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PAvCon

POLICE AVIATION CONFERENCE

2016

Germany

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It was a challenge that few outsiders successfully mastered. Who but a local could say with confidence and a fair degree of speed “*Bundespolizei-Fliegerstaffel Oberschleissheim*”

With this tongue twister Carsten Hermann the Officer in Charge of *Bundespolizei-Fliegerstaffel Oberschleissheim* introduced his unit and let us into its historic background as the earliest airfield in Germany. He let it be known that he would particularly welcome any of his guests that could manage to get the term, *Bundespolizei-Fliegerstaffel Oberschleissheim*, past their tongues and into their presentation!

Fortunately for the less adept at German pronunciation in quick time it was in any case a particularly warm welcome to all that had gathered within the brand new facility north of Munich. The whole event took on the distinct flavour of a launch party attended by the police of Europe and the US.

Some months earlier a 60th Birthday Party for what is now the Bundespolizei-Fliegerstaffel [via the BGS or Bundesgrenzschutz] was cancelled at short notice because of the unexpected uptick in the migrant invasion so perhaps in some small way PAVCon made up for that.

Gathered at this years event were police officers and crews from across Germany, Austria, Belgium, Estonia, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, United Kingdom and the United States along with several from the German and Netherlands military. Again the numbers attending were up on last year but still the French and Italian police maintain that they have never heard of the event.

Attendees from industry came from across the length and breadth of the globe.



Torsten Herrmann the commander of Bundespolizei-Fliegerstaffel Oberschleissheim and, below, one of the historical slides





The superb new facility, taken into use earlier this year, includes some unusual features including timber roof joists. The nearest EC135T2 is one of three the base operates in the rescue ambulance role. Two bases in the mountains are supported.

THE VENUE

Oberschleißheim [Ober slice-hime] is north of Munich city and handy for both the International Airport and the S-Bahn local railway but the Federal police air unit in Jagerstrasse is a little off the beaten track. One or two hardy souls made it their fitness walk and most did that and successfully dodged the occasional but torrential rain.

Past PAvCon's have used the main event hotel and a selection of local restaurants to house, feed and entertain the attendees but this year it all fell to the Zum Kurfürst, Hotel am Schloßpark, in Oberschleißheim and I think that everyone agreed that they never let anyone down with their hospitality or their cuisine. The fare offered for Bell Helicopter Sponsored meal-for-all attendees was simple and delicious.

In accord with the plan the PAvCon Conference occupied the area of the ground floor below the new control tower and a tiny part of the extensive hangar facility.

The original scenario was to allow for 24 3 metre units but in the event 40 were required. A technical [measuring] glitch came into play but with a little shuffling and much good will the original spaces were altered somewhat and everyone appeared happy. The realisation of this repair measure lies wholly with the ALEA Management Team from the USA. I have little doubt that they never envisaged being on the hands and knees redrawing plans when they set off from home but they were truly invaluable as the mini-crisis loomed.

The external static area for 4-6 aircraft was never called upon but as an active base the two visiting aircraft a Bell 429 of the Slovak Police [sponsored by Bell] and the H145 of the Hubschrauberstaf-





The new Airbus Helicopters H145 D-HBWW in service with the police of Baden-Württemberg, in Stuttgart attracted much attention.

The lower front edge of the Fenestron featured a fixed camera providing a view of the rear clam-shell doors to the cabin.

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The Baden-Württemberg H145 cabin

An advertisement for Babcock mission system solutions. The background is a cockpit interior with two large displays showing maps of London. The left display shows a street map, and the right display shows a 3D city model. The Babcock logo is in the top left corner. A blue box in the bottom left contains the text: "Trusted to deliver. Superior mission system solutions. Babcock's Design & Completion Centres deliver superior mission system solutions, designed with you for your mission. Integrated, certified, supported". The website address "babcockinternational.com" is in the bottom right corner.

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fel der Polizei, des Landes Baden-Württemberg, in Stuttgart [were well supported by examples of the locally based *Bundespolizei-Fliegerstaffel Oberschleisshe im* airframes—EC135, EC155 and AS332L1 Super Puma. An H135 of the Bavaria Police normally based at the airport was temporarily based at the event for two days.

This year a fixed wing presence was ruled out by accessibility issues from the nearby airfield. Although there are large gates that can be opened to provide the heliport a substantial 'clear area' the gate at the airfield end is too small to afford access.



THE EVENT

This year an additional day was inserted to trial a Training Day based on the US ALEA model but much reduced in length. The US original is a full three day course but we assessed that the region was not ready for such a long event and sought to cut it back to suit the audience.

Officer Jack H Schonely of California has long undertaken a tactics training role with ALEA and he agreed to trial a cut down version of his classes as a taster for European audience. It was highly successful and does however leave us with the question of how to follow it up next time out.

Jack Schonely has been working as a law enforcement officer for three decades, and he is an internationally recognised expert in the area of suspect tactics and perimeter containment. A published author Jack Schonely runs courses for the US Airborne Law Enforcement Agency and the PAvCon course titled "Suspect Tactics and Perimeter Containment" - an 8-hour, high speed, multi media, PowerPoint presentation that included almost an hour of video. The class was always designed for a range of police officers including patrol, supervisors, air crews, and trainers but few expected the depth and watchability of the final product. The class looks at current trends and tactics being used by criminals attempting to evade capture on foot. Suspects have learned a great deal over the years about law enforcement tactics. They are learning from their successes and failures. The tactics they are using today have changed dramatically from the tactics used 5 or 10 years ago and the 60 or so mixed ability attendees welcomed it on many levels.



Jack customises the training to every agency he trains so this will be crafted to take into consideration the unique requirements of European police forces—he has previously taught classes in Europe.

Charging a fee to visiting police was a new departure for PAvCon but clearly the level of just 35 Euro [£28] per person found favour among the target audience.

During that day of training the exhibition room was set up and the participating aircraft started to turn up for an early start on the Tuesday [14 June]. The programme was as ever ably supported by Dynamic Range Ltd., who we have worked with for a decade now. Occasionally speakers insist on undertaking their own plug in IT but we have found that as often as not it is these presentations that fail on the day. This year was no different but fortunately the majority of the speakers relied on our experts.

TUESDAY

The opening hour was the usual line up of welcomes and 'Mind how you go' by PAVCon Chairman Gareth Davies followed by Carsten Hermann's challenging piece on that historical background of the site and how to get the place name correct in references!

Col Thomas Helbig a long term supporter of all that PAVCon tries to do for European Police Air Support was faced with perhaps a more serious message in the wake of a recent Federal Police accident but equally marked both the worth and the presence of PAVCon in a suitable manner.

We may never know how much facilitation the existence of PAVCon brought to the process but we do know that a select group of European State Police entities have managed to get together and forge changes in a document that seeks to set out the future of European Aviation. Certainly the members of that group have been meeting away from PAVCon but equally they apparently first met at the 2010 event in Prague.

As mentioned in *Police Aviation News* in the past, there are two threads of opinion as to how State Aircraft might be regulated in the future. One states that they can, like some in the USA, do pretty much as they please wholly unregulated and the other that they wish to embrace regulation. The default for the new regulations due in 2017-18 was the former. EASA had decided that all Police, fire fighting and patrol aircraft owned by government entities are 'national' and not to be regulated under EASA. Now, under the revision proposed, Countries can if they so choose follow EASA regulation as they like or opt out in part or completely and effectively remain a National asset. One big reason to be EASA is that you retain the resale potential of your aircraft, which national aircraft generally do not. A group made up from senior representatives of Germany, Finland, The Netherlands and the UK exerted pressure to allow themselves to embrace regulation and maintain and support their fleet under civil regulations.



There is a significant financial bonus to embracing regulation. The aircraft in the EASA preferred 'do as they please' State category have low value and face a very limited market at the end of their days where the other group retain an airframe with a significant open market resale value by adopting Part 145 maintenance and other aspects of the normal EASA regime. In many cases they have always operated that way so it is simply maintaining the status quo. Some of the former Gendarmerie's, now seen as civil state police have always operated in a military regime and choose to retain that option.



Airframes, exhibitors and the conference presentations are the tangible elements of the PAVCon event. The main attraction for many remained the opportunity to Network both on the exhibition floor and during the evening social events.



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The normal day-to-day operations continued at the air base during PAvCon. Despite the advanced air-base specification refuelling on the pad is undertaken using bowsers.

A new Article 2 of the new EU Basic Regulation merges Articles 1 and 4 of Regulation No 216/2008 with a simplified text that introduces the possibility for member states to apply certain provisions of the new regulations to activities and services performed by State aircraft. It is a matter of choice and is not binding for all time.

PAvCon's are about Flight Safety, product and technique information and training and it was soon in its stride when Bryan Smith from Florida stood on the podium with his outline of the following days programme. The flaw in this turned out to be that a significant number in the audience were not going to be present. The H145 crew from Stuttgart were only present for the one day. That is a particularly European 'problem' that we have not yet resolved but for the majority it did not matter.

The day continued with a structured programme on inadvertent IMC survival and a discussion on the age old problem of crew complement. Will two do or should there be three. As ever it was not resolved in the conference room but what happens there is only part of the story, it can be much more important simply to raise the question and leave it to be discussed through the long Networking breaks.

Speaking of which another experiment was popped into PAVCon this year.

For many years the attending police have complained that there are too many commercial presentations taking time away from 'proper' discussion on training and tactics. So this year a significant number of the 'Commercials' was set aside to be run in the second half of the 2-hour long lunch break.

We did not expect much interest at all but in each case the room was pretty full suggesting interesting topic or too long for lunch! Just goes to show.



Meanwhile the business of the day was being enacted outside as Bell made use of the 429 in flying potential customers over the surrounding countryside. The targets were a German police unit and the army. It may be some time before the outcome of the activity comes to fruition.

The afternoon proper included an introduction to the Stuttgart H145, an item on UAVs and the latest from NPAS before a combined presentation by PAVCon and ALEA brought the subject of the future to the fore.

Where PAVCon goes from here has been a matter of private discussion for a while now but rumours have been circulating about how ALEA want to 'take-over' PAVCon and it was an opportunity to set the record straight—or at least straighter than rumour had hitherto allowed.

Back in November 2005 there was a meeting between UK police aviation, PAN, the ALEA and Shephard Conferences at Millbank, London and the result was the resurrection of the Police Aviation Conference in London in 2006. There was one common thread in that meeting in that each attendee [Brian Allinson, Bryn Elliott, Glenn Daley, Dan Schwartzbach and Alexander Shephard] was a member of ALEA. The plan was to reinvigorate wider interest in police aviation and I think it is fair to claim that the three Shephard Police Aviation Conferences of 2006-07-08 in London and the Netherlands did just that. PAVCon has simply followed the lead—albeit with some changes in style that having no shareholders has allowed.

Now the passage of time decrees some evolution and change to take the European conference scene closer to ALEA [where it started] and to inject a reality check. The plan will inevitably mean change as the future operator will be more accountable to its members than the current *one-man PAVCon*. Although the announcement is made it will be evolutionary and not overnight.

Europe has long had an idea of a 'European ALEA' but most ideas sought to reinvent the wheel whilst suffering from insufficient resources and not a few shackles of convention that would make financing the new organisation virtually unsustainable. ALEA is not perfect and knows that it is US centric in accordance with the majority of its membership but it exists as an organisation dedicated to the pursuance of airborne law enforcement. There is little point restarting from any uncertain new base.

That evening all thought of how the future would evolve were set aside as the majority of the attendees were entertained at the excellent Bell Helicopter sponsored meal at the Zum Kurfürst, Hotel Restaurant.



WEDNESDAY

So back to the event in the morning with an extremely well received and hour long Safety class led by Bryan Smith supported by, among others, Timm Paulsen the Federal Police Safety Officer. Coffee called and then a similar theme continued the safety discussions with a session on Safety Management Systems from Bill Proberts.

In the past John Osmond had the debatable honour of producing the most, boring, sleep inducing presentation and one of the most gripping. This year he was on the right side of the fence with his theme on how to deal with buying anything from industry without feeling too much pain! John comes at the subject from having been a salesman and a buyer and having seen many police purchasers make a real mess of their purchase process. The basics boil down to know what you want, order what you want and do not change your mind. Needless to say he was able to report instances where all too often every one of those rules is broken along the way and much public money wasted.

Against the grain the PAVCon event was able to report that the following presentations on vehicle markings, searching for missing persons using mobile phone technology and undertaking High Rise Emergencies successfully retained their audience levels—very much an unusual claim in the conference field. And then PAVCon closed the show with its secret weapon.





Officer and rescue pilot Joseba Mendizabel of North Portugal. None of us yet knows how he does it but it is a fact that people stop what they are doing—even if it is packing up to go home—and file back into the conference room to take in his brand of brand of pertinent humour given forth in 'Combat English'.

Of course there is no such place as North Portugal, no English language known as 'Combat' but this officer from the Basque Region of Spain has got the measure of the intricacies of police aviation as expounded through International English.

ANALYSIS

And that I guess is part of the magic of PAVCon. Some claim it is this individual or that individual that makes it a pleasurable event for all but I think it is actually the whole rather than the individual parts. It is not me or him, or her or them it is all of those. Like any casual club of like minded individuals acting together. There have been dissenters, there are those that have never been and those that have been and will not return for their own reasons but those that 'Remain' are enthusiastic simply because it works for them on both cultural and business levels. It is a place of business that is in itself a pleasure.

Even after repeat upon repeat of 'the event' we all learn something new each year and perhaps detect something that we had not noticed before and resolve to address in the future. This year some of us realised that the assumption that we all speak English may be being challenged in areas we had not suspected. Flight or ICAO English is just that and for many limited to focussing on undertaking a safe flight.

There are many levels of acceptance of English. Fluency of the native and the Queens English are in themselves different enough but, as the listing on each computer belies, there are a string of others even without entering into the realms of niche versions suited to ICAO and even real world 'Combat' form of talking. Some nations embrace ICAO English better than others and perhaps the Dutch and Germans get there better than most where [for in-

stance] Slavic tongues find it more challenging. I have known for many years that many in the international readership of *Police Aviation News* may well be incapable of conversation in English.

It is clear that for some grasping the nuances of the language may be much more difficult. It is one thing to successfully learn flight safe English and another to be tasked with the creative side. The creation of English based flight tools like SMS [Safety Management Systems] and FRAT [Flight Risk Assessment Tool] is generally left to be a locally produced text that reflects the unique circumstances of the local operation. It may be that trying to undertake this in English dulls the creative capabilities and as a result the smaller individual operations would either be better coached by larger organisations rather than left entirely on their own or even be presented with a set text that can be modified.

As ALEA moves into Europe and the rest of the world from the wholly American English environment assimilation of the various languages may be among their biggest challenges to be faced. It is doing well but it does need to take stock of its new environment, its different cultural requirements and levels of professionalism.

On another tangent of learning this year we learned the gains to be had from working with others who get to know the event. For many years we never made use of handling agents and were perhaps a little reticent to allow any of them to access the event simply because we had no knowledge of them or their product and our event was planned to simply use carry-on promotional props, no booths with walls, just a few tables and [IKEA] chairs. Over time it has become clear that exhibitors are shunning our minimalist ideals and bringing ever bigger props.

In the main exhibitors requiring logistic support used their own choice from FedEx, UPS etc. A few years ago one company managed to elbow its way in and offer services to the attendees [even with us professing to have no confidence in them!]. Well I am pleased to report that three years down that unknown road this year they, CEVA Showfreight, shone through in the service they provided. Their local representative Pete Busscher solved numerous problems for us the hosts and the exhibitors. As a result we will continue to offer their services but with perhaps many less reservations than in the past!

As for the 'thank you' paragraph it goes out to many. Everyone who turned up and made the event of course but mainly to the hosts the *Bundespolizei-Fliegerstaffel Oberschleissheim* it was newer for them than most and we do have a long established habit of never returning to the same location twice so it is a shock to each of the new hosts when they realise what is unleashed on their doorstep! I am unsure how long that 'no repeat' record can be maintained.

Now, in the wake of the Brexit turmoil, we have to find a way in getting the French Gendarmerie, more of the Spanish and even the Italian's to attend regularly. This year the French say they have never even heard of the event and they are trying to say that to the man who mailed, e-mailed and hand delivered leaflets, magazines and programmes to their door throughout the year!

Where to next? That is the question.

Bryn Elliott
Prop: Police Aviation Research

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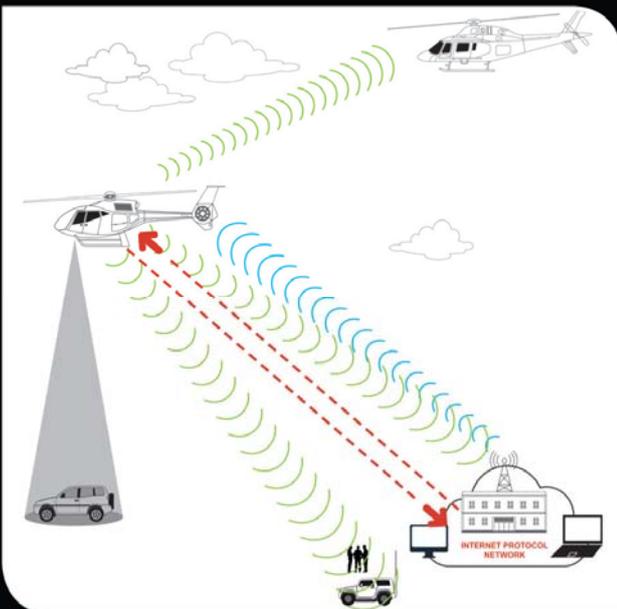


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