

Police Aviation News

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Helitech Show Report Special October 2003

IPAR

PAN @ Helitech 2003



There cannot be many helicopter shows where 'just a piece of equipment' is the star, but, for the emergency services aviator of the future, this may be one of them.

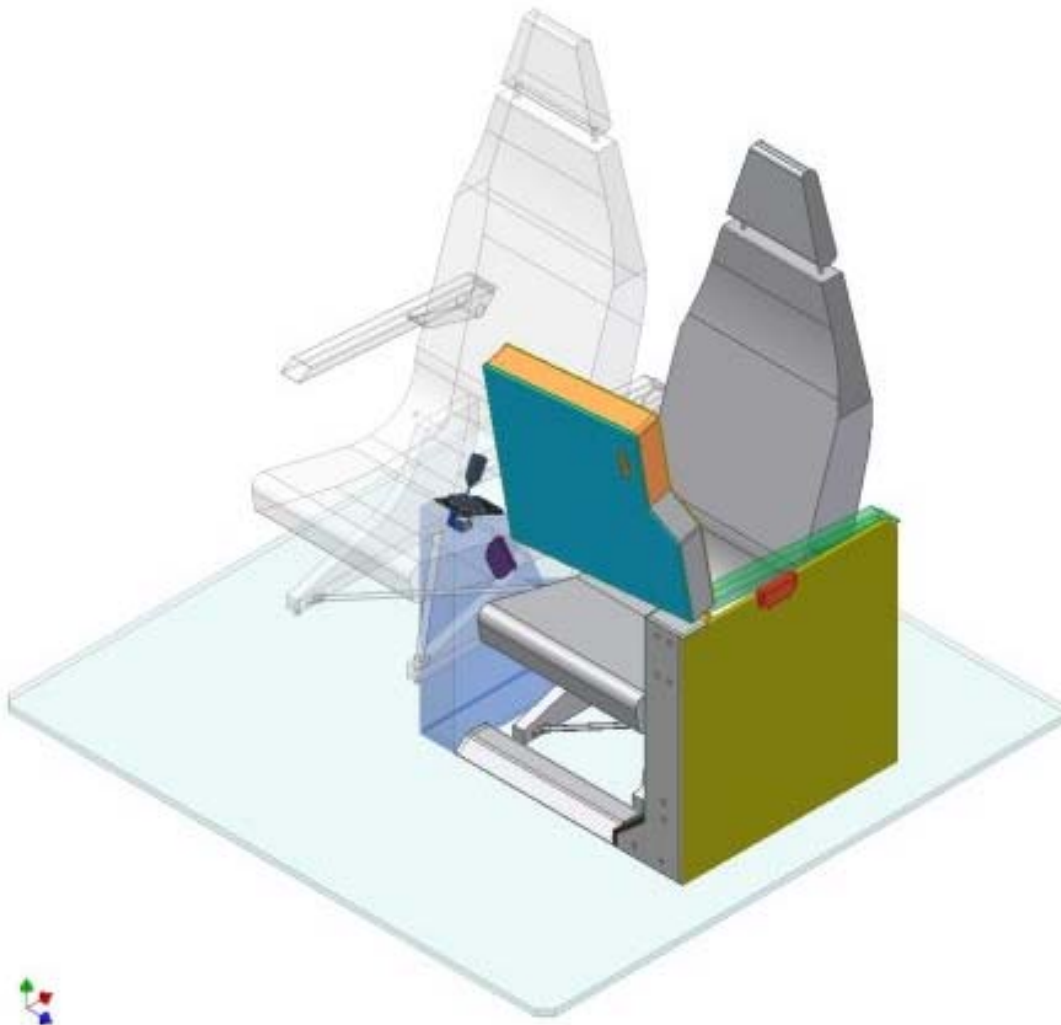
The Alan Mann Group Company was showcasing the newly developed AIMs, Advanced Integrated Mission Seat to potential customers from the Police, Maritime patrol, Surveillance, Reconnaissance and Airborne Broadcasting world.

AIMs, claims to meet a need for a sophisticated and ergonomic management and display system capable of providing the operator with fingertip control over a large number of mission systems.

Current systems are becoming increasingly inefficient for the operator. AIMs seeks to overcome that.



AIMS is a seat based, multi function touch screen display system offering a variety of control options. Control options include a Touch Screen Display, Fixed, Variable and line Selector function Keys, Hand control unit and Radio Transmission switch located either for hand or foot operation. AIMS' base system architecture integrates these control functions, allowing all role equipment to be operated from a single fully integrated operator seat. An 18 inch, touch sensitive LCD is mounted at natural reading focal length in portrait mode. The LCD offers the option of a split screen, with 2 full half-screen display visuals. It is capable of providing the operator with a high quality camera image and colour, moving map on one integrated display. The display assembly stows neatly away on one side of the seat when not in use in a manner not unlike that of airline passenger seat entertainment systems. This capability allows the cabin seat to be used as simple passenger seat or removed quickly and efficiently for complete cabin reconfiguration.



All surveillance system signals are routed through a Mission Computer Symbol Generator (MCSG), which is the brain of the system. The MCSG is located with the mission equipment rack in the aircraft baggage bay or equipment compartment. The electronic rack is connected to AIMS using a single stowable cable loom.

AIMS saves cabin space, minimises installation and removal times during configuration and reconfiguration, and allows efficient turn around times. It allows seamless efficient role change, even with the Operator Station installed and optimises upgrade and reconfiguration capability. AIMS is the result of successful international co-operation between Mann Aviation Group (Engineering) Limited, specialists in aircraft integration, ESG Elektroniksystem und Logistik GmbH, Real-Time Vision UK and ETEX GmbH. Readers will probably recall the German police BK117 upgrade storyline affecting ESG and Mann earlier this year.

Ed: Having had the opportunity to try out the new workstation at the show it is tempting to wonder why no one had thought about it before! This system effectively overcomes virtually all the multi-role problems faced by operators in the past. It may not be universal but most second-generation types should benefit from it being included in the role fit. I suppose they could put a folding table or entertainment module in the other armrest... 😊



The Editors bit...

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According to the organisers, Spearhead Exhibitions, there were more than 240 exhibitors from 22 countries signed up for the show this year. There were the inevitable 'no-shows' just 2-3 and a few gaps where additional exhibitors might have been fitted in so the impression was that there was less even if it was incorrect. The last show was affected by the non-attendance of some US exhibitors at the last minute following 9-11, this show appeared further affected by a number of smaller US and Canadian exhibitors not attending from the start.

That's the downside, there is evidence that the visitors in the hall included a significant number walking the stands with the intention of exhibiting next time. There are signs that a number liked what they saw and formed a resolve to make a date in 2005.

There were also a number of absentee helicopters from the show. Bell/Agusta Aerospace decided not to take its AB139 to the show. The type was sent to a show in Rome instead. AgustaWestland also decided against bringing an EH101 to the show – and therefore failed to counter the high profile flying of the Sikorsky S-92. One source suggested that a reason given for this was that there is 'no interest in the civil EH101' – in fact the Heliliner civil demonstrator is now in a museum. If Sikorsky felt that there is sufficient a market for their S-92 to bring it across the Atlantic [rather than just from Yeovil] it seems that one of the teams has got its marketing strategy very wrong.

In the emergency services arena there was something for almost everyone and there were many air units represented within the visiting throngs.

With the customers being brought out by the good weather the exhibitors could make the best of their investment. There were some unexpected absences though.

I would have thought that if FLIR Systems, L3 Wescam and Poly-Tech thought it worthwhile bringing themselves out to meet potential customers for their cameras why were the Israelis missing? Taman, with their sensors POP and MOSP has been courting UK police for a while now. What are the customers to deduce from their absence as exhibitors? They were at Duxford viewing at least one day so it was not a case of an inability to attend.

Bryn Elliott



Until recently this MD600N N958SD had been serving with the Los Angeles County Sheriff.



Another view of the Dyfed-Powys A109E Power at Helitech. The helicopter was handed-over at a ceremony attended by the Dyfed ACC Barry Taylor, and the Chairman of the Dyfed Police Authority John Antoniazzi. David Morley of Sloane Helicopters handed over the keys. [See October edition]



Simula, by now well known for their work on cockpit air bags for the US military have moved on to examining the possibilities attending the use of external air bags as a means of reducing damage and injury to the crew and airframe.

The system is still designed to be used in conjunction with JAR standard crashworthy features [seats etc] but could equally be applied to pre-JAR airframes. In the research into the Rotorcraft External Air bag Protection System [REAPS] a number of redundant airframes have been drop-tested with a degree of success. These drop-tests have been static so the effects of forward movement on the retarding effect have yet to be addressed. Test airframes used have ranged from the Bell 206 to the Sikorsky CH-53, the number of bags [and actuation systems] required by the latter being over 20.

Other issues – including other uses for the airbags including perhaps acting as a floatation system – are some way beyond the present stage of trials.

REAPS is an external system primarily intended to reduce the consequences of impact from catastrophic to repairable. It also promises to improve post crash escape by ensuring that the doors remain usable. Any other potential gains are currently being sidelined.



**The EC135, the UK's
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Night vision aids may be the thought of the moment, but there were relatively few exhibitors showing their wares at this year's show. Even the few included those disinterested in supplying the emergency services in the face of richer pickings with the military. That though is the nature of the beast, no one was really expecting a heightened interest in the subject on the eve of the opening as a result of the Strathclyde report.

Of the purveyors of night vision perhaps the largest was Oxley. The Cumbrian company had worked extensively on the new Dyfed-Powys A109E Power G-DPPF and its hand-over during the show highlighted their work. The fact remains though that the equipment at the core of Oxleys business, night vision filters and lighting, is an acquired taste. It is one that will have to be acquired by most emergency service fliers in the coming months and years.

Oxley are represent a number of companies, new on the stand this year was an Australian produced emergency beacon – the 'e-flare.' Based on proven LED technology the handy 21cm [9.5 inch] polycarbonate unit can provide up to 80 hours of attraction in a range of

 **flare**[™]
emergency beacon



Following the success of a ground power support programme at this summer's Paris Air Show, [Powervamp](#) Ltd has announced that it will now be offering a complete short-term DC power supply rental package for similar events around the world. The UK manufacturer supplied electrical power to no fewer than ten aircraft from six exhibitors in France and units were to be found in strategic working positions throughout the Helitech showground.

The Paris contract drew on the success of previous contracts between Powervamp and the Farnborough air show organisers to provide DC ground power during the past two air shows. 'The Paris Air Show contract provided the opportunity for us to prove the concept internationally on a much larger scale,' says managing director Richard Roller.

'There is clearly significant demand for silent DC power,' he says, 'so now we've put the elements of the system together in a full commercial package, and will be offering it for hire periods of as little as a week at a time.'



The exhibitors benefiting from Powervamp's DC power supply systems in Paris were Bombardier, ATR, Yakovlev, Piaggio, Embraer and Raytheon. Among them they used 24 of Powervamp's PS80 power modular supply units, which lie at the core of the support package.

At a typical air show, aircraft presented as static exhibits need to have their electrical and avionics systems powered up for hours at a time. Since this would not be feasible using standard on-board power, exhibitors either provide their own ground-based power supply system or, in the past, have often hired diesel generators. But this adds hugely to noise and exhaust fume pollution - a problem that can detract significantly from the appeal of the exhibits. Powervamp's solution avoids all this by removing noise and pollution.

To support the new hire package, a stock of PS80 power supply units has been built up at Powervamp's UK headquarters in Weston-Super-Mare. Where necessary, static diesel generators will be hired locally for each air show, saving on the cost of keeping them in reserve and transporting them to each location.

Normally Powervamp's power supply systems are bought by civilian and military aircraft operators for testing, repair and crew/observer training activities. They can power a wide range of systems such as avionics, radios, inverters, thermal imaging devices and moving maps. Examples have been deployed at numerous air bases worldwide, and the equipment is also light and compact enough to be carried on board an aircraft and deployed at remote locations using local mains power.

Powerpacks are not the only Powervamp product; the show was equally busy in providing quotes for the 'Calzoni' Heli-pad lighting and VASi system for which they are the UK distributors.

Powervamp's Helitech experience was positive, and a clash of dates [with a bus show] resulted in everyone in the company being out of the office. Quiet times were rare and most other times were described as 'manic' - just as it should be, except that the following week was equally busy in the office.

For further information, please contact: Richard Roller, Powervamp Ltd, 22 Bridgwater Court, Oldmixon Crescent, Weston-Super-Mare, BS24 9AY +44 (0) 1934 643000 fax 642800 Email: Richard.Roller@powervamp.com

Spectrolab combined a new design of searchlight with a Wescam gimbal to produce their latest searchlight, now another company has produced another gimbal-based searchlight that seeks to snatch the crown from Spectrolab.

Vector Scientific of Victoria State in Australia has teamed up with Swedish company Patria Ostermans Aero AB to market the new light in Europe.

The GyroLight VB500, developed in association with Axxcess Technology of Stamford, Connecticut, combines a high-intensity 500 watt xenon short arc white search light beam that peaks at 20 million candlepower. This output places it between the Nightsun 2 and SX-16s 30 million and the SX-5 15-20 million using a light source similar in specification to the latter.

Vector does claim a greater [1km] range for their light. The light is said to offer an alternative beam pattern that is sharper.

A selection of internal infrared filters provides a range of lighting from a red glow to completely covert. The light is installed in a US sourced GyroCam gimbal and has the appearance of a fairly standard single sensor camera mount.

The nominal 28 volt/25amp light starts up faster than the SX lights at less than a second and has no recycle or cooling limitations. It weighs 30.8 pounds [14kg] – with 4.7 pounds [2.14kg] to be added for the interface and standard hand controller. This makes it similar to the comparable SX-5. It remains to be seen whether other features [gimbal, price etc] set it aside as a credible alternative.

The [Vector](#) website shows something of the lights properties in other applications but does not yet feature the new gimbal product. [Vector/IPAR]

Work has started on building the new facility for Specialist Aviation Services [SAS] at Staverton Airport, Gloucestershire. SAS, better known world-wide as Police Aviation Services [PAS] a leading provider of pilots and aircraft to emergency services aviation, have occupied three hangars at Staverton for 14 years and the new larger facility will place these inefficient units under one roof.

The facility will be located some 200 yards [metres] west of the old – opposite the front of the recently built Bond Air Services HQ – and adjacent to the M5 Motorway. [PAS]

TLC Handling Ltd. is moving next year. Currently based in leased space on Finningly Airport the company with probably the most capable helicopter handling ground equipment on the market is set to expand into pastures new. They promise to expand their market horizons beyond Europe and the Far East.

During the show the company MD, Tony Hancock, was on hand with one of his Helilifts to carry many of the static exhibit helicopters onto the flightline after arrival and for departure. Most UK police air units with new skid equipped aircraft use the TLC Helilift to manoeuvre their aircraft. With manufacturers ground handling wheels being less than easy to fit and manoeuvre the aircraft with and costing ground £34,000 [Bell 407] the nimble electrically powered TLC machine is far more

able to do the job – and still a bargain at £20,000.



Skyquest Aviation, the Surrey based UK supplier of specialist avionics for the airborne surveillance industry, were introducing a new digital video recorder capable of offering users up to four hours of recording time. Existing digital video recorders are restricted to just over one hour.

The longer recording time helps to maintain evidential continuity and therefore reduces additional administration.

The same company has launched a new range of high-brightness LCD video displays. The displays are capable of being used in bright sunlight or they can be fully dimmed and switched to NVG mode. There are strong links between the Skyquest LCD screens supplied by an associated company 'Real-Time-Vision' and the front-page story of this edition. Call Geoff Turner at Skyquest on +44 1628 785143.

David Clark were displaying a range of headsets and highlighting new features including their new Comfort-Gel ear seals offering softer, more supple and form-fitting pads. A new portable battery-powered pack module, XL-9V, is 50% smaller and lighter than its predecessor.

PremiAir, better known for their supply of pilotage and maintenance to a range of the airborne emergency services in the UK were displaying some of their engineering skills at the show. PremiAir offer one of their original designs for helicopter life-raft stowage of a RFD Beaufort Aerolite 4F. The lightweight rack can be quickly fitted to the cockpit and cabin seat tracks on an EC135. Forward or aft facing the rack increases the options seating arrangement. Contact +44 1252 890089



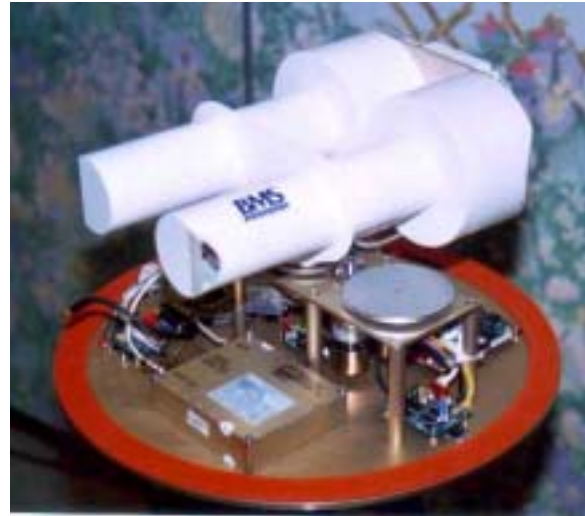
Broadcast Microwave Services Inc [\[BMS\]](#) of Poway, California were exhibiting at Helitech for the first time with their German distributor CAM GmbH-TEL Data Product Group of Gilching, Germany.

The primary product being marketed at the show was a lightweight COFDM digital downlink. There are no UK units in operation but systems are now flying in Europe with Polizei units in Germany. Other projects will greatly expand BMS's high profile market penetration in Europe before year-end.

On the morning of the first day a ceremony at the Bell Helicopter chalet Bell Helicopter Textron presented to Bristow Helicopters Ltd. a special award commemorating Bristow's 50th Anniversary and celebrating the fact that Bristow has continuously operated Bell Helicopter products for more than 45 of those 50 years.

Mr. Keith Chanter, Chief Executive of Bristow Helicopters accepted the specially commissioned award on behalf of Bristow. The award was presented by Mr. Donny Atkins, Bell Helicopter's Executive Director for Europe, Africa and the Middle East, who also presented Mr. Chanter with a letter from Bell Chief Executive Officer Michael Redenbaugh commemorating this milestone.

Systems are operational in the US and elsewhere.



BMS were showing a range of downlink equipment and their new GCA-11 airborne directional antenna. Featuring a totally solid state specification it provides a reliable unit of small size and light weight.

A switchable array antenna selected by solid state switching that is smaller than similar units and capable of fitting to aircraft and surface craft. The BMS GCA-11 is fully automatic and normally requires no operator input. For equipment demonstrations, contact [Dave Ayotte](#) in the US or [Gareth Davies](#) in Germany

[Tracware](#) and its business partner Enhanced Computer Solutions have announced the Police Aviation Services [PAS] based at Staverton Airport have selected AeroTrac™ as their strategic business system.

PAS, a commercial contractor, provides aviation services to the airborne emergency market sector round the clock 365 days a year. Services include pilotage, aircraft, maintenance and the role equipping of new airframes.

AeroTrac™ users include AeroMaritime, Aviation Turbine Overhaul Pty, Essential Turbines Inc and the London Helicopter Centres Ltd.

Alan Bristow founded Bristow Helicopters in 1953, and in 1957 Bristow's first Bell helicopters were placed on a contract for Shell Aircraft carrying out geological surveys in Bolivia. Bristow continue to have Bell helicopters in their world-wide fleet. In nearly 46 years of continuous operation, Bristow's fleet of Bell Helicopters has amassed over 2,000,000 flying hours and flown over 6,000,000 route sectors while carrying more that 25,500,000 passengers and nearly 600,00 tons of freight and baggage.

In another ceremony later in the show an UK police air unit accepted its welcome prize for a competition held during the year by FLIR Systems.

FLIR ran the competition among all the air units with the attractive prize of a DVD player. The winners were the Greater Manchester Police air unit, operators of an MD900 Explorer and a BN2-4S Defender. The prize was handed over to Peter Ramsden the Unit Executive Officer at the show. Peter, with his tongue thrust deeply in cheek, was heard to say...

'I would like to thank FLIR systems for this wonderful prize on behalf of the unit. I am aware that some of the best brains in the UK Police Aviation world were taken out of mothballs and committed to winning this competition. I am therefore extremely proud that Greater Manchester Police ASU came out on top'



The first AB139 will be delivered to the Italian operator Elilario in the passenger standard configuration before the end of the year. In the following months deliveries will ramp up to the civil and government customers who have already committed to the AB139 providing Bell/Agusta Aerospace Company with a comfortable two-year order book. Meanwhile certification activities related to specific aircraft kits are progressing well, both in Italy and the USA. The AB139 test flight activities in Phoenix, Arizona at the Honeywell facility are related to an expansion of the Honeywell Primus Epic avionic system now certified in the AB139. At present the manufacturer remains reticent about the identities of individual customers on its healthy sales list. Many of its sales – including those to the Royal Oman Police – are not public domain.

A Czech Police order for eight EC135s was announced at the show [see main edition], the SAS Flight Academy in Sweden announced other news on associated contracts. At the end of August SAS Flight Academy signed a contract with Aerocopter Ltd., Czech Republic, for places on the 'Generic NVG Basic Course.' Pilots from the Czech Police recently finished the NVG training in the SAS Flight Academy training facilities in Stockholm.

The SAS Flight Academy's newly developed Basic Course is intended to facilitate the ease of implementation of NVG's for VFR night operations. The main purpose of this course is to provide future NVG operators with the theoretical knowledge, manual skills and operational procedures required for safe and efficient operation with NVIS equipment.

"We have noticed a dramatically increased demand on NVG training from operators all over the world", says Thomas Wallén, Director Sales & Customer Relations.

SAS Flight Academy provides training for pilots, cabin crews, maintenance technicians and ships' officers. The training facilities, located in Stockholm and Copenhagen, offer training for twelve different aircraft types, ranging from regional to long haul aircraft and helicopter.

For more information please contact Peter Robertsson, Sales Manager, mobile +46 70 997 4770, fax +46 8 797 4241, or [E-mail](#)

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BP awarded **Bristow** a US\$7.5M contract to determine the feasibility of a highly controversial proposal to replace some offshore standby vessels with dedicated search-and-rescue helicopters.

The trials, known collectively as Project JIGSAW, included a 12-month assessment period using a role-fitted Eurocopter AS-332 L2 Super Puma based in Aberdeen, Scotland, for the flight trials. The final programme calls for four aircraft based on fixed installations in the North Sea's UK sector. Two more will be based in Aberdeen and East Anglia, a total of six helicopters. Later reports suggest that this total may well be cut.



In addition to the normal factory fit options, Bristow added a number of other features. The latest glass cockpit technology and fully coupled four-axis autopilot allow all-weather IFR approaches and modes such as overfly, transition up/down and hover that are SAR specific. The aircraft has a comprehensive medical equipment fit including a heart monitor, defibrillator, oxygen, airway management equipment in addition to stretchers, hypothermic blankets and intravenous fluid giving sets. The cabin crew are trained to Advanced Trauma Life Support (ATLS) standard.

Due to its size dwarfing all around it the JIGSAW Super Puma G-JSAR was the star attraction in the static park at the show.

The high specification role fit of the striking black and yellow helicopter includes a FLIR Systems UltraFORCE II multi-sensor turret, Skyshout, SX-16 searchlight and a Goodrich dual hoist installation.

Eurocopter, in conjunction with its UK distributor, McAlpine Helicopters Ltd., was displaying a full-scale cabin mock-up of the EC 225, its first appearance in the UK. This development of the Puma is more associated with offshore duties and Combat Search And Rescue (CSAR) missions but a small number of emergency services operators have used the earlier Puma models. All of the varied missions place the most severe pressures in terms of reliability, operational availability, and many performance parameters, such as high cruising speed, range, payload, and mission continuation in the event of a failure.

The EC 225 is designed to carry 19 passengers over a range of action of more than 200 nautical miles (NM) with the standard reserves for North Sea operations. Its built-in power reserve guarantees high performance within the framework of the future regulatory changes. The SAR version of the EC 225 is designed for extra long-range missions of over 200 NM. Flight testing for EC 225 certification in icing conditions has begun. Its Super Puma forebear was the first helicopter in the world at the time to be certified for flight in icing conditions with no temperature limitations. The Puma operates on a daily basis in icy Norwegian and Canadian winters.

The **EADS Hellas** [Helicopter Laser Radar] obstacle avoidance system is now certified and in service with German Border Guard [BGS] units in significant numbers. The latest news is that certain US Government operators are looking at the system. More information on the system can be found at www.sysde.eads.net

After a difficult year or two **MD Helicopters** were at least able to show a number of new orders at Helitech 2003. Just prior to the show opening MDHI announced three new helicopter orders, another was added later in the week.

MDHI delivered a third MD Explorer to AeroCare of Lubbock, Texas, for emergency medical service during the month. The new orders announced were the Luxembourg National Police MD Explorer for delivery in the second quarter of 2004, a MD600N for distributor Fuchs Helikopter in Switzerland and a 520N for UK delivery. Eastern Atlantic Helicopters, MDHI's single-engine helicopter distributor in the UK placed the order for delivery to an individual owner/operator in the second quarter of 2004.

Ed: There was no substantive news on the Explorers for The Netherlands. Due for delivery last month the latest is that delivery is now slated for the 'end of October.' Apparently the programme has been looked over by independent assessors and they have reported that it is 'looking good' – whatever that means.

FLIR Systems was launching the latest version of its multi-sensor gyro-stabilised airborne observation platform, the **UltraFORCE II Plus** at Helitech.

Following the international market success of the UltraFORCE II airborne thermal imaging system, FLIR Systems were demonstrating the newly released UltraFORCE II Plus. The system has already been selected by the Malaysian Navy, Hessen Police (Germany), Surrey, North Midlands and Hampshire Police Air Support Units; with the lead customer Dyfed-Powys Police with their new A109E Power G-DPPF. The UltraFORCE II Plus offers a multi-spectral TV Spotter Scope as standard.

The UltraFORCE II Plus utilises the latest generation Quantum Well Infrared Photodetector [QWIP], which provides unmatched thermal sensitivity and zoom performance as well as a 3 chip broadcast quality colour camera and the Spotter Scope with point three five degrees [0.35] and contrast. Viewing can be in either colour or monochrome. User proven additional features such as digital autotracker, real-time video, audio downlink and searchlight slaving are available as optional enhancements. [[FLIR](#)].

Rolls-Royce announced that ACRO Aerospace of Richmond, British Columbia, Canada, is the first Model 250 Authorised Maintenance Centre (AMC) to be re-appointed under a six-year agreement commencing in January 2004.

The present license agreements covering the existing network of 27 Model 250 AMC's are due to expire December 31, 2003, and Rolls-Royce will be formalising its network over the coming months. The updated Model 250 AMC network, incorporating Rolls-Royce owned service centres, will continue to offer a broad range of global capabilities, together with a greater focus on specific regional customer requirements.

ACRO Aerospace is a three-time winner of the Model 250 AMC award for Customer Satisfaction.

Turbomeca announced that the Arrius engine has clocked up 100,000 flight hours on police helicopters in UK and Irish Republic. Furthermore, the replacement of the current engine by Arrius 2B2, the latest version to date, on current EC135s with police is imminent.

The replacement (retrofit) of the engines by the latest version, the Arrius 2B2, will take place from October, starting with the Western Counties helicopter. The new engines will be installed in 12 EC 135 helicopters in Britain and the Republic of Ireland, of which 5 are for Bond Air Services, and of which some will go to 5 police forces and 2 private clients.

These retrofits are the fruit of a three-way collaboration led by Turbomeca with **McAlpine Helicopters** and the helicopter manufacturer Eurocopter Deutschland. They will be completed within a remarkably short time.

The first retrofit in the framework of this collaboration was successfully carried out on a craft of the Austrian automobile club ÖAMTC, which recently ordered another three EC 135 for EMS missions, bringing its total EC 135 fleet up to 21 units.

The Arrius 2B2 is the most advanced version in the Arrius range. It provides higher mechanical and thermal power which allows a take-off weight of 2,835 kg in category A, to higher temperatures and altitudes than its predecessor.

All of the EC 135's registered in Great Britain and the Irish Republic are powered by Turbomeca Arrius engines.



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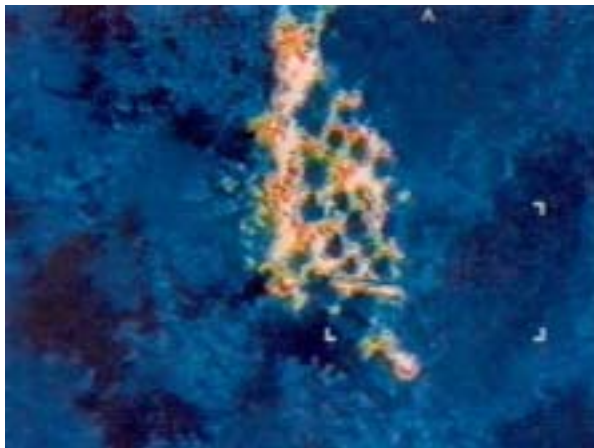
HAT3 modified. Model shown: APS 3003/08 - HSH 2008 00 234 3529

[KDBC](#) Limited of Devizes, Wiltshire were showing two 'new to show' products. Firemoth portable helicopter landing pad. This is a portable helipad with its own integrated light source and homing beacon. Specifically designed to make life easier for helicopter pilots trying to land on unknown terrain in various conditions, the helipad can be deployed in just 4 minutes and illuminated immediately showing wind direction and indicates the safe landing area from a distance of around 3km.

Firemoth is designed to be carried by Emergency Services support vehicles and sited by trained personnel. The non-rip nylon markers are light and flexible but also very robust.

A number of exhibitors were showing landing site lighting and beacons Helilight has been developed as a portable system using six light units [one being a spare] offering green, red, blue, white and infrared LED lights mounted in a robust polycarbonate casing.

RAM Systems were showing their fire mapping system. The vastness of North America calls for technology to assist in finding fires – hopefully before they become visible to the naked eye. Among the displays were images of a different kind that illustrate a contrast between US law and that of other countries. The RAM images are easily able to illustrate Cannabis grow areas as a clearly warmer and brighter area among the vegetation. Unfortunately US law will not allow such images to be used in any way shape or form. Even where they are accidentally taken [whilst on another project perhaps] the image is seen as an 'illegal search.'



In a show where customer demonstration flying was rare the S-92 led the pack. Even before arriving at Duxford potential customers from England to Norway was able to experience first hand the S-92's

With so many stands on offer to visitors it might be expected that there were regular quiet periods. For some there undoubtedly were, but the majors including Honeywell [Bendix-King], the L3 stand [manned by L3 Avionics and L3 Wescam, and the local Wescam agent Helimedia] and McAlpine Helicopters [Eurocopter] downtime was rare. Indeed the coffee was so good at the latter that there were reports of the organisers having to eject visitors an hour after the show closed – daily.

Blue Sky Network has received an STC for the C1000A; its newest Iridium based global satellite fixed-installation voice/data solution. The unit was formally introduced at the HeliTech 2003 show. Blue Sky Network began shipping units last month.

capabilities as the helicopter undertook a northern Europe demonstration tour.

Pre-Paris preparations began with the 19-passenger-configured aircraft shipped from Baltimore to Antwerp where it was reassembled, flight tested and flown to Stansted for pre-show demos to several UK customers. Following the Paris Air Show, offshore oil operators Bristow and CHC-Scotia were given demonstrations in Scotland.

Demonstrations in Bergen, Stavanger and Oslo, Norway followed. In Helsinki, Finland, the S-92 was demonstrated to Copterline Helicopters.

The Eurocopter EC 120B Colibri gave an impressive demonstration of its capabilities at the German Open Helicopter Championships held at Stendal in the east of Germany on September 14th, 2003. It came out No. 1 in the competition in which twenty teams participated (16 from Germany, two from Austria and two from Switzerland). Its crew, pilot Holger Hoven who is an ADAC Air Rescue BK 117 pilot, and co-pilot Michael Schauff who is a flight technician with the German Airforce LTG (Air Transport Squadron) in Penzing, thus became German Helicopter Champions for the second time in a row. This is their second success using the EC 120, theirs being the only EC 120 in the competition.

The new product, a fixed-installation Iridium satellite telephone system, uses an analogue signal to provide crew and passengers access to voice and data connections from as many locations in the aircraft as desired, using a variety of communication hardware. In addition, the C1000A can be interfaced to many existing, but more expensive, airborne telephone systems allowing customers significantly lower communication costs. Blue Sky Network is an Iridium Service Partner and provides service plans that are very competitive, easy to understand, and strategic for corporate owners and operators.

Blue Sky Network also showed a satellite based aircraft tracking and management system. The new D1000 mobile terminals, along with the Blue Sky Network SkyRouter server software form the company's new packet data information network. The SkyRouter network and D-1000 terminals provide near real time flight tracking, two-way messaging between aircraft and ground, and user defined customised telemetry reporting for fleet management. All satellite links utilise the Iridium Satellite System.

The aviation installation ready equipment kit prices begin at \$1,695 for an entry-level SATCOM package, and range to \$13,995 for a full-featured fixed and portable SATCOM solution. Kits for the D1000 asset tracking solution begin at \$5,995, increasing to \$11,995 for full-service fixed voice and data communications. For more information visit www.blueskynetwork.com, or call +1 866 759 7284.



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And so to 2005...

Early last month Reed Exhibitions announced that it has acquired Spearhead Exhibitions. Best known for the recent DSEi and Helitech Spearhead organises a total of 11 events in 3 main industry sectors – aerospace and defence, oil and gas and marine science and ocean technology.

The addition of the Spearhead events will significantly enhance Reed's aerospace and defence portfolio, which will now total 7 international events world-wide, including Asian Aerospace and Latin American Aero & Defence, (LAAD). Changes can be expected.

As mentioned in an earlier edition, there has been some talk of moving Helitech from Duxford to the large ExCel convention and exhibition site in London Docklands. There are those that are strongly in favour of this move. The other camp worry that ExCel will be too large for the moment and that the infrastructure will be too expensive for smaller companies. ExCel means London hotel prices and travel difficulties and removes all flying – both related and unrelated.

Helitech as we know it is a temporary tented encampment – quite rustic in nature – and some love the atmosphere that was born on the grass field at Redhill Aerodrome and transferred in 2001 to Duxford. Others, perhaps those exposed to Convention Centre based events such as Heli-Expo, dislike the rustic flavour with equal fervour.

Duxford is probably not ideal but it is an attractive site steeped in international history. It is after all an international business and it is history that directs the future. To see the glee on many faces – an international audience – when a Spitfire started up alongside the static may well be a distraction from the core of

rotary business, but where is the fault in passion?



Another view to take on the proposals relates to individuality. Next year – the gap year- a new annual helicopter industry show will be starting in Switzerland with a similar date slot. Helitech may well need all of its periphery attractions [the Spitfires included] and its rustic charm if it is going to run successfully in 2005. It may be that it will also have to reconsider this year's lack of a formal flying display to fend off the Swiss event.

I doubt that 2005 will be anywhere but Duxford, ExCel may come in time but Helitech has some growing to do before it loses itself in those great soulless halls in London.

Helitech 2003 was not perfect, but I guess that for the greater part it was loved by those attending.

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