EMQHR) provides 24 hour-a-day response for helicopter aeromedical and air rescue operations as well as being available to the police for special operations including the deployment of specialist officers.

[report via AHIA—the Australian Helicopter Industry Association]

EUROPE

As published in earlier editions of Police Aviation News it appears that the original version of the South Coast Project employing unmanned craft to patrol seaways is a thing of the past.

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The original project brought together a number of organisations to fund the operation of the BAE Herti in maritime patrol. It became clear at Farnborough that the Herti was not planned as an ongoing project.

That negative outcome to the original does not appear to have got through to the people in Brussels who are now promoting a similar project off the 'South Coast' of France.

The French project sponsored by Frontex is Eurosur and involves the potential use of unmanned craft with somewhat better credentials than the Herti. The specific types named are the Spanish built Fulmar and the larger higher specification Israeli built Heron. The Heron airframe is a widely used UAV rather than a trials project like the Herti.

In January this year the Fulmar was the only fully Spanish model presented to the European agency for border control purposes.

Thales and Aerovisión have given a real flight demonstration of the Fulmar to Frontex, the organism in charge of coordinating the border control operations of the European Union member states.

Fulmar is a wholly Spanish project developed as a global solution that uses the Maritime Surveillance Systems of Thales Group. The UAV is a small-size model (3.1 metres) weighing only 19 kilos that can fly at a height of 3,000 metres and achieve 150 kilometres per hour, with an 8-hour flight range that will allow it to fly up to 800 kilometres without having to refuel.

The Frontex demonstration was held at the Aktio Air Base in the Greek locality of Preveza. For three days, several international UAV manufacturers performed test flights patrolling the west coast of Greece, with Fulmar being the only Spanish product to demonstrate its capacities in a market dominated by unmanned aerial vehicles from the United States and Israel.

According to the media story the police in Kent are working on a £3M project with partners in the UK, France and Netherlands to explore the use of unmanned aircraft to patrol the coastline of the English Channel – that looks mightily like the now moribund Herti project being shoehorned into the Brussels storyline. [Mail on Sunday]

Ed: As with the US aspirations a date of 2015 has been arbitrarily placed upon the service entry of this idea. Like many people in the US there are those that see the date as way too early for the capabilities of industry to overcome the technical problems faced.

Currently – contrary to the MoS article – British involvement in this project is pending rather than in place. Which brings to the fore another storyline, this time from the Daily Telegraph who interviewed Supt. Richard Watson the NPAS director last month.

According to the story he has predicted that UAVs are likely to be used over cities or big events like Glastonbury, and might have appeared over the Olympics if they had been 'cost-effective.' He is quoted as saying that the Olympics represented a 'missed opportunity' and that UAV's offer the promise of a air service that is 'cheaper, more efficient, and more effective, with less risk.'

Those aims are at the core of what NPAS was set up to achieve. So far he has been offered a system with a price tag of £81M – a considerable hike on the entire NPAS budget of just over £60M and not perhaps meeting every criterion.

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EQUATORIAL GUINEA

In February this year PAN reported on the sale of the former Suffolk Police EC135T1 G-SUFF c/n 0118 to serve as a police helicopter in Equatorial Guinea. The initial tasking was for a Greek operator to fly the helicopter in support of the 28th African Nations Cup being held in Gabon and Equatorial Guinea from 21 January. The event passed off successfully.

What was not known until recently was that a second of the former UK police EC135T1 helicopters held by Eurocopter UK was also sold to the same buyer for use in Africa, the second aircraft effectively supporting the first. The second delivery was of the first ever UK police EC135, c/n 0040 formerly G-CCAU. Both continue to wear the UK 'Conspicuity' colours of blue and yellow and because of their origins both are supported logistically from Oxford.

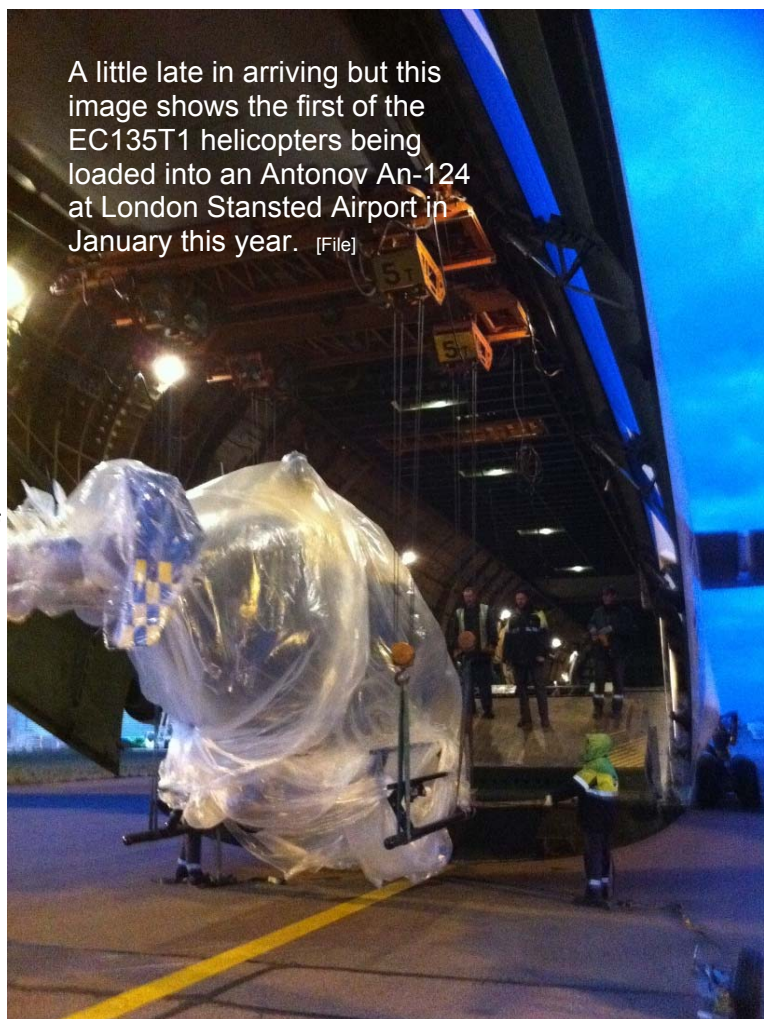
The first aircraft was reportedly delivered minus the sensor turret because of export control reasons but this has since been found to be inaccurate. The turrets fitted to these aircraft were not affected by International Traffic in Arms Regulations [ITAR] control. As previously stated, they were delivered with an analogue downlink capability and an ECS receiver suite.

The first helicopter was flown out to Africa on an Antonov An124 from Stansted Airport on January 6, the second followed by air from East Midlands Airport.

The two helicopters continue to be operated by the Greek company [Avia 7] and maintained by ex-pat engineering staff. The operation is expected to gain acceptance as Part 145 maintenance operation under EASA rules shortly.

Equatorial Guinea is a small country of 10830 sq mls/27972 sq km. on the Atlantic coast of Africa. There have been no known uses of airborne law enforcement prior to the arrival of these two EC135s.

A little late in arriving but this image shows the first of the EC135T1 helicopters being loaded into an Antonov An-124 at London Stansted Airport in January this year. [File]



UNITED KINGDOM

NATIONAL POLICE AIR SERVICE: A minor row has emerged over how staff members in the existing air units were obliged to sign up to join NPAS before being able to inspect the terms and conditions.

Officers had to sign up to the new National Police Air Service (NPAS) before knowing the terms and conditions for their new roles, Andy Viney, Secretary of the Thames Valley branch of the Police Federation has said.

August 15 was set as the deadline for signing up to NPAS and yet the Thames Valley air support officers did not have the full details of their new secondments in writing before then. As a result the eight officers affected had to take a 'leap of faith' in making an application prior to being able to assess such important details as the new shift pattern, maternity leave, recuperative and restricted duties policies. Some items including those being thrashed out as countrywide policy relating to the new Winsor negotiations no-one knows

the answer to.

Officers who join the NPAS will remain with their home force but will be seconded to West Yorkshire Police, which will be the lead force for the new air service.

ACPO has blamed tight timescales for the creation of the NPAS as being behind the need for Tactical Flight Officers to take some detail on trust. A secondment agreement is still being considered by the national Police Federation and not ready for publication. It will be made available as soon as it is agreed, meanwhile the official view is that the submitted applications are not binding and can be withdrawn. [TVPF/Oracle]

Ed: Not much changed in the police over all these years – there was always a requirement to sign as gratefully receiving payment for allowances long before they were handed over.

As the start date of October for NPAS looms the police authorities are setting their house in order. The National grouping will relate to the aircraft, pilotage and police staffing leaving aside one little detail that is quietly being addressed by the local police authorities.

Some years ago when the spares situation with the MD902 Explorer was at its worst the police aviation operators stockpiled whatever aircraft type spares they could to reduce the regular grounding of the type.

As a result of this activity, repeatedly denied at the time, a number of operators of the Explorer still have in store spares which will not pass automatically to NPAS – these are now being sold off to boost local police authority funds.

Ed: This is one of those dark areas of UK police aviation. It dates from the days when Explorer helicopter's never broke down, never suffered long periods of AOG and police forces never went shopping to buy their own stock of spare parts. It all came out in the end of course as MD spiralled downwards out of control but it was a major area of denial in the police units. There was nothing wrong with buying the spares [other than the unseemly denials perhaps] it was judicious activity, most US police air units stack up OH-58s for a rainy day as a matter of course, but UK operators of Eurocopter's did not feel they needed to undertake parts stockpiling as a matter of course so it was a clear contrast in style and therefore something that some wished to pretend 'did not happen.'

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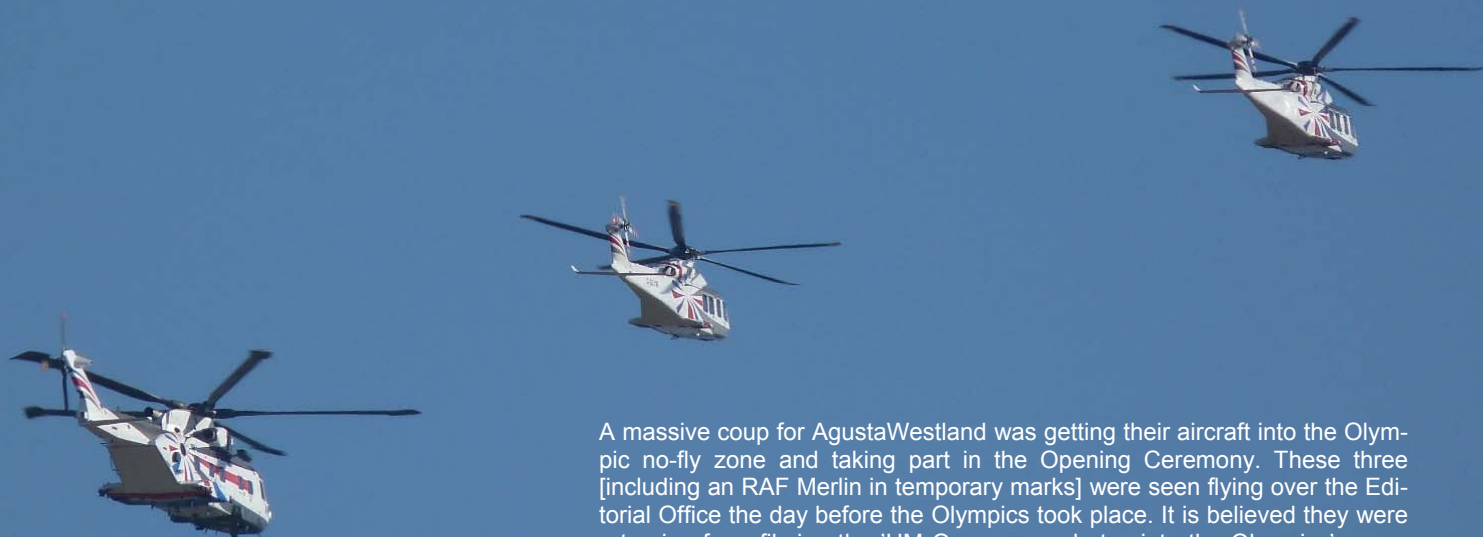
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A massive coup for AgustaWestland was getting their aircraft into the Olympic no-fly zone and taking part in the Opening Ceremony. These three [including an RAF Merlin in temporary marks] were seen flying over the Editorial Office the day before the Olympics took place. It is believed they were returning from filming the 'HM Queen parachutes into the Olympics' scene for insertion in the opening ceremony sequence. [PAR]

OLYMPICS: Prior to this year's Olympic Games many questions were asked about how capable the police service was going to be in securing the games venues, in particular the absence of sufficient aircraft resources appeared critical to observers.

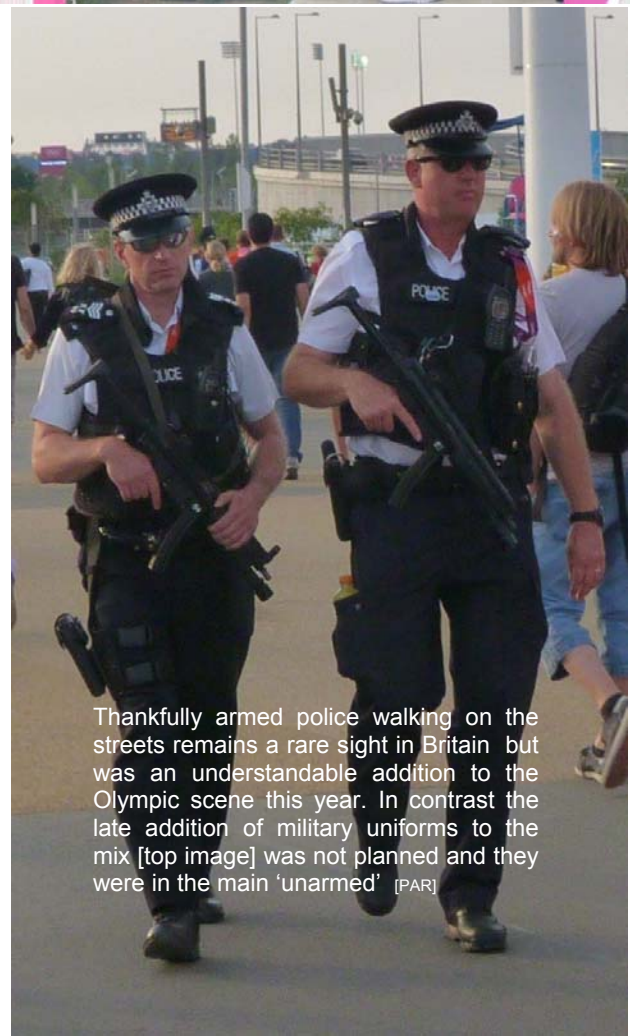
All this detail was over shadowed by a number of late hour dramas related to the provision of private security by G4S – in short the company could not meet its obligations and had both insufficient numbers of temporary staff and many of those it had were badly trained.

Britain's ever shrinking military was always going to be involved in security and there were plenty of media opportunities to show off the hardware, helicopter carriers anti-aircraft missiles and interceptor aircraft. Shrinking it may be but the military provided the last minute answer to many of the problems and most visible security was undertaken by men in camouflage suits [normally not a sight any Olympics wishes to entertain]. That sea of combat suits may not have been seen as the ideal to be associated with the Olympic Games but as we all know now it actually worked primarily because it was the British military solution many other nations would never have pulled it off.

In stark contrast to the instant perception of Britishness, on site the army was basically unarmed but the police were those toting guns!

As none other than *USA Today* noticed it was not air support or the army that made this massive event work. The city has pioneered the use of closed circuit television surveillance cameras which have played major roles, from tracking common criminals to terrorist bombers, including the four men who carried out the devastating attack on the city's subway and bus systems in 2005, the day after London was awarded the 2012 Summer Games.

The world has seen what an effective tool these cameras are – within days of the attacks 7-years ago the investigators had images of the four suicide bombers on their way to carry out the assaults, all captured by cameras set



Thankfully armed police walking on the streets remains a rare sight in Britain but was an understandable addition to the Olympic scene this year. In contrast the late addition of military uniforms to the mix [top image] was not planned and they were in the main 'unarmed' [PAR]



The military presence at the games was considerable but non too visible. This Rapier missile battery was at Netherhouse Farm in the countryside north of the Olympic Park. [PAR]

up throughout the city's transport network and since greatly added to.

The whole of the Olympic Park system has cameras everywhere – probably far too many to monitor but constantly recording what the human eye misses first time around.

And that is probably the secret of CCTV. Mindful of the dark messages in books such as 1984 many were deeply worried about the 'Big Brother' aspects of the multitude of cameras and having faceless officials following their every move – but it simply did not happen that way.

What we humans do 99.9% of each day is far too boring for interesting surveillance and it is only when something major happens that the footage is even looked at. Of those now millions of cameras across the world now quietly recording the passage of time on multi-day hard drives most simply pass into 'overwrite' without ever being checked out. [Ed]

In London, surveillance cameras are a constant feature on the urban landscape, and no-one knows for sure whether the cameras are active, dummy or simply broken. Most people do not even see them but a subconscious knowledge they are there subtly modifies behaviour.

A number of groups rail against the spy cameras – stating accurately that the British are the 'most watched nation in the world' – but in the wider population few care. [from article in USA Today via Officer.Com]

HUMBERSIDE: Manchester Airports Group has sold its 82.7% shareholding in Humberside Airport to airline operator Eastern Group whose home base it is.

The airport, south of the Humber Bridge is relatively quiet in terms of commercial operations, serving Aberdeen (Eastern) four times daily, and Amsterdam (KLM) three times daily and has some holiday charter flights to various destinations. Passenger numbers the airport peaked in 2006 with 520,956, but last year only saw a throughput of 274, 609, the worst figures in a decade.

The airport is the base for the Humberside Police helicopter support unit's MD902 Explorer helicopter and the change in management is unlikely to affect that operation.

www.humbersideairport.com

WILTSHIRE: NPAS has indicated that there will be no objection to Wiltshire Police and the county's Air Ambulance continuing their long standing collaboration at least until the end of 2014. NPAS had originally intended that Wiltshire's police air operations would be transferred to Filton near Bristol from July next year. However, thanks in part to consistent lobbying by the air ambulance charity, these plans have been postponed.

The Wiltshire Air Ambulance trustees' Chairman, Richard Youens said that he was keen to maintain the existing arrangements with the Police as long as possible and was much relieved by this development.

"I would like to express my thanks on behalf of the charity for the support we have received

from our local MPs who helped us with our representations to the authorities – in particular Claire Perry (Devizes) and Robert Buckland (South Swindon). I would also like to thank the Policing Minister, Nick Herbert, who was kind enough to hear us out and has taken our concerns into account. All indications are that the Police/Air Ambulance alliance is popular in the county, and we are confident that we will still have some form of working relationship with Wiltshire Police beyond December 2014,” continued Mr Youens. “However we recognise that from 2015 NPAS will impact on the way we do business, but whatever else may be in doubt over the longer term, the charity remains committed to providing an air ambulance service to the people of Wiltshire from the hangar we share with the police in Devizes”.



Richard Youens – Wiltshire AA Charitable Trusts

UNITED STATES

ARKANSAS: A decade on from closure the City of Little Rock is set to re-introduce its helicopters on a limited scale to deter crime. Two officer involved shootings in one weekend during July appear to have led to the air support rethink. Although the report does not mention the helicopter type the Police Department operated two Bell OH-58s – registered N900PD and N901PD – in the past. Only N901PD is currently registered. Ten years ago, fuel costs for regular operation were about \$24,000 a year. [Kark]

Ed: The unit was threatened with closure in December 2002 as the Little Rock City Board members, tried to close a \$10.3M

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budget gap. The unit represented a saving of \$946,000 and went. Little Rock PD added a helicopter to the force in 1995. Flight hours in 2001 amounted to a modest 50 hours per month, two hours of each 10-hour shift include random patrol.

CALIFORNIA: Ripon PD Aviation Unit recently celebrated three years operating its minimalist air support operation.



In July 2009 Ripon PD was the first law enforcement agency in the state of California to implement a designated aviation unit, utilizing a Powered Parachute (PPC).

Ripon PD was selected to participate in an aviation test and evaluation project, sponsored by the United States Department of Justice (DOJ), Aviation Technology Program (ATP). The aircraft, on-board equipment, trailer and pilot training were provided to the department at no cost.

The Powered Parachute (PPC) is extremely economical to operate. When fuel, maintenance, insurance, and additional costs are added up, the PPC costs approximately \$40 an hour to operate. The aircraft does not need a traditional runway, and there is no need for a traditional aircraft hangar. The aircraft can easily be towed to a desired location, and it can be deployed and flown by one Officer/Pilot. A second Officer can be added onboard to act as a Tactical Flight Officer. The PPC is commonly regarded as one of the safest forms of flight.

Ripon pilots are licensed Sport Pilots, with Powered Parachute ratings. The aircraft is equipped with aviation and police radios, GPS and onboard computer systems. Pilots utilise i Phone technology, and digital video/photographic equipment while on board the aircraft.

Ripon has undertaken missions supporting local, county, state, and federal agencies and covered a number of Law Enforcement missions including: missing person cases, river search/rescue, suspect captures, crime scene location, aerial crime scene and traffic photography, major event security over-flights, crime suppression and even critical infrastructure over-flights.

Ripon has proven the concept that small and rural Law Enforcement agencies can implement and maintain an aviation unit on a tight budget. Small and rural law enforcement agencies now have the ability to safely, quickly, and economically, provide their front line officers and command staff with mission critical information; that can immediately be used to help ensure the safety of their citizens. [RPD]

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FLORIDA: The Airborne Law Enforcement Accreditation Commission (ALEAC) presented an Accreditation Certificate to members of the Florida Highway Patrol (FHP) Aviation Unit; FHP is the third agency in the United States to earn this distinction.

FHP dedicated time and resources to enhance policies and procedures that encompass new safety, maintenance and training requirements, which led to successful accreditation. Since 1962, the Aviation Unit's mission has been to support ground troopers through aerial traffic enforcement, surveillance, LoJack stolen vehicle tracking, photography, disaster relief supply, equipment and personnel transportation, medical relays, roadway patrols and other services as requested.

With today's fleet of eight Cessna single-engine aircraft and one Piper twin-engine fixed-wing aircraft, FHP's Aviation Unit provides the services it historically has in the past but with a robust capability and a safe operating environment that is second to none. The accreditation confirms the FHP's commitment to providing the highest quality of service to motorists in Florida.



Pictured here are ALEA Southeast Region Director Kevin Vislocky, ALEA President Kurt Frisz, ALEAC Vice President Roy Swetnam and ALEAC President Jim Di Giovanna presenting to FHP's Aviation Section Captain Matthew W. Walker (Unit Commander), Lt. Miguel Cendan (Training Officer), Master Sgt. Gary Schluter (Safety Coordinator), and Master Sgt. Luis Badia (Maintenance Officer). In addition to being awarded full accreditation, the FHP Aviation Unit was also awarded a \$2,000 grant sponsored by American Eurocopter.

For more information on the ALEAC accreditation program, please contact Jim Di Giovanna at james47@gmail.com or Don Roby @ droby@zoominternet.net.

TEXAS: It has been a busy time in Dallas with lots of shootings reported this year. The recent turnover has left eight suspects killed, a near riot in South Dallas and officers caught in a drive by shooting. Last month for the first time in perhaps two decades, a Dallas police helicopter came under fire.

Fortunately the anti-aircraft gunman, 17 years old Dadrian Petry, is in custody.

Air One flew over Southeast Oak Cliff about 10 am looking for four suspects spotted fleeing through an alley from a burgled house in Concordia.

The crew of the Bell found the group hiding nearby and as they flew overhead Petry started firing. The helicopter stood off out of range and remained undamaged until the suspects were arrested by ground officers. Three of the group were juveniles.

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AIR AMBULANCE

CANADA

ORNGE: The problems surrounding Ornge rumble on with a new chapter being written almost every week. Late in July it was announced that AgustaWestland wanted to “claw back” \$1.8M because Ornge founder Dr. Chris Mazza and his team failed to drum up new business.

Part of the contract was a marketing services agreement between Ornge and Agusta now under investigation by a Queen’s Park committee and the Ontario Provincial Police.

Ornge paid Agusta \$144M for twelve new helicopters in 2008, then Agusta hired Mazza and his team — including water-ski instructor turned vice-president Kelly Long — to scour the world for other air ambulance customers. Opposition critics have suggested that was a kick-back, something Agusta hotly denies. It says it paid Ornge \$4.7M to discover new markets, and that another \$2M contract was in the works but was never acted on because Ornge halted work on it.

An ongoing Star investigation has found that the work done for the \$4.7M was shoddy, consisting of Internet searches and winding up in just two binders that interim ORNGE boss Ron McKerlie said was not worth the money paid. Kelly Long and the daughter of former chairman Rainer Beltzner did much of the work on the report.

To try to recoup its money, the giant Agusta has filed a claim against the bankruptcy of the for-profit companies created by Mazza to sell high-end rescue insurance to the travelling wealthy. [Star]

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UNITED KINGDOM

EAST ANGLIA: Based in Norwich and Cambridge with two leased helicopters the East Anglia Air Ambulance are expected to flesh out their plans for moving the operation towards offering a 24/7 service including night operations into remote sites at the forthcoming BGAD event to be held at Cambridge Airport on Tuesday September 18. Hopefully more details will be available next month of this 'Night Capable' helicopter operation. [EAAA]

LONDON: Some months ago Richard Branson's Virgin Group gave notice that it wished to end its long standing, ten year, association with the London Air Ambulance [LAA] based at the Royal London Hospital in Whitechapel.

Rather than replace Virgin with a single sponsor, the board of the LAA has decided to attract a significant number of lower-level donors as it attempts to increase overall funding.

In the year to March 2010, donations from charitable fundraising were around £1M. In the current year, that figure is expected to double.

A few well known City firms have stepped in to sponsor the air ambulance in place of Virgin. Aberdeen Asset Management, fund manager Artemis and accountancy firm Deloitte are among the better known new funders.

If the dreams are met – and LAA has been struggling financially for a long time - Increased funding might allow an improvement in its services, the aims they have said they would like to see include the addition of a second helicopter, running multiple teams and setting up a training academy.

To coincide with the increased funding LAA are now looking to recruit the charity's 'first' full time chief executive. [Telegraph/PAR]

MIDLAND: Staff at Strensham are celebrating after their base was upgraded for the first time in 17 years. Midlands Air Ambulance (MAA) began flying its helicopter from the site, near junction eight of the M5, in 1995.

Crew members have been given a new accommodation area that includes a kitchen and an office, as a replacement for a portable building they had before.

The hangar at the site has been upgraded and new lighting has been added to the helipad to help with possible future emergency night flights.

In all, the air ambulance has spent £200,000 on revamping its Strensham base.

The work was funded through public donations and grant aid from the County Air Ambulance Trust.

Crews are now being called out an average of 10 times a day and that the MAA had dealt with more than 37,000 incidents in its 21-year history.

A similar refurbishment to Strensham's was carried out at the RAF Cosford site last year.

NORTH WEST: Both of the helicopters operated for this charity are to move from airfields to hospitals. The charity believes the moves may save lives.

The region's two air ambulances are currently based at City Airport, Eccles, Manchester [formerly known as Barton] and Blackpool Airport.

The helicopters will move to dedicated trauma hospitals, the University Hospital of South Manchester (UHSM) in Wythenshawe and Royal Preston Hospital and will facilitate the access of specialist doctors to the helicopters, enabling them to fly out to the site of the trauma incident. [NWAA/BBC]

WARWICKSHIRE & NORTHAMPTON: in a new development for the operation two midlands based air ambulance operations are to start using a car so they can get doctors to the scene of accidents at night time and in bad weather.

The scheme is being rolled out by Warwickshire & Northamptonshire Air Ambulance (WNAA) on Saturday nights at first, to gauge demand. The charity currently only flies during daylight hours.

WALES: Wales Air Ambulance paramedic Aneurin Heath received the first ever BBC 999 award for Outstanding Paramedic.

The BBC 999 Awards, hosted by Lenny Henry and Kirsty Young, was an unprecedented event to recognise the tireless work of Emergency Service heroes.

Since the 999 emergency number came in to action 75 years ago, emergency services have saved millions of lives and helped countless others. The Awards aimed to acknowledge the heroic acts that officers and volunteers perform on a daily basis.

Wales Air Ambulance's Swansea based paramedic Aneurin Heath was nominated for his lifesaving role in treating a 26 year-old man who had fallen 30ft down a cliff into a rocky cove, sustaining spinal and pelvic injuries.

With the tide coming in fast, Aneurin stayed in the turbulent water until they were winched to safety.

YORKSHIRE: There are reports that Yorkshire AA is reviewing their basing arrangements and one new base being looked at is said to be the grounds of the Nostell Priory estate. The claim is that the charity is looking to set up a base at the former Nostell Priory Roses nursery warehouse located within a National Trust site just off Doncaster Road, Wakefield.

The charity currently provides two helicopters for emergency help from its main base in the south at Leeds Bradford Airport and a secondary base to the north west of the county at RAF Topcliffe, near Thirsk.

On the face of it the planning activity is simply a feasibility study with regard to the potential options available for relocating their current Leeds Bradford International Airport airbase to another base and they have undertaken similar exercises before without any actual moves taking place.

With regard to the Nostell Priory site outline plans are investigating options which include converting an empty warehouse into a hanger to keep the helicopter overnight, forming a landing pad and fuel area and creating office space, canteen and rest areas for five crew members.

The property is available and may ultimately prove attractive compared with the current base at a busy airport known to have some weather issues.

The study simply reflects 'good housekeeping' on the part of the charity in allowing them to have in place a fall back plan to keep ahead of options should the situation at the airport change unexpectedly. A massive change in commercial airline traffic rates might make effective air ambulance operations untenable. Recent media suggestions that a move is actually planned are therefore premature but with some substance.

The airport base remains the home of Multiflight the maintenance organisation used by both Yorkshire AA and Great North AA so the links are not being severed. [Wakefield Express/PAR]

The troubled move of the subsidiary base at Bagby to the former RAF Topcliffe near Thirsk has been hailed a great success for the charity. The operation is based in part of the control tower and has access to a section of one hangar suitably cordoned off and heated when necessary. The location is currently an army camp with minor RAF glider training activities but historically it was built as a bomber station serving Bomber, Coastal and Transport Commands and operating a range of aircraft including the Whitley, Wellington, Neptune and Hastings. [PAR]

UNITED STATES

NATIONAL: American Eurocopter announced the appointment of the 2012 Vision Zero Aviation Safety Award Blue Ribbon Committee. This committee will evaluate the applications and determine the winner of the 2012 Vision Zero Aviation Safety award.

This award, established by American Eurocopter in 2006, was created with the purpose of promoting a higher level of safety within the air medical industry. As part of the award,

American Eurocopter contributes up to \$10,000 to the winner of the award to further develop aviation safety initiatives within their organisation. This will be the sixth year for the award.

In 2011, Flight For Life Transport System won the award for its long history of involvement locally, regionally and nationally to promote safety in the air medical transport industry. Flight For Life was the first hospital-based EMS helicopter program in Wisconsin, completing its first patient transport in January of 1984. In 1996, it became the first air medical program in Wisconsin to gain CAMTS accreditation, a standing it has held ever since.

All programs and operators who are members of the Association of Air Medical Service (AAMS) are eligible to apply for the Vision Zero Aviation Safety Award, and may nominate themselves. Application forms are now available on the AAMS website (www.aams.org). To be considered for the 2012 award, completed forms must be received by September 20, 2012.

Each member of the committee has extensive background within the air medical industry:

Bill Bryant MPA/HSA (Chairman)

Mr. Bryant is the president and principle of Sierra Health Group, a national healthcare consulting firm based in Golden, CO.

Denise Landis, RN, EMT-P, MSA, CMTE

Ms. Landis has been in the air ambulance industry over 25 years and is the Program Director for the University of Michigan Survival Flight.

Eileen Frazer, RN, CMTE

Ms. Frazer has been the Executive Director of CAMTS since its inception in 1990.

Ed MacDonald

Mr. MacDonald has over 42 years experience flying patients since 1970 as a combat medical evacuation pilot and 19 years of experience as an active EMS Pilot.

Chris Eastlee

Mr. Eastlee is the President of the Air Medical Operators Association (AMOA) a trade association representing certificated air carriers providing air medical transport.

Gerry Pagano

Mr. Pagano is the Director of Operations for the Health Care District of Palm Beach County's Trauma Hawk Aeromedical Program in West Palm Beach, Florida.

Jason Schwebach MBA, MHA, CMTE

Mr. Schwebach is the Administrative Director for MedCenter Air, the transport service for Carolinas Healthcare System in Charlotte, NC. Transport.

Chris Bryant

Chris is the Fleet Safety Manager for American Eurocopter in Grand Prairie, TX.

For more information on The American Eurocopter Vision Zero Aviation Safety Award, please visit www.aams.org or www.eurocopterusa.com.

CALIFORNIA: California Shock Trauma Air Rescue (CALSTAR), with headquarters at McClellan, has agreed to purchase up to eight EC135 helicopters. CALSTAR operates nine full-time bases in northern and central California and is the largest non-profit air ambulance provider on the US west coast. With this order, it will replace its older, non-Eurocopter aircraft and will become an all-Eurocopter operator.

"We performed a very detailed review of our mission profile and our requirements so that we could begin the process of upgrading and standardizing our fleet," explained Lynn Malmstrom, President and CEO of CALSTAR. "Once we evaluated all the aircraft, the EC135 was the best suited for our current and future mission needs."

CALSTAR is a not-for-profit community service company that has been in operation for 28 years. The company has developed a strong culture of safety within its people, and that is something Malmstrom attributes to its high level of patient care and flight safety. "Safety is the single most important priority for our teams. We want to make sure our crews return home after each shift to be with their family and friends and that our patients get where they need to go safely." Since its inception, CALSTAR has safely completed over 48,000 trans-

ports with no injuries to patients or crew members and to date CALSTAR has flown over 70,000 accident-free flight hours. [AEC]

MICHIGAN: We keep on seeing them at events and launches but only now have the three new maize-and-blue EC155 helicopters actually started to enter service for the communities in the Great Lakes states, speeding patients toward advanced care at the University of Michigan Health System's hospitals.

The arrival of the new helicopters marks the beginning of a new era for the 29-year-old programme, which was the first medical flight service in Michigan.

The Health System chose the new aircraft to replace three Bell 430 helicopters that have been icons since 1998. More than 10,000 critically ill and injured patients and donated organs for transplant have passed through their cabin doors. Together, they have flown the distance to the moon and back several times.

Now, Survival Flight will be able to travel further, faster and more quietly, using the first EC155s to be put into emergency medical service in the US. They will enhance the Health System's ability to provide advanced, high quality and safe care to patients from across the state, region and nation in partnership with other institutions.

The new helicopters are equipped with advanced equipment and safety features, including the ability to fly in low-visibility conditions. They have nearly 50 percent more cabin space for nurses and patients, an all-glass cockpit and a 500-mile range allows them to fly as far as Syracuse, New York, or Louisville, Kentucky, without refuelling. [AEC]

Aviation Specialties Unlimited, (ASU) announced that they have added the Eurocopter EC155 model to their STC portfolio. The addition of this STC gives ASU an unprecedented 54 STC model/make configurations. The completion of the first ASU STC EC155 model was for the University of Michigan and was a combined effort of ASU, Metro Aviation and American Eurocopter. [ASU]

UTAH: American Eurocopter delivered an EC145® to the University of Utah's AirMed operation in late July. AirMed currently has a fleet of four helicopters but this is the first Eurocopter. The existing fleet includes a Bell 407, a 430 and a Pilatus PC-12.

"We were getting to the point where it wasn't cost effective to operate our other helicopter, and we needed to make a change in order to provide our patients with the type of service they need and deserve," explained Rob Stantus, AirMed Program Manager. "We evaluated several twin-engine aircraft during our selection process. The EC145 was the only one to meet all of our requirements: performance, cabin size, flexibilities, capabilities, and more. We are looking forward to adding this aircraft to our fleet."

After the delivery at American Eurocopter's Texas facility, the aircraft will be flown to Denver, where it will be completed by United Rotorcraft, a division of Air Methods. [AEC]



FIRE

UNITED KINGDOM

AVON: The ad-hoc Avon Fire & Rescue 'trial' over the Olympic period carried on as expected using the former police EC135T1.

Meanwhile on August 15 the bids for the more permanent 12-month trial were to have been in. Assuming all goes to plan this will be followed by an announcement of the successful contractor in September and, perhaps an outline of the operation and the aircraft type to be involved as early as October. Similar to the SAR-H bidding it is a selection of the contractor, the type to be used is not yet critical and all of the bidders have a number of alternative types available.

GLOUCESTERSHIRE: A one day **Air Fire** Rescue Exercise was held on August 23, 2012 at the National Resilience Centre, Fire Service College, Moreton in Marsh.

This was a 'Workshop day' set up by National Resilience High Volume Pump [HVP] capability sector to examine the role of air support in support of the UK fire industry.

The day was divided into two sections with the morning dedicated to seminar, presentations and detailed discussions and the afternoon used for proving flights utilising an AgustaWestland AW109 helicopter G-CDVB owned by the manufacturer.

The flights were principally conducted over the areas badly affected by the 2007 floodings, in the Tewkesbury and Gloucester region. This involved some of the commanders who were on scene during that time.

The Exercise successfully demonstrated the benefits of air support to the HVP capability sector and complemented earlier capability demonstrations to the USAR sector using the larger AW 139 helicopter.



File Photo

Air Fire has developed a strategic business case for regional and national air support based on cost sharing and financially supportive principals that would enable operational costs to be met from within existing budgets depending upon capability options agreed. It does not impose pressure on jobs and would provide the required levels of capability necessary to close the current gaps in regional and national resilience.

The capability has been tested in a representative environment, with the most recent deployment to a USAR exercise in Waddington.

Further developments are in hand and a press announcement is due later this year.

UNITED STATES

FOREST SERVICE: In a policy shift brought on by a report into a 2009 Station fire, the US Forest Service will begin night time helicopter missions to battle blazes in the Angeles National Forest and other federal lands in Southern California.

The Forest Service has scrapped a ban on night flying to fight wildfires, a prohibition imposed about 30 years ago for safety and cost reasons, and plans to start flights after dark next summer, once crews have been trained and equipped.

The reversal in tactics grew out of congressional inquiries into the Forest Service's initial response to the Station fire, the largest in Los Angeles County history. Two firefighters died in the flames.

The Forest Service misjudged the threat posed by the fire the first day and waited until the following day before attacking it. It will never be known whether earlier action would have halted the fire earlier and prevented deaths but this new action effectively decides that it might have.

Los Angeles city and county fire departments, among other agencies, routinely use aircraft to douse flames at night. [USFS/MC/LB]

Ed: A US correspondent believes that the USFS caved to political pressure. The west is burning up right now, and with the destructive fires in Colorado this summer, the issue has become a political hotbed and emotions are running high. As in many instances across the world it is all too easy for politicians to tell Cal Fire and the USFS how to fight a fire – especially when they probably have no real concept of how to fly a kite.

It is very like many other plans by non-flying administrators to do tasking at night – air ambulances as well – but such operations are inherently dangerous even with intensive training. Training costs a great deal and even the best trained crew can never can be sure that the others in the sky at the same time are as good – and that is before you address mutual aid from other countries. Just how good is their English when operations ramp up to intensive?

CALIFORNIA: In August, the San Diego County Board of Supervisors voted to upgrade a prototype infrared camera mounted under a OV-10 Bronco fire-fighting plane they operate in conjunction with Cal Fire. Three years ago the prototype system was installed on the Cal Fire Bronco as an experiment worked on jointly with Lincoln Labs at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. The heat sensing camera sees through smoke to develop a sharp image of a wildfire that shows where flames are growing, spreading, or dying down. A streaming video link and remote control allows fire managers on the ground to point the camera and direct water drops or the overall fire fighting effort.

The system was a success and now \$198,000 has been set aside to acquire a new camera to integrate with the Next Generation Incident Command System – or NICS – an Internet-based system that uses mapping and communications technology to create a real-time picture of an emergency.

The system will be expanded in phases, with the new camera and three video downlink and control systems for battalion chiefs on the ground expected to be in place before October. The equipment is designed to connect many users to the video, so that multiple fire managers can access real-time images of a wildfire but that will require the mobile command vehicle to be fitted with a video downlink and control system and for mobile relay stations to be acquired enhance remote access.



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SEARCH & RESCUE

ALBANIA

MILITARY SAR: Cobham Aviation Services joint venture FB Heliservices has been awarded a two year contract to provide helicopter flying training to the Albanian Ministry of Defence. FB Heliservices will provide a series of courses which will provide multi-engine type conversion, glass cockpit familiarisation, instrument flying and Search And Rescue training to 12 Albanian Air Force pilots and SAR training only to four helicopter crew members.

Training will be delivered on a combination of the FB Heliservices Agusta A109 and Bell 412 HAR2 aircraft. These courses are designed to provide essential training for the pilots and crew before they operate newly delivered Cougar helicopters to the Albanian Air Force. The courses will take place over the period of July 2012 to June 2014.

This contract is the first between the Albanian Ministry of Defence and a British company.

CANADA

COAST GUARD: The Canadian government has announced it intends to procure new helicopters for the country's coast guard.

Fisheries and Oceans Canada, the government department responsible for the coast guard is looking to procure 24 new helicopters over the next five years to replace the current fleet of 22 aircraft including MBB Bo105s, Bell 212s and Bell 206L LongRangers. The Canadian Coast Guard is looking for 16 light and eight medium-lift helicopters and at least one flight simulator.

Industry commentators have suggested that to signing a contract next summer the most likely light-twin helicopter candidates include the new AgustaWestland AW149, the Bell 429 and the Eurocopter EC135 or 145. Potential medium-twin candidates include the AgustaWestland AW139, the Bell 412 and the Eurocopter EC175.

SWITZERLAND

AIR ZERMATT: Early in August Swiss operator Air Zermatt took delivery of the first Bell 429 to be registered in Western Europe – the 67th production example is now flying as HB-ZSU. Painted all red, the helicopter has a hoist fitted to the starboard side and would thus be used for mountain rescues. In Eastern Europe there are already two 429s operating in each of Ukraine and Russia. [Helihub/Michael Mau]



[Right] The Bell 429 as delivered to Air Zermatt

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UNITED KINGDOM

The UK Government has announced the short-list of bidders going forward to provide SAR services around the British coastline for a 25 year period. The successful bidder(s) will take over roles currently provided by the Royal Navy and the Royal Air Force, as well as a civilian contract currently held by CHC.

Bond Offshore Helicopters, Bristow Helicopters and CHC Helicopter are the nominated shortlist published by the Department of Transport, with the actual winners expected to be announced early in 2013. This rules out the bid by Belgian operator NHV. A fifth consortium involving British International had previously withdrawn from the competition.

The companies are bidding for three lots, which include coastguard duties.

Lot one is to deliver the service at/near Sumburgh, Stornoway, Culdrose, Leconfield and Valley using helicopters capable of taking at least eight casualties per aircraft.

Lot two is to deliver the service from Lee-on-the-Solent and at/near Chivenor, Prestwick, Lossiemouth and Wattisham using helicopters capable of taking at least four casualties per aircraft.

Lot three is a contract covering the requirements of both Lots one and two.

Sky Watch Civil Air Patrol (Northern Ireland) have carried out a search for missing man Dean Patton on Ramore Head, Portrush, using an un-manned aircraft. The aircraft is battery powered and is made of foam. It has a 1.4m wingspan and weighs just over 1kg. Sky Watch Civil Air Patrol (Northern Ireland) has permission from the Civil Air Authority to operate drones in the UK, in full compliance with the Air Navigation Order 2009.

The search took place at first light on August 24 shortly after low tide. High definition video imagery was recorded by the drone at various altitudes. All of the headland, cliff-faces and rock shelves plus 100 metres out to sea was captured. The un-manned fixed-wing aircraft was in the air for just over 5 minutes.

The UAV pilot, Paul Trimble, stated that *"During the first deployment of the drone on a call-out the conditions were excellent for searching, even though there was light rain falling."*

The request to search was made by Dean's family and the data collected has been handed over to Coleraine CID for analysis.



*Sky Watch UAV being launched
By Paul Trimble on Ramore Head*

INDUSTRY

During the recent 2012 EAA Air Venture an agreement was signed between OMA Sud and a South Korean company for the exclusive distribution of the Skycar twin and Redbird single with a Redbird due to be delivered within the next three months.

In addition an agreement has been reached with a Chinese company to set up a joint venture for final aircraft assembly, distribution and maintenance of the aircraft. In early September a delegation of a major Chinese company, met in Oshkosh, will be at the OMA facilities in Italy to sign an industrial and commercial agreement aimed to the distribution in China of the two aircraft of OMA Sud and later for their final assembly with sales forecast of 300 aircraft per year, both for ground surveillance, pollution detection tasks and for passenger transportation and light cargo operations.



<http://www.expo.aero/uk/promote-aeroexpo/>

These two events were the main positive outcomes of the participation of the company Air Venture where the US preview of the Redbird was undertaken and the first Skycar aircraft assembled in the USA on the final assembly line at Opa Locka, Miami, Florida.

The Skycar has been in development with Oma Sud in Italy since 2003. It was launched in mock-up form at Paris 2005, exhibited at the 2009 show as an aircraft with

potential for sales into the law enforcement market and air ambulance markets. The type certificate was issued by ENAC/EASA in January 2010. Prior to this announcement of a Chinese connect production of the aircraft was to be primarily undertaken at Opa Locka, Florida, USA.



Customer appreciation of the industry sometimes gets confused, and the all too regular changes in the management set up place an unnecessary onus on customers to pay attention to what is going on in the management structure of others when they should be able to simply get on with their own business.

The latest group affected are the customers of the small **Cloud Cap** sensors. Not so very long ago [in November 2009] Cloud Cap was swallowed up by Goodrich. Now Goodrich has itself been taken over by United Technologies [UTC] and as a result both Cloud Cap and Goodrich have been plunged into another management reshuffle shortly after an all too short period of consolidation after the last changes.

Cloud Cap is now part of a new division of UTC called UTC Aerospace Systems along with all other Goodrich business segments and Hamilton Sundstrand. UTC Aerospace Systems offer customers a broad portfolio of advanced systems, products and components, from landing gear and nacelles, to electrical generation, air management systems, and of course Cloud Cap's UAV Flight Management System and stabilised camera systems.

The group HQ is located in Charlotte, North Carolina and for the time being at least Cloud Cap remains in Hood River, Oregon. [UTC]

BAD MONTH FOR BELL

The Bell 214ST operated by Bell in support of 525 Relentless development crashed last month. Initial reports suggest a tail rotor problem affected N409SB. The two-man flight crew conducted a near textbook emergency landing, only to have the helicopter tip onto its side when one of the wheels dug into the soft dirt.

The 214 ST, originally developed in the late 1970s as a military helicopter for Iran was sold commercially after the fall of the Shah. Among the operators were the Royal Oman Police and the oil industry. Until the 525 is built it will remain the biggest helicopter ever produced by Bell but less than 100 were built. [FWStar-Telegram]

During last month Bell continued the pressure on the FAA and EASA over that questionable weight increase on the 429. Last month they triumphantly announced that the Department of Civil Aviation in Thailand is the thirteenth country to approve the increased maximum gross weight for the Bell 429 based on Transport Canada's certification. A week later they followed this up with an announcement that China, the country where you can count helicopters on one hand, had also signed up to the new MGW.

Transport Canada approved operation of the Bell 429 at 7,500 lbs. in January, 2012 after an extensive technical evaluation. The increased gross weight of the 429 was driven by customer requirements for an increased load, which dramatically improves the 429's capabili-



The Air Zermatt Bell 429 in Switzerland after it had been given its house colours paint scheme. See also page 19 for the delivery colours. [Bell]

ties and arguably made it a viable proposition for operators.

Although it will not be the end of the argument the FAA came out mid-month with a comprehensive rejection of the Bell request and the document was backed by EASA.

Ed: It seems pretty clear that Bell needs that FAA and EASA certification more than the certifying authorities have a need to please Bell! No matter how hard they may try with getting 'Mickey Mouse' certification in the far corners of the earth the major authorities are simple not for caving in on this request for a significant alteration in regulations.

It is fair to say that Bell's pressure for change is being countered by their industry rivals, particularly Eurocopter, but it was pretty obvious from the start that it was a major ask by Bell in the first place. Meanwhile the refusal to accede to the request by FAA and EASA is likely to dramatically narrow wider acceptance of the type in the main markets for the 429.

Fortunately the company ended the month on a better note in being able to announce that it had again been named number one in product support in Aviation International News' 2012 Product Support Survey. This was the seventh consecutive year.

Bell Helicopter topped the scores in nine of 10 categories surveyed and strengthened its position by 4% from 2011. Consistently named the industry leader in customer support, Bell Helicopter also received top honours for the 18th consecutive year from the readers of Professional Pilot in their annual independent customer support survey earlier in 2012.

ALEA TRAINING

ALEA signed an agreement with Night Flight Concepts last month for the provision of Laser ArmorTM Laser Defense training to members to help counter the danger of laser strikes.

Night Flight Concepts developed the Laser Armor Laser Defense Training in partnership with Dr. Dudley Crosson, aviation physiologist, educator, and ALEA Aeromedical Liaison. Dr. Crosson noted, "With ever-more powerful lasers coming available to the public, the threat posed by laser strikes to fixed-wing and rotary-wing operators is very real." Crosson affirms training can help aircrews to "expect the unexpected." He notes, "Upon completion



of the Laser Armor training program, students have a sound understanding of the affects of lasing, methods for mitigating the problem and recommendations for safety management systems, including mandatory requirements for pilot/crew retinal scans to establish vision performance baselines."

The Laser Armor Laser Defense Training is self-paced and teaches aircrew members the capabilities, limitations and preventative measures required to respond to a laser strike. The program covers mitigation techniques most effective in the public safety sector of aviation. To learn more about the \$95 special offer on Laser Armor Laser Defense training for ALEA members, call 888-632-8764 or write to info@nightflightconcepts.com.

Ed: The US have embraced the cause and effect of Laser attacks on aircraft far more strongly than in Europe. Whilst they are acknowledged as a significant nuisance and potential danger and pursued through the courts with some vigour on the other side of the Atlantic most attacks are simply brushed aside as an inconvenience. Whether specific training as offered by Dudley Crosson will see significant acceptance in such as the UK is currently assumed to be unlikely.

On August 8 an initial group of Night Vision Goggle (NVG) industry professionals, convened in Dallas, Texas to form the new **Night Vision Advisory Council (NVAC)**. The purpose of the planning meeting - hosted by FlightSafety International - was to develop a council of NVG subject matter experts to provide recommendations on safety, education, standardization, and other issues pertinent to the NVG industry. The creation of NVAC is in response to an FAA request at NightCon 2011 for industry specific night vision recommendations. NVAC invites industry-wide participation of night vision manufacturers, trainers, and operators providing guidance to enhance regulatory issues.

NVAC is seeking additional members with a desire to aid in shaping the future of the night vision industry.

The inaugural NVAC meeting is scheduled for September 19th in Dallas, Texas. This setting is fitting as the meeting precedes NightCon 2012: the civil industry's only night vision conference. Night vision organizations interested in Night Vision Advisory Council participation should contact Randy Rowles with questions or comments at 1-561-386-6078 or rowles@eratrainigcenter.com.

Negotiations are underway for the representative for **Diamond Aircraft** in the UK to be DO Systems. Currently Diamond are represented by Diamond Aircraft UK based at Gamston Airport, Retford, Nottinghamshire DN22 0QL and undertaking sales and maintenance of the aircraft types.

The prospective buyer of DA UK is **DO Systems**, primarily a surveillance operator headquartered in Salisbury, United Kingdom and operating worldwide. It is two mutually supporting divisions - Defence Optical Systems (Products), and DO Systems Limited (Services), providing customers with a focused, knowledge based, value-added service with the capability to deliver complete air and ground solutions anywhere in the world.

At the Farnborough air show DO Systems was located alongside Diamond on the edge of the static park but it is not known what stage the sale had reached at that time. At present the deal is going through Due Diligence stage so it will probably be weeks before it is finalised.

The **Association for Unmanned Vehicle Systems International (AUVSI)** has sent a letter to the secretary of the U.S. Dept. of Transportation, Ray LaHood, and acting Federal Aviation Administration administrator Michael Huerta, urging them to create the legally mandated pilot program for the integration of pilotless planes into the national airspace system (NAS).



"The FAA Modernization and Reform Act of 2012, signed into law on February 14, 2012, required your agency to establish a pilot program to integrate unmanned aircraft into the national airspace system at six test ranges. The law required the test range program to be put in place not later than 180 days after the passage of the FAA bill, or August 12, 2012. Unfortunately, this deadline has passed without the FAA meeting this crucial benchmark," said the letter.

To read the entire letter, [click here](#).

It is reported that the US Marine Corps is not letting go of its **K-Max unmanned** aerial system (UAS). The 'Corps deployed a pair of K-Max K-1200 converted into unmanned configuration and ground stations on a six month trial in November 2011. The trial was extended up to the end of the fiscal year this month and now is to run through into 2013. They could remain in use until September 2013.

The K-Max has been around a long time but it's specification as a single seat freight carrier did not catch on in any of its intended markets so only a handful were built. The unmanned K-Max is a joint venture between the aircraft manufacturer Kaman Aerospace and Lockheed Martin, which provides the mission management and control system. [Rotor&Wing/PAR]

Soloy Aviation Solutions has added the Cessna U206G/TU206G models to their approval list for its law enforcement Observation Seat modification designed specifically for surveillance operations. "We currently have approval for the Cessna 206H models," said Dave Stauffer, CEO. "We've expanded our offerings with the inclusion of the G model Stationair that will open the option to more operators."

The Observation Seat is the central component to Soloy's Rear Observer's Station package. The package includes an oversized left side observation window combined with the 270° articulating observer's seat. The 206H model includes a headliner which is re-contoured for additional headroom and four point harnesses are installed for the flight crew's safety.

About fifteen years ago, during a period when the **US Department of Defense** was 'dumping' some 3,000 former Vietnam War helicopters into the market place the industry threw up its hands and complained bitterly about their [new aircraft] industry being destroyed from within. The aircraft were intended for use by the law enforcement industry with a few other users besides. The 'others' included agriculture in a number of forms.

With hindsight we now know that the 3,000 airframes [it may have been more] were a myth and that barely a quarter of them ever flew a police mission. Most were destined to be parted out; stacked around behind many a police operators hangar awaiting the removal of parts. Nonetheless hundreds of new operators experienced aviation and once ensnared they found that they could not do without the flexibility it provided. The result was that when inevitable the 'free' DoD craft became unsustainable through a lack of spares or rising costs they had to look elsewhere. That elsewhere was the new aircraft market and as a result in the long term those '3,000' airframes actually promoted expansion in the industry. The customer had to buy newer airframes although for some costs will have resulted in a narrow choice between a light sport airframe and a Robinson. A sale is a sale.

It is in the light that last month's announcement by Brevard County, about 35 miles from Orlando Florida, that by next summer they will have two new 'weapons' in their battle against mosquitoes should be viewed.

The County Commission authorised the purchase of two, as yet unidentified, new helicopters for use by **Brevard County Mosquito Control** at a cost of \$4.6M. It will be interesting to see which type is selected.

The two helicopters will replace the three DoD surplus OH-58s now in the mosquito control fleet and will save the county \$587,000 a year by reducing maintenance, fuel and other costs related to a fleet that is 44, 22 and 12 years old. The two older helicopters are so inef-

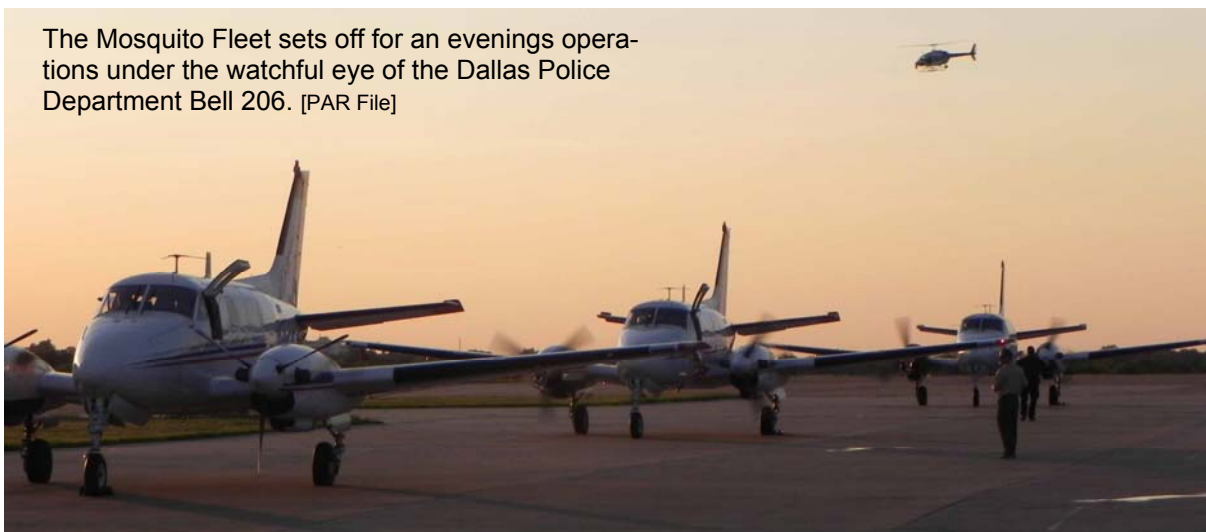
ficient that they are grounded 58% of the time and as a result Brevard is having to spend money on getting contractors to fill the gap in this seasonal need.

Ed: Overall the 'free DoD helicopters' was a bit of a fallacy but it served the end result. Overall these airframes were old and inefficient, just keeping them in the air was a major undertaking and many of them were refurbished at high cost prior to use. The cost of the work done on the refurbished airframes was such that in many cases it would have been cheaper to have taken on a single modern commercial airframe and fly it intensively. Where they scored was in first cost, it was easy to sell a package of 'free' airframes to the legislature and then spend 'running cost' money on upgrading them to a standard a commercial acquisition may have cost in the first place. Leaving the aircrew and maintenance costs off the air support bill has been a ploy undertaken by police across the world and it has really worked to the advantage of many of the fledgling air police operations.

In the US law enforcement operators with Public Aircraft still need to meet less strict requirements than those of commercial operations so the last few years have provided a cushion in costs of flight training, certification and insurance. If true staffing costs had been added to the cost projections many would never have started.



The Mosquito Fleet sets off for an evenings operations under the watchful eye of the Dallas Police Department Bell 206. [PAR File]



The use of former DoD aircraft extends beyond helicopters. In Texas they get attacking the mosquitoes using a different kind of surplus aircraft.

Dallas is at the epicenter of an outbreak of West Nile Virus in the United States. The populace are not happy and the politicians, mindful of their responsibilities [or at least the next election] are doing their best to cull the population of the tiny carriers.

The aircraft were spraying "Duet Dual-Action" adulticide, a synergized synthetic pyrethroid insecticide. It is basically a nerve agent, and to boost the effect of the nerve agent the compound contains Piperonyl Butoxide. This chemical is included to deliberately shut down part of the immune system (CP450) that would ordinarily rapidly break down the active ingredients Prallethrin and Sumithrin, in the target mosquito body. The manufacturer claims it increases the efficacy of the pesticide by about 15%. The system on the planes distribute the chemical in amounts of .8oz per acre (the equivalent of 2 tablespoons of active ingredient

per acre). "Droplets are precisely configured to interact with the biology of the mosquito – only a few microns in size."

Although authorities have claimed that this chemical "poses no undue risk to humans and the environment," they cover any potential errors in that advice by thoughtfully adding that you should take a shower and launder clothing if exposed to the spray!

The tail numbers on the aircraft used were: - N70U c/n LM-51, N72J c/n LM-72, N79W c/n LM-77, N78D c/n LM-78 the 1967 build examples and N61Q c/n LM-92 is the 'youngster' of the fleet having been built in 1968. The operations undertaken by this fleet are seasonal, their flights being strictly in the area of Agriculture & Pest Control [MC]

Security-conscious authorities will be using a wide variety of devices and technology to monitor the skies, streets and waterways around Tampa during the Hurricane delayed Republican National Convention.

This will mark the first time unmanned aerial vehicles will patrol the skies over a national convention.

The vehicle, called an **Aether Aero**, is an eight-bladed vertical takeoff platform that provides intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance to government agencies.

The 41/2-foot-wide Aether Aero, which resembles a small helicopter, can fly up to 4,000 feet high and, with a specially built battery, can operate up to four hours at a time, Winter said. It is equipped with a 109x optical zoom camera, can lift up to 50 pounds and is so light it can be picked up with two fingers.

In addition to the unmanned aerial vehicles, United Drones will operate several unmanned ground vehicles, called Wraiths, at the convention. The Wraiths can travel up to 65 mph "and climb just about anything,"

The company would not say which government agencies will use the aerial drones or what will be targeted by their sensors, nor who will use the Wraiths or how they will be equipped.

Besides crediting the draft with previously unheard of endurance for an electric light UAV the company claims to have a working 'see-and-avoid' technology installed. The drones can fly at night, and even through a hurricane, something that could come into play with Hurricane Isaac.

ACCIDENTS & INCIDENTS

12 June 2012 Eurocopter AS350B3 N590AE. Air ambulance of St. Mary's CareFlight, Grand Junction, Colorado. While in cruise flight from Grand Junction to Aspen at 12,000 feet the helicopter suffered a bird strike. The pilot observed no abnormal instrument readings but aborted the flight and returned to base. No damage was found and the helicopter was returned to service. [Concern]

23 July 2012 Aero Commander 500S N535SA. Aerial fire fighting coordination. The aircraft was substantially damaged during an off-airport forced landing near Elko, Nevada, due to the complete loss of power in both engines. Neither the pilot nor the observer was injured. The public-use flight was operated by the United States Bureau of Land Management (BLM) as an air-attack coordinator for aerial forest fire fighting activity. The airplane was owned and piloted by Spur Aviation of Twin Falls, Idaho. Flight departed Elko International Airport and flew to the vicinity of the fire with 4 hours 30 minutes of fuel on board. The airplane loitered in the vicinity of the fire and the observer coordinated the air attacks and 4 hours later turned back to Elko. While en route to Elko at a point estimated to be 4 to 5 minutes away from the airport, the engines started "surging," and the pilot then decided that due to distance and terrain considerations, he would land on a road 6 miles from the airport. This was achieved but the aircraft wings were damaged by impact with road signs. After the event a total of about 1 gallon of fuel was recovered from the tanks. The pilot had a total flight experience of about 16,800 hours, including about 1,500 hours in the accident airplane make and model. [NTSB: WPR12TA323]

2 August 2012 Piper PA24 Comanche N8218P. Flying Doctors. The 66-year-old pilot was killed on impact when the plane crashed into a building at Truckee, Tahoe Airport as it took off on a test flight. The pilot was James Ungar, a doctor of Yreka, northern California. He was departing for a humanitarian medical mission in Mexico with two passengers when he noted problems with lift and aborted a take-off. After dropping off the passengers again he was testing the problem in a solo flight that ended up in the crash. An Auburn-based non-profit called Los Medicos Voladores, or The Flying Doctors, says Ungar was a volunteer pilot who flew doctors to Mexico and Central America.

5 August 2012 Bell 407 N429PH. Air ambulance of St Joseph Regional Health Center operated by PHI struck a cell phone tower near Interstate 35 and Binz-Engleman Road, San Antonio whilst in flight and severely damaged its port landing skid. The 407 was en-route to the San Antonio Military Medical Center with a patient. It made an emergency landing on a pile of mattresses at San Antonio International Airport [mysanantonio]

9 August 2012 Kamov Ka-32T A Russian helicopter contracted to extinguish wildfires in Turkey probably hit a mountain killing five persons aboard. The crash was near the village of Otmanlar, northeast of the town of Köyceğiz, Muğla Province. The dead were listed as two Russian pilots, a Russian technician, a Turkish pilot and a Turkish forest conservation worker. The Turkish pilot, Atif Ateşok, was injured in a previous incident when a KA-32 helicopter crashed during a fire-fighting mission in 2006. [Bloomberg]

13 August 2012 Bell 206L3 N28AE. Air Ambulance of Air Evac Lifeteam EMS – tail rotor struck wire on approach to site in Burnett, Texas. No further damage. The crewmembers became focused on a vehicle that appeared to be attempting to enter the LZ area, at which point the nurse contacted the ground unit and asked that they stop the vehicle. A few seconds later, at approximately 50 feet, both the nurse and medic warned of wires sighted. The pilot immediately increased the collective to attempt a go around when a minor bump was felt through the airframe. At this point the medical crewmembers verified that the wire had been cut by the tail rotor. The last 25% of the tail rotor had made contact with the wire and sustained minor damage. There was also a minor indentation found on the left side of the tail boom, around the tail rotor area, that was apparently from FOD.

15 August 2012 Eurocopter BK117B1 N911CH. Air ambulance operated by Air Methods for Boston Medflight, Bedford, Massachusetts. On lift off a door separated from fuselage causing damage at Lawrence, Massachusetts, USA. The back-up aircraft was departing airport base for reposition to main base location. As aircraft lifted off and reached an altitude of 25 feet the co-pilots side rear sliding door departed aircraft and landed on taxi-way. The aircraft returned to dolly and landed safely. Pilot's pre-flight walkaround indicated door was secure and there was not an open door indicator light on take-off. [FAA/Concern]

16 August 2012 MD500E N551CP. Columbus Police Dept. Four years old aircraft suffered catastrophic engine failure shortly after take-off on patrol and autorotated into a street suffering a hard landing that damaged the main rotor and severed the tail boom. The certificated commercial pilot and an observer, who was a commercial pilot, were uninjured. Night visual meteorological conditions prevailed for the local flight that was originating from the Columbus Police Heliport (OH52), Columbus, Ohio. [Media/NTSB]

18 August 2012 Beechcraft King Air B200 N901SH. Air ambulance of Sanford Intensive Air, Sioux Falls, South Dakota. On a flight from the Rosebud Sioux Tribal Airport back to Joe Foss Field (KFSD) in Sioux Falls, SD, there was a landing gear indication problem. After selecting the landing gear control knob to the down position, the right main green light did not illuminate and the red gear control knob light was intermittent. Pilot executed a go around and flew to the north of the airport. Emergency gear extension performed followed

by a low pass over runway for external visual report. All said the gear appeared to be down despite continued warning light. Safe landing undertaken. It was determined that one of the down lock switches had failed, not allowing the green light to illuminate even though the gear was down and locked. [Concern]

21 August 2012 Eurocopter BK117B1 N911CH. Air ambulance of Boston Medflight, based Bedford, Massachusetts. Aircraft was returning from patient mission and in landing phase at airport base when the #2 engine low oil pressure illuminated and engine lost power. The PIC initiated a single engine landing on taxiway which occurred without incident. [Concern]

FLIGHT SAFETY

Last month Air New Zealand grounded its fleet of eighteen Beech 1900D aircraft after hair-line cracks were found in the tail area of an aircraft during routine maintenance inspection. The fleet was grounded for a fleet wide inspection.

The Beech 1900 is used by a number of airborne law enforcement operators worldwide including US Federal and Central American formations. [Reuters]

LETTERS

Helicopters Australia is the Official Journal for the AHIA now being developed.

The August edition has been delayed so as to announce the new President and Vice President of the Steering Committee and other key positions to tide the AHIA over until the AGM in early November. The AGM will follow the traditional election processes of office bearers.

The names of these volunteers will be sent out ASAP along with announcements of major sponsors who have kindly offered to give the AHIA a good push along.

If you want to include your friends or family members on our free mailing list then please let me know.

Kindest regards,

Rob Rich

Convenor of Steering Committee

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FIGURES

The Sheriff's Office in Mesa County, Colorado, claims it operates an unmanned aircraft at the cost of \$3.36 per hour, compared to \$250 to \$600 per hour for a manned aircraft.

A decade ago the Alabama Dept of Public Safety 'proved' to me that they could run their fleet of Bell OH-58s for just \$20 an hour.....

As a famous but now deceased Irish comedian regularly reminded us.... 'It's the way that I tell 'em!'

In Michigan the Oakland County Sheriff's Office in Pontiac raised eyebrows and a few other things during a car rally that got out of hand last month.

Two large fights broke out as the **Woodward Dream Cruise**, a popular meeting of collector

 <p>Helishow DUBAI 2012 www.dubaihelishow.com</p>	<p>DUBAI HELISHOW 2012 International Civil and Military Helicopter Technology & Operations Exhibition 6th to 8th November 2012, Grand Stand, Meydan Hotel, Meydan Racecourse, Dubai, UAE</p>	
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cars, dispersed and the police reaction in sending an AS350B2 of their air support unit resulted in some of the pristine paintwork on the cars being damaged – and more.

The helicopter was used to light up the area of Raeburn and Woodward, where police say as many as 60 people were fighting. It was claimed that the downwash from the hovering AStar kicked up dust and pebbles that rained down onto some of the classic cars. The damaged cars included a 1968 Buick Skylark convertible, 1972 Oldsmobile Cutlass, 1989 Chevrolet S10 and 1968 Chevrolet Malibu.

The police took the complaints seriously enough and duly photographed the various paint chips but reserved liability in view of the circumstances.

Fortunately for the police among the crowd was someone who wanted to 'egg up' the claims and, not content with claiming that the downwash lifted a few bits of grit and stones, came forth with a claim that a young, 11 years old, girl was lifted up off the ground and slammed onto his car. The girl and her similarly injured brother were rushed off to St. Joseph Mercy Oakland hospital for treatment.

And probably a meeting with 'Lawyers for you'?

EVENTS

Regular readers may recall my comments on the smaller area of the recent Farnborough Air Show given over to unmanned craft. It seemed that it was becoming normal as the industry took stock of a technology that in the commercial arena at least was going nowhere fast.

Contrast that information with the latest press release from next year's Defence & Security Equipment International (DSEI) 2013 exhibition at the ExCeL in London (10-13 September, 2013), the Association for Unmanned Vehicle Systems International (AUVSI) has increased its support of the Unmanned Systems Showcase which now covers more than 21,000ft² of floor space at the venue. This compares with the 8,000ft² used last time during DSEI 2011.

The zone is a dedicated area on the show floor which was established to promote and demonstrate the capabilities of a diversity of unmanned systems. At DSEI 2011, demonstrations included unmanned ground vehicles (UGV) and unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV). It is planned that during DSEI 2013 unmanned underwater vehicles (UUV) will be able to join other maritime demonstrations in the dock adjacent to the ExCeL. Unmanned Combat Air Systems (UCAS) are also expected to feature.

It seems then that unmanned for the military is not falling away and that Farnborough was not typical.

The UK Border Force has announced its official participation and support for the first annual BORDERPOL Conference and Exhibition being held in London, UK, October 16th-17th 2012.

The UK Border Force is that part of the Home Office, responsible for protection of the United Kingdom's borders.

Since 1 March 2012, the Border Force has been a separate operational command, with its own ethos of law enforcement, led by its own Director General, and accountable directly to ministers as part of the Home Office.

The UK Border Force official endorsement of the BORDERPOL Conference is an active step towards enhancing inter-agency co-operation with international forces, for improving the strength of border protection and security, from refugee and migration movement to illegal activities, such as people and narcotics trafficking.

BORDERPOL's primary mission is to promote international borders that enhance human mobility whilst ensuring traveller safety and security and facilitate smart and secure border systems by working with the border security establishments of likeminded nations to ensure that international borders protect as well as connect people and places.

The BORDERPOL Conference & Exhibition in London forms a key element to the organizations mission and mandate promoting co-operation, consultation and communication among national border administrations and associated services and agencies.

For further information and full conference programme visit: www.borderpol-event.org.

Police Aviation Research are investigating where to hold the next editions of **PAvCon** and hopefully will have a decision on the location in Europe of the 2013 event in weeks.



4-6 September 2012. ALEA Regional Safety Seminar, Western Region, San Diego California, Contact Michelle Blackstone mblackstone@alea.org www.alea.org

11-13 September 2012 GPAC 2012. 7th International Exhibition & Conference for Police and Special Equipment Leipzig, Germany. www.gpec.de www.police-exhibition.eu



11-16 September 2012 ILA Berlin Air Show, Berlin Brandenburg Airport.

Visit www.ila-berlin.com to view details of the event. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us: ila@messe-berlin.de



29 September – 3 October 2012. IACP 2012, the annual meeting of the *International Association of Chiefs of Police* San Diego, California, USA. For more information, contact Benjamin Ekelund at Ekelund@theiacp.org or Elaine Deck at Decke@theiacp.org visit the following websites: www.theiacpconference.org and www.iacpsmallerdepts.org

10-12 October 2012 ALEA Regional Safety Seminar, Canadian Region, Richmond Hill, Ontario, Canada Contact Robert O'Quinn roquinn@alea.org www.alea.org www.borderpol-event.org



18-19 October 2012 Police Aviation, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Discussing the technology, training, tactics and challenges that Police Aviators face when dealing with Airborne Law Enforcement

<http://www.tangentlink.com/police-aviation-kuala-lumpur-malaysia-october-2012/>



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