

Police Aviation News



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POLICE AVIATION

AUSTRALIA

NEW SOUTH WALES: The New South Wales Police Force has signed for the delivery of a new Bell 412EPi for delivery late next year. The helicopter will be operated from a base in Sydney in tactical and response missions.

First introduced in March 2013, the Bell 412EPI improves the Bell 412EP platform with the Bell BasiX Pro™ fully integrated glass flight deck, providing critical flight information at a glance for greater situational awareness and safety. The Bell BasiX Pro™ system is specifically designed to meet the requirements of twin-engine helicopters and is optimised for IFR, Category A and JAR OPS3 compliant operations. The avionics suite also includes high resolution digital maps, electronic charts and approach plates, ADS-B transponder and optional HTAWS and XM satellite links. The Bell 412EPI incorporates the power of Pratt & Whitney's PT6T-9 Twin Pac® engines, providing 15% more horsepower than the standard Bell 412. The Bell 412EPI features the BLR Strake and FastFin® system, which modifies the tailboom to optimise airflow and improve handling, safety and lift [Bell].

Ed: The current operational helicopter fleet is a mix of AS350, AS355N, EC135P2 and a BK117B. It may be that the new Bell is a replacement for the latter.

BELIZE

BDF: Other than the Bell 212s operated in Belize by the Royal Air Force and various types flown locally by the US military Belize has had no helicopters. The British machines were pulled out some time ago.

According to B.D.F. Commander, Brigadier General David Jones, there is a need to operate their own helicopter. Anti-drug operations have recently been flown with the assistance of US troops and both Chinook and Blackhawk helicopters, and they were wildly successful. A lack of resources in the country suggests that owning a helicopter might seem like a pipe dream but Jones is pressing the government for the acquisition of a helicopter.

For the past three years Belize has been training some of its pilots in Jamaica on the type preferred. The government has committed to share the cost of maintaining these helicopters. One of these helicopters cost about \$2.9M and little over \$1M to maintain.

Front Cover: In Peru the Interior Ministry has taken delivery of the first of four Eurocopter EC145T1 helicopters for use by the country's National Police [PNP].

The new aircraft, seen here before delivery, will be stationed at the Police Aviation Unit's main base, from where they will perform public security missions as well as disaster relief throughout the country. The remaining three helicopters will be delivered before the end of the year. Photo: © Eurocopter Charles AbarrPort

CHINA

HONG KONG: It is rumoured that the Hong Kong Government Flying Service will be issuing a tender for fleet renewal next year.

The current rotary wing fleet is based upon the EC155B1 and the AS332L1, the first of which was delivered at the Paris Air Show Le Bourget in 2001. [Pprune]

CYPRUS

POLICE: The local media have reported the signature of a joint memorandum by the Justice and Defence Ministries to facilitate the joint operation of the five AgustaWestland AW139 helicopters in the island.

It is expected that the two police helicopters will be coordinated with the three National Guard examples to undertake joint training and operational readiness for SAR, fire fighting and patrol. The expectation is that the new coordination will optimise helicopter availability for security and control of the coastline at reduced cost. [Helihub]

EUROPE

Readers may recall the item on page 6 of the October edition that highlighted a looming certification problem for police aircraft in Europe. EASA have declared that they will not be overseeing police type operations after October 2014 as they fall outside normal operations in requiring a number of easements in order to undertake their day-to-day operations and are therefore a complication in 'normal' certification activities.

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Although some law enforcement aviation operators are quite happy with the looming situation a number of them do not want to be simply seen as State Aircraft without the certification rigours of JAR-Ops.

Since the story broke further meetings have been held in Belgium between some of the 28 affected nations, principally the UK NPAS, the Dutch, the Federal Police in Germany, and EASA officials. These nations [each of whom operates civil certified and registered aircraft] were hoping to work with and under EASA rulemaking into the future.

At the moment there may well be something like 28 different answers to the problem - some of which include disinterest – but a number are working hard to ensure that the negative stance of EASA is modified to allow them access to an EASA based regime.

INDIA

COAST GUARD: The acquisition process of fourteen helicopters for an Indian Coast Guard shore based SAR operations has made some headway. The helicopters are meant to be operated along the country's vast coastline spanning 7,500 km and to replace a current fleet based upon single engine Chetak [Alouette] and a few Indian developed Hindustan [HAL] Advanced Light Helicopters [ALH].

The new helicopters are expected to be a major advance on the existing fleet in meeting a 2012 requirement set up in the wake of the 26/11 Mumbai terror attacks. Acquisition of aircraft and ships is part of a wider modernisation programme.

Apart from the helicopters, the Coast Guard also flies Dornier fixed-wing aircraft which are deployed along the country's sea shores and in the island territories.

Flight evaluation trials are only in the early stage of a lengthy procurement process complicated by the recent troubles between the Indian military and AgustaWestland, its AW101 and corruption allegations.

Trials of types shortlisted for the purchase, including the Eurocopter EC725, and types from AgustaWestland and Sikorsky, are due in the New Year, technical bids having been evaluated.

There is a sense of urgency in acquiring more helicopters as it has come to a stage where operations were being affected. Of around fifty naval warships capable of operating helicopters, the availability of helicopters to fill the flight decks is only around half that number. [India Today]

Meanwhile the long standing requirement for replacement of the Army and IAF Cheetah and Chetak helicopters remains unfulfilled. The long-delayed procurement project for 197 reconnaissance and surveillance helicopters is in the danger of being junked for the second time. The indigenous HAL project to develop 187 similar light utility helicopters has also been hit by a huge delay.

With the likely cancellation of the contract for 12 VVIP AW101 helicopters the decision to scrap the 197-helicopter project is likely to be set aside as an enquiry takes place. The cur-

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rent contenders are the Russian Kamov Ka-226T and the Eurocopter AS 550 C3 Fenec [military AS355].

The procurement process was almost finalised in December 2007 but then cancelled due to some irregularities – arguably a variation on the current situation besetting AgustaWestland. The navy needs to clear a shortage in anti-submarine warfare helicopters, it needs to acquire 56 naval utility helicopters customised for surveillance, anti-terror, electronic intelligence gathering and SAR.

BANGALORE: Bangalore Police is set to deploy two unmanned drones at a political rally of the BJP party's prime ministerial candidate Narendra Modi. The drones were part of increased security measures put in place after an earlier rally for Modi was attacked. The October 27 rally in Patna saw the death of five persons. Equipped with advanced cameras, the drones were to help the police to monitor the situation from the control room and the photos will be relayed to the on-duty officers at the venue. [One India News]

MEDITERRANEAN

The chaotic fallout of the "Arab Spring" is fuelling a surge in the smuggling of drugs, weapons and people across the Mediterranean, and cash-strapped regional powers are struggling to respond.

Last month, European leaders in Brussels turned down calls from southern European states already hard hit by the euro-zone crisis for additional support to tackle record numbers of migrants attempting to cross to the continent in frequently perilous journeys arranged by people smugglers.

As described in a recent edition of PAN more than 32,000 migrants from Africa and the Middle East have arrived in Italy and Malta so far this year, more than 550 died in October alone, as autumn storms made a difficult crossing in small, poorly maintained boats even more dangerous.

While the migrant crisis is relatively well documented, reliable data on other smuggling and crime is patchy. Syria's civil war and chaos in Libya are producing massive arms smuggling, while drug runners use similar routes to ship North African hashish and Latin American cocaine.

Those who watch the Syrian conflict closely say smuggling from Libya to Syria has become a significant source of rebel arms in the last year. While the Syrian coast remains largely in government hands, weaponry is believed to be slipping in through coastal regions of Lebanon and Turkey using small Arab funded merchant ships that avoid major ports and load and unload at the type of secluded landing site used by smugglers for centuries.

A Syria in turmoil has become a major corridor of drugs into the rest of the Middle East. Western governments are training Libyan security forces but most experts say the prospects for a significant change on the ground in Libya or Syria in particular remain distant as local forces are increasingly distracted by civil unrest.

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While control of the ground borders is difficult to maintain the situation at sea is arguably easier to oversee. Considerable naval forces already exist in the area. France, Spain and Italy have large and sophisticated navies and long-range aircraft bolstered by the U.S. Sixth Fleet to maintain a fairly constant presence and hundreds of ships are boarded each year in support of preventing militants from using the sea to mount attacks on Europe.

TURKEY

POLIS: Bell Helicopter has now officially announced the delivery of the first seven of fifteen Bell 429 to the Turkish National Police and released an image. The manufacturer states delivery was on or ahead of schedule. The aircraft will be used for a wide array of law enforcement missions, including surveillance, personnel transport and air support of ground operations.

The seven 429s were accepted between September and October 2013, with remaining deliveries expected to occur on or ahead of schedule through next year. The National Police began operating the aircraft as soon as they were delivered, flying surveillance and transport missions nearly every day and night. Each aircraft is equipped with multi-sensor cameras, the latest microwave downlink technology and a state-of-the-art video management system. [Bell]

The aircraft being delivered are effectively the belated realisation of the 1998 Five Year Plan which planned for the aircraft to be due for delivery from 2001.



Sikorsky Aircraft recently delivered the second of two VIP S-92® helicopters to the Turkish National Police (TNP) for service to the Turkish Prime Ministry, as part of a contract signed in 2011. Sikorsky delivered the first aircraft in May 2013.



UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

ABU DHABI: The Air Wing has signed a Memorandum of Understanding between the Abu Dhabi Police GHQ and the New York Police Department in the United States. The MoU aims to develop and boost cooperation between the two parties in all areas of police work. The signing of the memorandum demonstrates the keenness to create a safer society, with a view to enhance stability and achieve justice for all. This agreement stems out of the firm belief in the need for cooperation between both parties in the areas of police work, notably sharing expertise, participating in training courses, availing modern police techniques, and sharing information.

A new base building is being built for the Abu Dhabi Police Air Wing at the Al Bateen Executive Airport. The new build includes a new management building consisting of two stories with a total area of 3,000 square metres. The project commenced last April and will take 14 months to realise. The hangar will have accommodation for twelve helicopters, storage and maintenance workshops.

DUBAI: AgustaWestland has announced that the Dubai Police will operate five AW169 light intermediate helicopters to perform a range of missions including law enforcement, emergency medical services and VIP transport.

This contract marks the entrance of the AW169 into the Middle East parapublic helicopter market and further expands the success of the AW169 in the United Arab Emirates, where it has also been ordered to carry out VIP and passenger transport operations. The introduction of the AW169 for a range of public utility applications in the UAE follows the success of the AW139 for government and parapublic roles in the country.

AgustaWestland also announced that the Dubai Air Wing has placed an order for one AW189 8-tonne class twin engine helicopter to perform VIP transport missions. This contract is the first order for a VIP transport-configured AW189.



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UNITED KINGDOM

NPAS

FIXED WING TRIAL: The National Police Air Service has awarded the contract to deliver a police role-equipped fixed-wing surveillance aircraft to Airborne Technologies of Wiener Neustadt, Austria.



The platform - a Vulcanair P68R – was modified by Airborne Technologies at its Austrian facility and on delivery will provide the Police with the optimum solution in the EU-wide procurement process.

©AirborneTechnologies

Keen to explore the opportunities presented by the new generation of fixed-wing aircraft, through conducting a 6-month operational trial, NPAS decided to add a fixed-wing aircraft to their helicopter-dominated fleet. This award is the second for a Vulcanair P68 from Airborne Technologies with the German Police previously buying the type.

Captain Oliver Dismore, Flight Operations Director of NPAS, said, "I was tasked by the NPAS Strategic Board to explore opportunities around introducing new generation fixed-wing aircraft to the fleet to enhance our capabilities at modest additional cost. The cutting-edge surveillance equipment (Wescam MX10 and Churchill Augmented Reality System), proposed by Airborne Technologies, is fully integrated into a mission system presented in an ergonomic working environment. This will reduce the workload of the single Tactical Flight Officer crew and will enable the aircraft to perform tasks normally carried out by our helicopters, freeing them up for more time-critical missions."

For the trial the Airborne Technologies Team will provide a tailored aircraft with a sophisticated working environment and presents itself once again as technology leader for the support of the flying police.

NPAS does not currently have fixed wing resources but can buy time from existing operators including Greater Manchester Police who retained their own Defender aircraft beyond the creation of NPAS. The future of such independent fixed wing resources is not currently on the agenda for discussion.

Ed: NPAS undertook a short trial with a Tecnam provided by Airborne Technologies earlier in its existence. That trial in the North West and Wales was considered a success but the airframe was considered too small for the crew members in endurance operations and a larger type was proposed.

The P68 has served on trials with the British police a number of times in the past and operates with others across the world. For the record the earliest UK use was when a company called Twinflight operated their Partenavia P68 Observer G-SPOT in support of trials for Fishery Patrol, with Devon & Cornwall, Northumbria and West Midlands forces in 1981-82.



Mark Harris

NPAS NOW

Thirteen months into the commencement of joint operations the organisation has settled into a base located with West Yorkshire Police in Bradford. NPAS is made up of individuals drawn from police forces across England and Wales nominally drawn together under West Yorkshire Police [WYP] as the umbrella organisation. The WYP and their now defunct Police Authority volunteered for the task of hosting NPAS and as a result they took upon themselves many hidden operational costs for which the only evident return is kudos – perhaps a tenuous gain.

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Most of the costs of NPAS have been defrayed by the use of existing resources. Setting up an organisation of this complexity would have required a massive start up fund but this step was not required as the existing resources – the bases, the aircraft, support logistics and the most expensive item of all, the people – were in place.

Before the creation of NPAS air policing was very much a locally based resource. Most units were created at the whim of individual police chiefs and governing authorities. Often these operations could be judged to be inappropriate spending for the size of the individual Force, many were weak and clearly increasingly sophisticated and expensive helicopters severely stretched budgets. This left the funding of each operation very much at the mercy of local pressures and there have been numerous instances of units operating uneconomic levels of availability and then temporarily 'running out of money' and losing funds and flight hours as the financial year proceeded. These cutbacks were usually rectified within months with the dawning of a new financial year and were rarely highlighted by an often ill informed media. The annual aviation specific funding and credit facilities injected by Home Office into air support from 1994 alleviated the situation but in some instances even that seems to have done no more than prolong the operations just long enough for NPAS to appear. The years of generous Home Office aviation funding [£3-5M annually] ensured that the aircraft were by and large owned by the state when the national operation came along and that reduced the need for compensation. The direct Home Office funding halted with the creation of NPAS after some £70M had been injected into industry, even that a tiny part of what is considered to be around £18M a year spent on maintenance and parts alone.

NPAS suggest that in recent years that the dire financial situation in the Western World and Britain in particular was leading to a number of the police forces facing massive cuts and that pressure was pushing the operators of the weaker operations to consider unit closure. Most at risk were the smaller county operations that were unable to attract a partnership with another party, either another police force, a fire service or an air ambulance. That some were crumbling was illustrated by the closure of the Hampshire Police BN-2 fixed wing operation early in the process but to that can be added Merseyside which had been one of the first high quality urban helicopter operations. There were many reasons for the end of the Liverpool unit, one of the oldest, but its roots lay in a city short on cash, a region with an excess of air support and a boss, Chief Constable Bernard Hogan-Howe, who was willing to sacrifice his unit. Hogan-Howe, now the Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police in London, was a central figure in the creation of NPAS during his tenure in Liverpool and as the ACPO Lead on police aviation matters.

Under NPAS there are fewer bases but each of those bases operates core hours reflecting those considered the busiest in policing to offer police air support across England and Wales. A small number offer a full 24-hour service across the country. This is often decried as a lowering of service but there was no borderless policing nationally and only a meagre 24/7 service in place before NPAS started. Furthermore the service is now pretty much assured whereas before there was a great secret agenda that sought to hide long term technical groundings that brought into question the very need for air support. If a police force could manage without any aircraft for 2-3 months it did not take an expert to conclude that it could be disbanded without a significant effect on policing in general.

Under the new regime police forces buy into a set number of flight hours each year regardless of whether they previously operated an aircraft before. That there was a need is best illustrated by the enthusiastic tone of recent media reports on operations in two police forces that never had air support before – Lincolnshire and North Yorkshire. This is further underlined by news that the latter force has already requested a modest increase in their original annual allocation of flight hours.

The composition of NPAS staffing retains a local flavour. The officers attached to the individual units are in the main drawn from nearby police forces and bring with them local knowledge. Again the reduction in bases is said to reduce local knowledge but even under the older set-up members of flight crew regularly found themselves over unfamiliar territory and reliant upon the electronic assistance of sensors and mapping. Although it is in no manner a unique selling point there have been instances where the countrywide set up of NPAS has greatly assisted role trained staff to re-locate right across the country to their advantage.

CONTROL ROOM: There is a core of WYP officers, particularly the Control Room staff, that anchor the operations in Yorkshire but many of the original figures involved in the setting up of NPAS continue to travel at least 200 miles from as far away as Kent and Cornwall. High quality modern communications negate a need for them to be hands on in Bradford all the time and in any case the real work is undertaken in cooperating with the dispersed units and aviation suppliers across the country. In Bradford, representing WYP, are the recently appointed Chief Accountable Officer Chief Superintendent Ian Whitehouse and the Assistant Chief Constable Mark Milson providing the top layer of the organisation.

The most controversial element of the operation is the additional layer of control that the WYP based Control Room represents.

The National Control Room [NCR] and associated offices occupy a small part of a single floor of the former police station at Dudley Hill, Bradford. The facility uses a section of a large well equipped existing WYP back-up control suite and shares the services of the associated IT support team.

A great deal of venom was directed at the facility and the additional time lag it injected into the call out procedure. In the beginning there might have been reasonable grounds for the criticism as the otherwise experienced control staff found their feet with what was an unfamiliar scenario. Even within a large aviation operating force like WYP even the most experienced individual controllers rarely dealt with aircraft despatch and so they had a learning curve that was greatly assisted by unit visits, flight experience and regular contact with their customers – the units and the police forces.



Control Rooms are not exciting subjects for photography but these PAR images provide a window on the quietly professional controllers that direct NPAS resources throughout England and North Wales—the facility clearly has a significant potential for growth.



The situation quickly improved over time and was greatly helped out by a primary decision not to deny the individual units access to local police radio transmissions and where appropriate to self launch. The NCR retains control however and there will always be instances where self launching does not fit into to operating criteria.

The individual nature of the creation of the original air units produced different operating criteria so the new NPAS version is necessarily a distillation of the better aspects of each – that leading to different opinions on the worth of the whole. In other cases the NCR will have a wider picture of the national situation and may at times divert that self launching aircraft to a more important task and perhaps reallocating another nearby aircraft to the original call depending upon its operational worth.

In British terms the distances between bases may appear to be large but in World terms they are low, it is a matter of priorities and scale. Much has been said about all parts of England and Wales being within 20 minutes of a police air unit but that is very much a Gold Standard of cover not achieved by many nations from a cold start.

Assisting the local policing strategy are a number of regional Hailing Channels that can allow a degree of direct radio contact between ground forces and air support.

DELAYED VISIT: In general police aircraft are afforded priorities not given to other operators but a recent tragic accident illustrated there are sometimes unexpected limits to those agreements. On November 15 the Cleveland based EC135P2 was visiting the NPAS base at Hawarden, Chester when a private Cessna 310Q aircraft crashed killing the occupants. As a result the airport was closed. Although the based NPAS EC135P2 helicopter was allowed to come and go freely to deal with emergency calls the airport authorities, Aviation Park Group Ltd., refused the Cleveland aircraft an opportunity to leave [along with all commercial and private flights]. As a result the police aircraft remained stranded at Chester until the following day.

The crash of a twin engine aircraft killed Gary Vickers, 58 and his partner Kaye Clarke, 42 both from the Chester area. Gordon Vickers, the father of the experienced pilot Gary, and a pilot himself has paid tribute to the skills of his son in an as yet mystery accident. <http://www.chesterchronicle.co.uk>

WAKEFIELD: The NPAS MD902 aircraft based in Wakefield, formerly the West Yorkshire aircraft, has now had a makeover of its colour scheme and has joined the others in having a blue and yellow ‘conspicuity’ colour scheme.



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WALES: There is still no resolution of the situation in southern Wales but talks continue between the parties. Both of the units involved, a leased EC135T2 at St Athan and a AgustaWestland A109E Power at Pembrey currently operate less hours than would be expected by airframes in the National service. The flight time achieved by the Dyfed-Powys Power is significantly lower and despite being a fully SPIFR capable airframe it is virtually a daylight only service – and it always has been simply because of low funding failing to meet high aspirations.

The media line in Wales is that both forces had been due to 'scrap' their own helicopters and join the new National Police Air Service (NPAS) over the summer but refused to do so amid concerns about the level of coverage they would get. Neither machine is being scrapped, simply dropped from the programme and replaced with something different. The South Wales aircraft is leased and it was simply that the leased aircraft would be replaced by an NPAS owned machine at the end of the current lease in 2015. The Dyfed-Powys AgustaWestland A109E Power is a unique airframe and would not fit in with any multi-aircraft fleet support contracts. One of the keys to future cost cutting is economy of scale and a unique airframe cannot deliver that.

Now South & East Wales based at St. Athan have reached an agreement with NPAS to keep its own leased EC135T2 helicopter G-WONN [right] until January 2015 — and will then only join the national network "provided the new service is seen to be as good, if not better" than the one currently provided by its contractors, Bond.

The Dyfed-Powys commissioner is still negotiating with NPAS and is not announcing details so it could still take up the role of fixed wing operator – a development that was only mooted some time after the all-helicopter fleet was announced in October 2012.

Nonetheless there is a suggestion that the PCC is "... confident of securing a helicopter service for Dyfed-Powys...." to be based at Pembrey. [This is South Wales/PAR]

Ed: Despite the last statement credited to the PCC stating that a helicopter service would be based at Pembrey this seems wholly impracticable. Pembrey is just a stones throw from St.Athan and the expensive new facility was specifically designed for the AW109 and is therefore unsuitable for fixed wing as it is not attached to the runway. Perhaps moving the St.Athan aircraft to Pembrey would fit in politically in Dyfed but it is unlikely to prove popular with the South Wales and Gwent operation.





Bell has delivered a new Bell 429 N429MJ to a joint rescue and police operation to service a public private partnership that began two years ago at Flathead. The partnership is between the Flathead County Sheriff's Office and Two Bear Air.

Fundraising for the new helicopter started two years ago but it has effectively been put into service to replace its predecessor a Bell 407 single damaged earlier this year. The Helicopter has special features like night vision, specialized cameras, 3-D mapping systems and a rescue hoist.

Based in Whitefish, Montana, Two Bear Air provides world-class aviation support for search and rescue teams in Flathead County and other agencies across the region. Using the most advanced technology available, Whitefish philanthropist Mike Goguen supports all costs of the operation with zero cost to taxpayers, with the mission of ultimately saving lives.

Two Bear Air works in close partnership with the Flathead County Sheriff's Office and Kalispell Regional Medical Center's ALERT helicopter, adding to the rich history of rural aviation support across the rugged and vast landscape near Glacier National Park.

In September 2011 undersheriff Jordan White began to raise money for search and rescue equipment. After learning that search and rescue teams needed a quality helicopter Mike Goguen purchased a Bell 407 and committed to pay all costs of the operation under the name Two Bear Air, including expensive maintenance and staffing highly trained pilots and personnel.

He hired Jordan White to serve as the executive director and pilot. Mr. Goguen has spent more than \$10M at zero cost to the taxpayers of Montana.

The Bell 407 was retired in July 2013 and replaced by a McDonnell Douglas MD 500E awaiting the arrival of the newer Bell in October. The 429 uses the technology of ASU (Aviation Specialties Unlimited — leaders in night vision technology), Aero Computers (mission management and mapping systems), FLIR (thermal imaging, night vision, and infrared camera systems) and Goodrich rescue hoist from UTC Aerospace Systems. [2BA]



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OKLAHOMA: Next summer the Oklahoma City Police are getting two new \$3M Eurocopter AS350B3 to replace the two current helicopters. The new helicopters will be equipped for rappelling and fire bucket carriage, features not available on the current fleet. The current fleet is now aged around 10 to 12 years and was starting to cost the department a lot of money in repairs. [News 9]
Ed: This replacement has been in the planning stages since early 2009 and is now two years late. The original schedule was to start the replacement process in 2011 – when the expected unit cost was judged to be just \$1.9M.



Memorial Hermann EC145 N456TK pictured on October 25 at Houston-Ellington, Texas
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AIR AMBULANCE + + + + +

COLOMBIA

BUCARAMANGA: Because of its small size a type that is least likely to feature in the plans of most air ambulance operators is any Robinson – except it seems in Columbia. It is all a matter of scale, historically external litters got around diminutive size of helicopters but carrying a normal patient inside appears impossible. Over the last eleven months a hospital in Colombia has been operating a Robinson R66 in the role of pediatric air ambulance for the Fundacion Cardiovascular de Colombia (FCV) in the Andes.

The Robinson was selected as an affordable air ambulance to operate alongside Westwind 1124A and Learjet 31 jets in the region.

Doctors at FCV are using the R66 HK-4815-X to reach pediatric patients in remote areas. The back seat of the R66 has been replaced with a bench, an incubator and other medical equipment, an FAA certified role fit. A typical flight of one hour replaces a ground transportation trip of four to nine hours, which for some infants was just too long.

The hospital had been seeking a helicopter for some time but until the R66 option presented itself it was not economically viable.

EUROPE

DRF: To protect its crews against the dangers of carbon monoxide [CO] when attending visiting scenes of collapse in confined spaces DRF Luftrettung has equipped the crew members of all its helicopters with a CO detector.

The emergency physician carries the device with him, since he usually enters the location first. If the CO concentration is too high, the device warns the crew by vibration a light and a beeper sound.

The small device shows CO concentrations in parts per million (ppm) and warns in two stages - at a concentration of 30ppm and 60ppm. At 30 the warning is that there is something there and windows and doors need opening. 60 means an immediate evacuation is called for pending the arrival of respirator equipment.

To ensure that the emergency workers can rely on the CO detectors, they test them every morning using a test station containing a bottle with CO gas. This allows a check on whether the device gives a warning at an elevated concentration. So far, DRF Luftrettung is satisfied with the equipment. It costs €400 per HEMS base. More information is available at www.drf-luftrettung.de.



IRELAND

HEMS: In spite of several attempts to reverse the situation Ireland remains a nation with severely restricted air ambulance services. In the latest move to enhance coverage the Irish Coast Guard Sikorsky S92 rescue helicopter fleet is being utilised on a trial basis as an air ambulance service.

A trial period in Shannon is to be extended to Dublin shortly. Some 300 HEMS operations have already been carried out this year. [RTE]

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UNITED KINGDOM

NATIONAL: The National Conference and Awards of Excellence of the Association of Air Ambulances [AAA] was held on November 18 at the Millennium Gloucester Hotel in Kensington, London

The location was chosen after what was reported to be a non-too-exciting sojourn to Telford in the Midlands last time out, there is little doubt that the move found favour among those attending.

The AAA seeks to represent all air ambulances in the UK although not all are in fact members. It is a means by which all the charities and operators might speak with a common voice but although it is of a similar size, it is no take it or leave it route like the police NPAS. The operations currently outside AAA include, North West, Yorkshire, Wales and the Coventry based TAAS, although the latter sent an observer.

The AAA has struck an advantageous three year deal with the Millennium Hotel that will, disasters apart, see the annual AAA event within their plush surroundings for the foreseeable future. Even that deal is indicative of a new thinking within the AAA. In the past everyone was at such pains to be seen to be running events in a miserly and boring manner that the representative organisation withered and died through neglect; and the air ambulance industry has been to enough 'funerals' of its representatives – variations of NAAS and AAA - in the past. It is too early to say that the new set up will exhibit longevity but it should do.

The range of subjects covered in three rooms ensured that there was something for all from a diverse range of subjects - aviation, charity, fundraising and even police operations. The content was not always clear from the title.



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A title like Major Trauma Networks sounds quite medical but in fact majored on the difficulties that currently inhabit the HEMS industry in that the health service in concentrating its resources in some centres of excellence but quite often these locations were devoid of on-site helipads and it was the charity sector that was taking up the slack to insert landing sites in retrospect.

There is a fear of charities being hung out to dry by an ill-informed media. More than once in the recent past Charity overheads have been the source of criticism and that was the thread of a presentation entitled 'The elephant in the room' from Cornwall Air Ambulance. There will always be an ill informed media out there that fires from the hip without researching stories – and maybe it will get worse in the future as the number of paper publications with decently sized professional staff with time to think things through plummet.

An area of HEMS interest repeatedly returned to within the pages of PAN is paediatric air transport [and the specialist operation known as The Children's Air Ambulance TCAA] was the subject of presentation if not great discussion. A year on from the last time this was widely discussed nothing has changed significantly. There is a general air of there being no great need for a specialist service as long as there is a dearth of in hospital landing pads – if not beyond. The Air Ambulance Service [TAAS], the current guardians of TCAA are not members of the AAA but there was a silent representative in the room, so the rate of progress of the TCAA service is difficult to judge. After asking several well placed and informed people at the conference [each of whom did not wish to be quoted] it seems that the perception is that the number of CAA operations may be hovering around 10. If that is a true reflection of the *current need* it is clear that, as predicted, there is none.

The major aeronautical interest presentation at the one day conference was the growing interest in Night HEMS. The team from East Anglia Air Ambulance [EAAA] that gave a sparkling presentation at the September Helitech Show were back with a similar storyline. The passage of a month or so resulted in new items of information being added to the storyline as this new skill-set evolves.



It currently seems unlikely that every charity air ambulance will move to Night HEMS operations – like the paediatric service there is simply not enough demand yet – and there is no 24/7 operation on the stocks. The current operations are extensions of hours and will be so for some time yet. A mutual cross border assistance by the night operators is likely but no one is talking about charging or allowing funding raising cross border – the very thing that causes such tension with TCAA fundraising by TAAS nationally. Already EAAA regularly operates in support of surrounding charity air ambulances their EC135s have been seen in Essex and Hertfordshire and within the ring of the M25 all without charge. It may be that some time in the future this issue will have to be faced and the AAA will be the forum for that.

All the night operations meet the requirements of the UK CAA but there is no standard operating model, that is evolving based upon flight experience and the type of demand it prompts. Already there are signs that the type of calls the helicopters will be attending are falling outside the projected model. Daytime brings blunt trauma [as produced by car and industrial accidents] and nights bring penetrating trauma [stabblings].



Explorer operators led by Medical Aviation Services [SAS/PAS/MAS] fly two pilot and the EC135s [Bond] fly single pilot and yet the now withdrawn police Explorer operation was also flown single pilot.

Each solution has represented a success story for the Trakka searchlight. This new technology has been quietly been making headway against the old technology and new [Spectrolab and Thommen] with most of the customers not wishing to announce purchases. Neither of the Night HEMS solutions sought to have a searchlight fitted – each hoped to save weight by using smaller fixed lights. Once the CAA set out its needs both developers selected the Trakka.

Ollie Dismore the Flight Operations Director of NPAS, seen here right with Nigel Hare of Devon Air Ambulance, gave the latest updates on the police aviation changes to an audience drawn from across the air ambulance community. He had to go head to head against an open mike session on fundraising and a discussion on Ultrasound but managed a good audience.



The best and brightest from the air ambulance world emerged victorious at the first national Air Ambulance Awards of Excellence. The awards, which are independently judged, received a significant number of nominations from air ambulance operations across the UK. Winners included medics and aircrew; a volunteer; a charity worker and a staff employee at the prestigious event held in London last night.

This is the first year the awards have been held and were hosted by BBC Breakfast presenter Louise Minchin with GP and noted comedian Dr Phil Hammond on hand to present each winner with their award in front of an enthusiastic gathering.



The Chairman of the AAA, Bill Siverwright [right], selected the National Director of the AAA Clive Dickin for his personal award. He is seen here wearing a temporary Movember moustache flanked by BBC Breakfast presenter Louise Minchin with GP and noted comedian Dr Phil Hammond.
©PAR

AAA Chairman's Award	Clive Dickin – National Director, AAA
Outstanding Young Person Award: Sponsor: Bond Air Services	Poppy Young – Essex and Herts Air Ambulance
Charity Staff Member of the Year: Sponsor: Milestone Aviation Group	Janice Flower – Essex & Herts Air Ambulance
Air Ambulance Paramedic of the Year: Sponsor: Prometheus Medical Ltd	Graham Chalk – London Air Ambulance
Air Ambulance Doctor of the Year: Sponsor: Bound Tree Medical	Dr Anne Weaver – London Air Ambulance
Air Ambulance Pilot of the Year: Sponsor: Quadrant Events	Captain Neil Jeffers – London Air Ambulance
Air Ambulance Campaign of the Year: Sponsor: Lottery fundraising Services	Devon Air Ambulance – 'Devon Air Ambulance on Tour'
Charity Volunteer of the Year: Sponsor: Donorflex	Jenny Ashman – Midlands Air Ambulance
Special Incident Award: Sponsor: Eurocopter UK	Dorset & Somerset Air Ambulance Captain Max Hoskins; Paramedic Greg Peacock; Paramedic Steve Freeman
Lifetime Achievement Award: Sponsor: Medical Aviation Services	Dr Gareth Davies – London Air Ambulance

Headline winners were London Air Ambulance scooping four awards including Pilot of the Year award, Doctor of the Year, Paramedic of the Year and Dr Gareth Davies with his Lifetime Achievement Award.

In the other categories top honours went to Poppy Young as Outstanding Young Person and Charity Staff Member Janice Flower from Essex and Herts Air Ambulance. Honours also went to volunteer Jenny Ashman for her fundraising efforts over a twenty year period for Midlands Air Ambulance.

Devon Air Ambulance took the Campaign of the Year award and the Special Incident award was presented to the aircrew from Dorset and Somerset Air Ambulance.

Chairman of the Judging Panel, Guy Opperman MP, said: "It was a wonderful night with each and every one of our air ambulance recipients striving to set the highest possible standards of excellence in the sector. It has been an honour to be involved with such an inspirational group of people."

Next year the awards will take place on November 17, with nominations being taken from the 1st January until 1st September 2014. For more information please visit www.aoaa.org.uk/aaee [AAA]



Outstanding Young Person, Poppy Young, Essex & Herts Air Ambulance with Louise Minchin, Paul Westaway [Bond Air Services] and Dr Phil Hammond. ©AAA

DERBYSHIRE, LEICESTERSHIRE & RUTLAND: The air ambulance (DLRAA) have begun operating with their brand new AgustaWestland AW109SP Grand New, one of the fastest civilian helicopters in the country and able to reach speeds of 185mph.

The helicopter was handed over to DLRAA by Sloane Helicopters, who provide all three helicopters for TAAS. After a few days of familiarisation with the pilots, the helicopter took off on its first mission from East Midlands Airport on October 25.

The new helicopter includes more advanced GPS, radio and autopilot features, as well as upgraded electric systems. The new autopilot is now capable of carrying out more complex flight procedures. It is also a night capable aircraft meaning the Charity can now look at the need for a night service in its area.

HELP CHARITY: In the midst of the current problems with the NHS, there is some good news as the HELP (Helicopter and Emergency Landing Pads) Appeal announces the completion, development and ongoing success of a number of life-saving hospital helipads across England.

The charity, which was set up by the County Air Ambulance Trust and relies solely on public donations, provides grants to NHS Hospitals across England to fund the development of life-saving helipads, providing direct access to A&E departments and thus significantly reducing patient transfer times.

In the South, the HELP Appeal's second completed project at Southampton General Hospital, has just celebrated its second anniversary. The helipad, which received a £700k grant from the HELP Appeal, has received an average landing of one per day since opening in November 2011.

A new helipad at St Mary's Hospital, Isle of Wight, was officially opened by The Duke of Kent in November, with a grant of 250K from the HELP Appeal. The new facility also allows patients with life-threatening trauma injuries to be flown from the Isle of Wight to Southampton General Hospital as quickly as possible.



Work is well underway on a 25m x 25m helipad on the roof of the St James' Ward at St George's Hospital in Tooting, South West London, following the assembly of the UK's biggest crane on site. With the support of a £1M donation from the HELP Appeal, the helipad will be the second in London and the first south of the river, significantly reducing transfer times to the hospital's Major Trauma Centre. The helipad is due to be open early next year.

The Bristol Royal Infirmary (BRI) celebrated completion of a new helipad, with a £500K Grant from the HELP Appeal. The helipad, which becomes operational in the New Year, will form part of a redevelopment programme at the hospital involving the centralisation of specialist paediatric services at Bristol Royal Hospital for Children (BRCH). Airlifted patients from all over the south west requiring the services of either hospital will benefit from the helipad, which will prevent the need for secondary road transfers, dramatically reducing the time it takes to access the emergency treatments required.

Plans for 2014, in addition to completions in London and Bristol, are progressing for new

helipads at Derriford Hospital in Plymouth, Northern General Hospital in Sheffield, Aintree University Hospital in Liverpool and Hull Royal Infirmary. Out of the 20 Adult Major Trauma Centres in England, almost every single one will have a helipad by the end of next year. www.helpappeal.co.uk.

HERTFORDSHIRE: Herts Air Ambulance has celebrated five years of being in operation and saving lives across Hertfordshire. To mark this very special milestone the Charity hosted a celebration evening for its supporters at the prestigious Haileybury College in Hertford with special guest Ray Winstone a new celebrity patron!

The Herts Air Ambulance and the HEMS Team at the scene of an incident and key statistics from the past 5 years of Herts Air Ambulance



JERSEY: Only a few months ago the pages of PAN were carrying news of the arrangements in place for the fixed wing transport of patients to the UK mainland. What that story did not cover was the 'What if?' scenario. Last month a critically ill baby was taken from Jersey to Southampton Hospital by a Royal Navy helicopter after heavy fog closed the island's airport to fixed wing operations. A medical team had earlier been forced to fly into another Channel Island and then been

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transferred by Guernsey's marine ambulance in force five winds and choppy seas. The RN Sea King helicopter landed on a football pitch in Millbrook to pick up the baby boy, who needed emergency care in the UK. [media]

WALES: Lifesaving charity Wales Air Ambulance has installed portable incubators in its three aircraft, helping seriously ill infants receive the critical care they need by air.

The 'Babypod' is the first of its kind in Wales and can be installed on each helicopter within minutes, saving precious time in a paediatric emergency.

Wales Air Ambulance airlifts around 400 children every year from its bases in Swansea, Caernarfon and Welshpool. The incubators will make a vital difference in treating and flying infants up to nine months old, which accounts for on average three missions each month.

The pioneering equipment is made of lightweight, non-metallic materials, allowing it to be used in x-ray and MRI machines when babies reach hospital.

The Babypods are lined with shock absorbing foam, ensuring minimal vibrations from aircraft engines, and has a transparent lid allowing parents and paramedics to constantly monitor infants. The Babypod is 100cm long, 43cm wide and 30cm in height, weighs 9.5kg and can be carried by one crew member.

It is fitted onto the aircraft stretcher using custom built mounting system, enabling the incubator to be secured or removed within minutes. Infants are conveyed in a stable environment, meaning advanced and emergency treatment can be carried out in-flight, such as managing a difficult or blocked airway, or administering drugs. The pod is non-metallic, x-ray translucent and MRI compatible for when the baby reaches hospital. [WAA]

UNITED STATES

CALIFORNIA: An air ambulance company was fined nearly \$33,000 by San Joaquin County officials for deviating from the county's transport plan for trauma patients.

The county also renewed its agreement with REACH Air Medical Services, which has been transporting patients in San Joaquin County since 2005.

The company replaced the manager responsible for its operations in San Joaquin County and submitted a corrective plan of action that includes new training and more communication. Both county and company officials said the plan goes beyond ensuring the ambulance company follows the county plan in the future.

The incidents that led to the fines took place in August. In one the REACH helicopter took a patient to a hospital in Stanislaus County after being told to take the patient to San Joaquin General Hospital. The air crew changed its route to a hospital with a higher-level trauma center because of the patient's head injury.

In the second instance the helicopter initially insisted on taking an injured child to Oakland Children's Hospital but eventually complied with instructions and took it to UC Davis Medical Center in Sacramento.

Both incidents deviated from the county's new trauma plan outlining procedures to treat patients suffering from traumatic injuries, including where to take them, depending on the severity of the injury. The plan is designed and directed by physicians to give patients the best chance for survival. They came down hard on REACH because it was a wilful act of refusal.

Even after the expensive disagreement the county Board of Supervisors voted unanimously to renew its agreement with REACH. The payment of the \$32,652 was an accommodation, an alternative to the suspension of operations for three days.

Founded in 1987, REACH provides air ambulance services in California, Oregon and Texas.



MARYLAND: They have been a familiar sight over the state for some months on their training flights but the new AgustaWestland AW139 helicopters only entered service last month.

Maryland State Police Superintendent Colonel Marcus L. Brown joined Dr. Robert Bass of the Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services System and other state and local officials at the Aviation Command's Eastern Section on November 19, to officially mark the commencement of full-service mission operation of the first AW 139 helicopter to be deployed on the Eastern Shore. The pilots and flight paramedics who staff "Trooper 6" have now been fully trained on the new aircraft.

AUSTRALIA

VICTORIA: Firebombing aircraft will be sent to bushfires and grass fires across Victoria more rapidly this summer, under new rules for aircraft management that aim to tackle fires from the air sooner and stop them spreading.

The new aircraft dispatch system - which was trialled in Victoria last summer - is a response to a key recommendation from the Bushfires Royal Commission, which found the authorisation system for aircraft used on Black Saturday was too slow.

The royal commission heard many concerns about aircraft dispatch on Black Saturday, including that the first two fire-bombing aircraft dispatched to the deadly Murrindindi fire that destroyed most of Marysville "arrived too late".

Under the new system, firebombing aircraft will be dispatched as quickly as possible and at the same time as ground crews. This differs from the traditional system, under which aircraft are sent only after a ground crew reaches a fire and decides if aircraft are needed.

UNITED STATES

MISSISSIPPI: Bombardier has sold and delivered its 50th 415 superscooper amphibian aircraft. The aircraft, purchased by a partnership led by Tenax Aerospace, LLC of Ridgeland, Mississippi, will be used under contract to the United States Forest Service starting this month. The contract, thought to be valued at approximately \$34.5M, represents the first sale of the type into the USA.

The Bombardier 415 superscooper aircraft is the only aircraft specifically built for aerial fire fighting. It is able to land on unpaved runways, lakes, rivers and seas, enabling both rapid initial attacks to extinguish fires and sustained attacks to contain fires.

While this Bombardier 415 aircraft is the first to be sold to a United States customer, a total of five State and privately owned CL-215 aircraft, the predecessor to the Bombardier 415 aircraft, are currently operated in the United States.

Since the first Bombardier 415 amphibious aircraft was delivered in 1994, a total of 85 Bombardier 415 and four Bombardier 415 MP aircraft have been delivered to governments and fire fighting agencies around the world. In addition, 80 CL-215 and CL-215T amphibious piston aircraft remain in service worldwide. www.bombardier.com



SEARCH & RESCUE

NORWAY

STOCKHOLM: The Norwegian government has decided to enter final negotiations with AgustaWestland Ltd., for the delivery of the AW101 as their new rescue helicopters to replace the current Sea King fleet. [Ministry of Justice and Public Security]

UNITED KINGDOM

BRISTOW: Trakka Corp Pty Ltd has announced that the A800 Trakkabeam Tactical Searchlight has been selected by Bristow Helicopters for all 22 of its new UK Search and Rescue aircraft. Bristow has been awarded the contract to deliver the UK SAR helicopter service from 2015 by the Department for Transport.

Bristow will be utilizing the unique, internally fitted, spectral light filters only available on the A800, to enhance their SAR operations. Trakka's IR filter allows the operators to use the searchlight effectively with Night Vision Goggles, where the light actually enhances the goggle view on the target area. The amber filter allows for improved light penetration through mist, rain and smoke, while the visible red filter is ideal for winching operations or other close in work. All of these filters are available at the flick of a switch within a second, making the Trakkabeam the only true multi-mission searchlight on the market today.

INDUSTRY

Astronics Corporation's **Max-Viz Enhanced Vision System** has been selected by Simplex® Aerospace as standard equipment for its SkyCannon™ and Fire Attack™ Systems.

The Simplex SkyCannon is a helicopter-mounted fire fighting system that enables fire fighters to reach fires in high-rise buildings more quickly and effectively than traditional ground-based systems. Complemented with the Astronics Max-Viz Enhanced Vision System, operators of Simplex fire fighting equipment will be able to see through smoke while fighting high-rise fires.

The new Simplex system will be compatible with viewing Max-Viz images on the aircraft multifunction display or on a dedicated display. In addition to enhanced vision images, newly designed Simplex Aerospace Fire Attack systems will support data acquisition of door operation, hover pump activation and foam pump activation, all correlated with aircraft GPS position. www.simplex.aero.

AKV, Inc., located in Camarillo, California, USA has announced that their ETM1000 Exceedence and Data Trending system received EASA STC approval No. 10046919 on November 5th, 2013.

The ETM1000 provides monitoring and recording of the drive train for trending purposes, as well as being configured to emulate the Rotorcraft Flight Manual and record exceedences based on the operating limitations for all engine and rotor parameters.

The ETM1000 provides the pilot with panel mounted pushbutton annunciators as well as side tone that will alert the pilot when operating in close proximity to takeoff and transient limits.

The ETM1000 is approved for the Eurocopter AS350D, B, BA, B1, and B2 (VEMD) powered with Arriel 1 or LTS101 series engines and provides an affordable solution for those seeking to incorporate FOQA compliance for legacy A/C.

AKV, Inc. is actively working on adding installation approval for the Bell series helicopters including the Bell 206B/L, 407 and Mediums, including the UH-1, 204, and 205. Future additions will include the Robinson R22, R44, R66, and MD line of helicopters. sales@akvinc.com
www.akvinc.com



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At the time of the **Helitech** in London the editor raised a query about the crashworthy capabilities of the stroking seats fitted to the EC145-T2 on display on the Eurocopter stand. The query was based upon perceived differences in the design of the seats fitted in different rows of the cabin. The rear seat row appeared to have significantly less space under the seat for stroking and to have significantly less headroom for rear passengers compared to front passengers.



Like a number of other current production airframes aircraft such as the EC145 have design features rooted in older technology – although EC naturally seek to promote the latest version 145 as wholly new it remains a BK117 at heart and that brings with it some useful ‘Grandfather Rights.’ A number of older types cannot offer passengers the safety of stroking seats and others can only offer such seating in the forward cabin areas for structural reasons.

A suspicion formed that the differing headlining heights might make effective stroking questionable in the rear of the BK117/EC145 and yet the aircraft on display was fitted with full seating.

Some weeks after the request for information Eurocopter duly came up with an answer that addressed the query. Suffice to say that although the stroking distance is significantly less the design still meets the requirements for impact attenuation—albeit at the expense of headroom for we taller passengers.

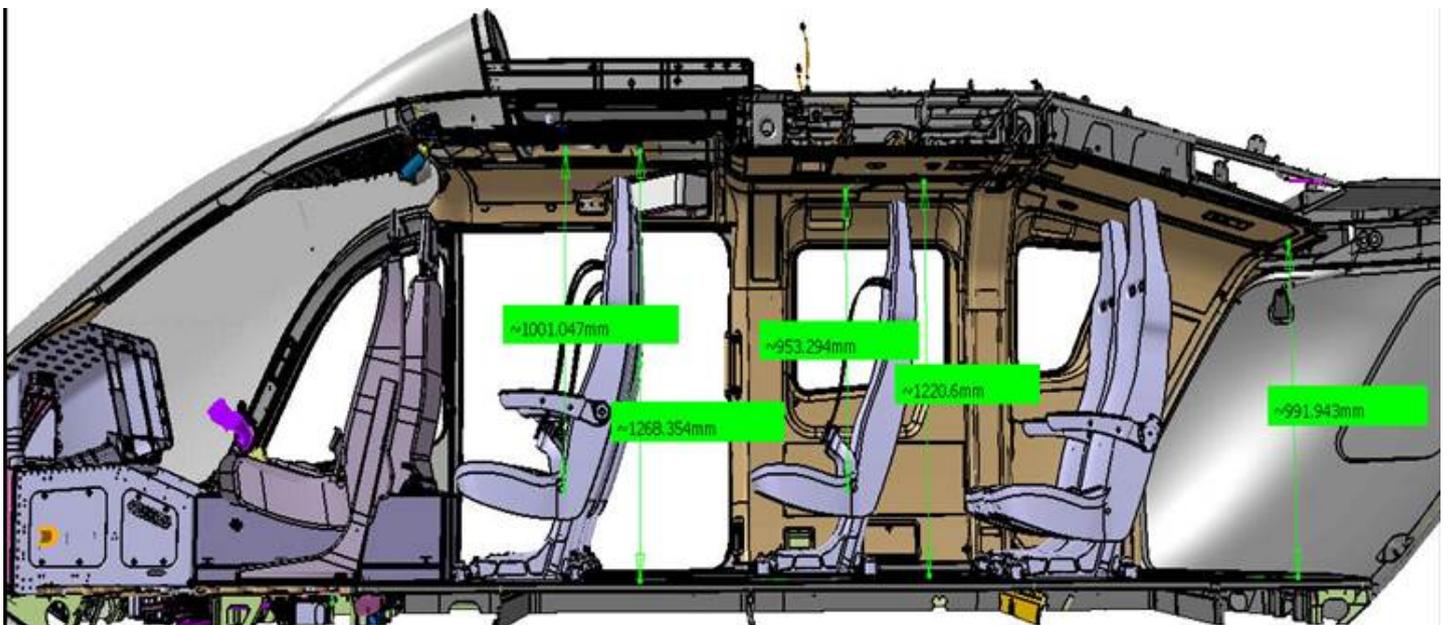
“... please find below the answers prepared by our team concerning your questions on the EC145-T2...”

“1. The distance between the seat squab and the roof lining in the cabin varies depending on the position inside the cabin. The distances are shown in the following ... picture:

“2. The seat height restriction is directly related to the certification requirement of crashworthy seats to cater for a generic person, according the specifications of a 95 percentile male and 5 percentile female person. This is valid for crew seats as well as for passenger seats.

“3. The stroking distance below the seats is an essential part of the certification. It is absolutely mandatory to leave sufficient space for stroking otherwise the seat will not be certified. This also counts in the lowest position for the maximum certified weight according to the specifications of the seat”.

Eurocopter sent two images and this is the clearer of the two. It clearly shows a lowering headlining for rows three and four and a significant decrease in gap under the rear seat row which undoubtedly caused the engineers some problems!



It isn't over until the fat lady sings is a well used term and the same applies to the fortunes of **MD Helicopters** in the Middle East.

Dubai-based Quest Aviation Solutions has been appointed exclusive sales distributor for MD Helicopters' multi mission product range of helicopters in the UAE. The deal was announced on the opening day of the 2013 Dubai Air Show. Quest's territory will cover the Emirates of Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah, Ajman, Umm al-Qaiwain, Ras-al-Khaimah and Fujairah.

Quest Aviation Solutions will market the whole MD Helicopter product range from the single-engine multi mission 500 and 600 series including the unique 530F and 540F for hot-and-high challenging missions, to the top of the range twin- engine MD902 Explorer. Discussions are taking place to provide a local parts and maintenance centre.

Quest was displaying an example of the MD902 Explorer configured in an EMS role. This aircraft is one of those to be found in service with Qatar's Gulf Helicopters which has been the country's first civil EMS contract, supporting the HAMAD Hospital in Doha, since 2008. It is proving to be a reliable and rugged performer within the challenging environment and hot temperatures of Qatar. The 902 was scheduled to undertake a sales tour immediately after the event.



The Team at Quest Aviation Solutions has considerable experience in marketing both helicopters and fixed wing aircraft globally. Commercial Director Mike Creed will lead the sales drive.

"We very much look forward to securing new sales in the UAE, mirroring the success MD Helicopters has achieved in other equally demanding markets," Mike Creed said. "After a slow couple of years the appetite for general business aviation and Multi Mission Light helicopters has improved significantly in the UAE," he emphasized. Creed sees a significant change of thinking in the region where the Light Multi Mission Helicopter will start to excel in the Police and the EMS roles, especially. The MD Explorer's attractiveness is that it combines twin engine safety with "NOTAR" technology, providing quiet and safe operational needs which all operators demand.

"MD has not been pro-active in the UAE for a few years now, owing to a targeted strategy in other global regions. But now, with this new partnership with Quest, which will be dedicated to promoting the unique characteristics of our helicopters, as well as the excellent relation-

ship we enjoy with the company's directors and Mike Creed, we are confident we have the right partner to deliver sales success in the region," said Perry Orr, MD Helicopters Director, Middle East and Africa.

Ed: There have been several stop start projects in the region as far as MD are concerned – according to the stories circulating a handful of years ago every HEMS operation in the region should be operating MD902 Explorer's by now but the big dipper fortunes of the company and some questionable marketing choices simply resulted the many 'dead cert' deals evaporating and other aircraft types stepping in. The only HEMS operation to survive was the one in Qatar.

In recent years Mike Creed has been fronting Quest Aviation Solutions and their plans to develop the Gulf region's first locally-produced helicopter and that project looks likely to be put on ice in order for Quest to take up an opportunity to become sales distributor for MD, the deal announced at the Dubai Airshow.

Mike Creed is now the commercial and deputy project director for Quest Aviation Solutions but he has long-established relations with the U.S. firm and this relationship clearly has led to a healing of past wounds.

At the Dubai 2011 Airshow Quest launched the tandem-rotor, light-twin AVQ helicopter, a \$2.95M aircraft designed in the Ukraine but set to be manufactured in the UAE. First flight for the helicopter, which featured an ejection capsule, had been planned for early this year but no signs of the project reaching fabrication are evident.



In 1969 Mike Creed started out as operations manager at Fairoaks Airport in Surrey, where he learned to fly. In a succession of posts in the UK he joined the Mann Group in sales and marketing, Sloane Helicopters, Patriot Aviation and Harrods Aviation before leaving to join Action Aviation in November 2005.

By the middle of 2006 Action Aviation was closely linked to the Sino Swearingen SJ30 business jet, a project with a long drawn out development period that has not yet exhibited the promise it once showed.

At the November 2006 Dubai Helishow Action Aviation was appointed as a distributor for MD Helicopters for regions including the Arab Gulf and Scandinavia and locally based Mike Creed was at the forefront of the publicity and sales team on the deal. The exclusive distribution contract for eight years included the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Bahrain, Oman, Denmark, Norway, Sweden and Finland.



Right: Mike Creed [centre] and Lynn Tilton [extreme right] together at the 2006 Dubai Helishow when he fronted the last major sales boost for MD in the region.

Over the following months the relationship between senior figures at Action Aviation and MD soured. Action could demonstrate significant sales in the region but the fall out, reportedly over margins, resulted in a number of them failing and MD Helicopter's fortunes facing a significant dip.

In April 2009 Mike Creed left Action Aviation after 3 years for Project Phoenix, a business jet operation, as VP Sales and next reappeared in the limelight with Dubai based Quest in 2011.

I suspect that this time the situation will be more favourable for the fortunes of MD.

Gama Aviation, an executive air charter company, has announced plans to provide an air ambulance in the UAE region by 2014.

Gama, which currently runs the Scottish air ambulance with up to 4,000 flights yearly, is looking to expand into the UAE and the Mena region. The decision is part of a larger plan to gain market share in the region, as the company noted a 70 per cent increase in movements on an annual basis.

Gama opened an office in Jeddah two years ago, and is working hard to establish a name and brand in Saudi Arabia.

The company's latest project was a \$5 million investment in a new facility in Scotland last week. Indeed, Gama has been expanding over the last two years. Its current projects in the UAE include working with UAE-based clients, as well as a recent VIP handling facility in Sharjah, which provides various services for VIP flights. [Gulf News]



Vector Aerospace Corporation has announced the establishment of a new engine facility at Singapore's Seletar Aerospace Park specially built for the PW150A turboprop engine. The new 8,000 sqm engine center housing a 5,200 sq. metre state-of-the-art facility represents Vector Aerospace's appointment as a Pratt and Whitney Designated Overhaul Facility (DOF) and will be equipped with full engine overhaul and test capability.

Vector Aerospace will be investing more than \$50M (Sing) in the construction, tooling and equipping of this facility.

By locating in the Asia Pacific region, Vector Aerospace will provide the owners of PW150A engines and operators of Bombardier Q400 a cost effective, viable, easily accessible MRO alternative and significantly strengthens Vector Aerospace's presence in the region from its scheduled completion late next year. www.vectoraerospace.com

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INCIDENTS & INCIDENTS

12 October 2013 Beechcraft King Air C90 N426EM. Air ambulance of EagleMed LLC, Wichita, Kansas USA. The aircraft stationed at San Marcos, Texas, USA was en-route to Iraan, Texas for a patient pick up. Shortly after touchdown at the Iraan airport, the aircraft struck a deer. The deer unexpectedly darted into the path of the aircraft from the left and was struck by the aircraft. Aircraft control was not affected and both engines continued to operate normally. The pilot taxied the aircraft clear of the runway and onto the parking ramp a short distance away and was shut down. Post flight inspection revealed damage to one of the right propeller blades and minor damage to the main landing gear door. [Concern]

3 November 2013 Britten-Norman BN-2B Islander G-CIAS Channel Islands Air Search aircraft made a forced landing in a north Jersey field with five on-board whilst undertaking a sea search task with other resources. No injuries reported. Damage apparently limited to part of the fixed undercarriage being ripped off in the belly landing [Media]

5 November 2013 Eurocopter AS350 N. Customs & Border Protection (CBP) helicopter had to make an emergency landing in the Lower Rio Grande Valley near Roma, Texas, USA. The CBP helicopter landed safely in a vacant lot off North Athens and East La Frauga Streets with no injuries. It is reported that the helicopter sustained damage by something striking the main rotor blade, allegedly a rock thrown by somebody on the Mexican side of the border but those reports have not been confirmed. [Media]

13 November 2013 MDHI MD500E N556CP. Columbus Police Department helicopter landed unexpectedly after a warning light came on, it was not damaged. Officer David Eubanks, the piloting, brought the helicopter down on an athletic field at Grandview Heights High School near 5th and North Star avenues. [Media]

19 November 2013 Bombardier LearJet 35 XA-USD Air Ambulance. Aircraft crashed into the Atlantic Ocean about three miles off Fort Lauderdale killing the four persons aboard. The aircraft operated on behalf of AirVac International, had flown to Fort Lauderdale with a patient and had just taken off on the return trip to Cozumel when the pilot reported mechanical problems and asked permission to return to the airport. [Media]

26 November 2013 Helicopter Iranian Police. Crashed near the eastern city of Saravan close to the Pakistan border. No one was injured in the incident and it was reported that 'no serious damage was caused to the airframe' but an image of the supposed aircraft suggests that it was upright but severely damaged. [Trend]

DIARY

11-13 December 2013 ASPACPOL the 2nd Indonesia Asia Pacific Police and Internal State Security Event to be held at the Jakarta International Expo [JIExpo] Kemayoran, Jakarta- Indonesia. Hosted by Indonesian National Police and supported by Ministry of Industry, Ministry of Trade, National Disaster Management Agency Republic of Indonesia, and Indonesia Exhibition Companies Association (IECA). This event will host over 300 exhibitors from 30 countries and 9,000 delegates and trade visitors. The first ASPACPOL was in 2011. Questions regarding participation at this event to be directed to tel: +62 21 864 4756 / 85, fax: +62 21 865 0963 or e-mail: info@aspacpol.com

PAvCon latest: The 2014 PAvCon Police Aviation Conference will be held at the Air Support Unit of the State Police in Belgium [street address: Haachtsesteenweg 138, 1820 Melsbroek, Brussels, Belgium] on June 3-4, 2014.

The number of organisations that have indicated they are attending includes all the police services in central Europe and, so far at least a dozen from industry. **Revue Thommen** are again sponsoring the first night.

The PAvCon website will carry venue and hotel information documents later this month.



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