

Police Aviation News

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Number 213 January 2014

PAR

HAPPY NEW YEAR



SCOTTISH POLICE CRASH KILLS 10
EC135 SAFETY - NOW UNDER SCRUTINY
UK 'GO IT ALONE' WOES **POLICE 100**
IS YOUR FREE HELICOPTER REALLY NEEDED?
FIRST 24/7 UK HEMS **OTHER START UPS**
NORWAY SIGNS UP SAR AW101

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EDITORIAL

Happy New Year.

This month marks 100 years of police aviation. The story of the simple prisoner transportation by a Curtiss seaplane off the coast of Florida has been told many times before and is carried in both the latest edition of the ALEA's Air Beat magazine and on the PAN website for those needing to read it afresh.

I had hoped that this apparently noteworthy event would be marked in a high profile manner as was afforded to other recent centenaries but there was no interest in the event within everyone in the Miami Police air units or those elements of US industry potentially considered close to the event. Reflecting this general apathy the marking of an event that is in effect where our industry came from will have to rest as this short editorial.

Bryn Elliott



POLICE AVIATION

BRAZIL

SAN PAULO: The Government of the State of San Paulo in Brazil has placed an order for a GrandNew light twin helicopter. The aircraft will be operated by the Military Police of the State of San Paulo to perform environmental and forest patrols and airborne surveillance missions in the State of San Paulo and will be delivered in 2014. The contract also includes a comprehensive logistic support and maintenance package which will be supplied by AgustaWestland do Brasil, headquartered in San Paulo.

Procurement was made under the *Programa de Recuperação Socioambiental da Serra do Mar e Sistema de Mosaicos da Mata Atlântica (Social and Environmental Recovery Programme of the Serra do Mar and Atlantic Forest)*, following a tender issued by the State of San Paulo Forest Conservation which selected the GrandNew as the best platform among competing types. The contract marks the first order by the Government of the State of San Paulo for an AgustaWestland helicopter and adds one more GrandNew in a law enforcement configuration in Brazil, following an order for one helicopter of same type made by the State of Rio de Janeiro. [AW]

Front Cover: The New Year winter is scheduled to be one of the hardest yet for the United Kingdom but we will have to see how true that is in due course—one thing the weather bureau always get wrong is long range projections.

Setting the scene for what may be to come is one of the Devon Air Ambulance Trust Eurocopter [soon to be Airbus Helicopter] EC135 helicopters is a snowy Devon scene.

Devon were among the lead charities in buying rather than leasing their new aircraft—a development that is gaining more converts as the months pass by.

The next development for Devon is to a new base at Exeter Airport it will share with NPAS.

CANADA

ALBERTA: The Edmonton Police helicopter unit has been ejected from its base to a location they now find unsuitable.

No it's nothing they did wrong nor a bill they left unpaid, they simply joined with all their neighbours in moving out from an airport in the middle of town that has been earmarked for redevelopment as housing and industry for many years. City Centre Airport has closed and the police now fly from Villeneuve Airport.

The move led to a police chief clashing with politicians over a perceived difficulty the police operation now faces over the capabilities of its two \$2M helicopters.

Deputy Chief David Korol Edmonton police has declared that the force are now looking at buying one or two \$8M twin-engined helicopters if they can't find an alternative site to base their current fleet.

The new location has added to their operating time and expense, and police have been unsuccessful so far in their search for a place around Edmonton to land and refuel. There is a realisation that alternative sites might need to increased capabilities of a light twin type. There have been negotiations with the army about moving to the military base at Namao, Edmonton as well as private landowners in the city.

A member of the Edmonton Police Commission criticized the lack of communication he's had on the issue and stated flatly that buying one or two higher-priced new helicopters is out of the question.

The City Centre Airport officially closed at 4:49pm on Saturday, November 30, 2013, bringing to an end one of Edmonton's longest-running civic debates. The City Council voted to close the airport in phases way back in July 2009 following years of argument and reports. One runway closed in August 2010 even as the battle to get a stay of execution continued.

A new, 3,600-square-metre air ambulance based opened earlier this year at the Edmonton International Airport, completing the relocation of medevac services.

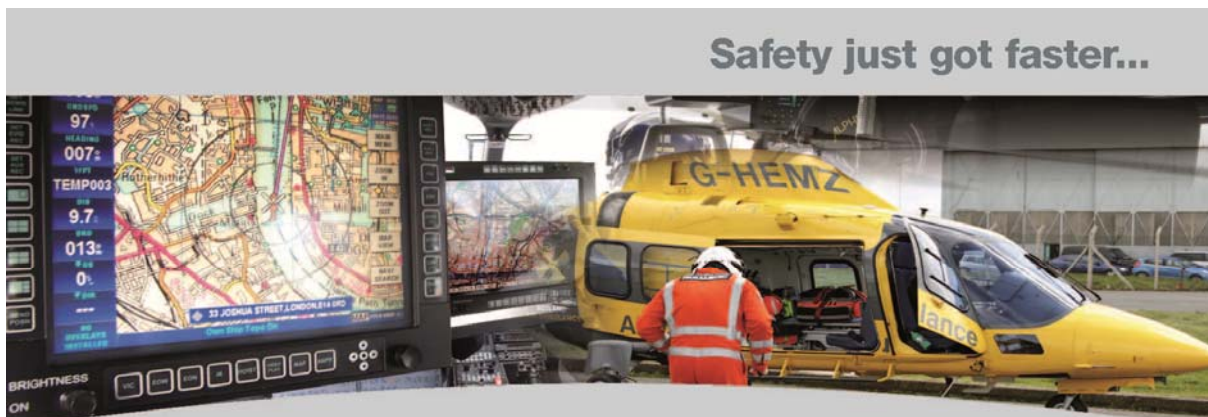
In October Villeneuve Airport announced an expansion that includes plans to build 6 new hangars, to extend one runway to 5,000 feet, to install an Instrument Landing System (ILS), and to improve storm water, domestic water, and sanitary systems. [Journal]

CHINA

DALIAN: Dalian Municipality has taken delivery of its second Turbomeca powered EC155 B1 for missions ranging from surveillance, rescue and anti-terrorism, to fire-fighting, troop airlift and the transportation of personnel.

The EC155 B1 is equipped with a locally produced electro-optical FLIR (forward-looking infrared) camera, searchlight, loud speakers, rappelling ropes and hoist. It also has the capability to carry a water bucket delivery system in support of fire-fighting missions. [EC]

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GERMANY

FEDERAL: Christie Systems USA, Inc. builder of customised projection display equipment is supplying Frasca International twelve simulation projection systems for the German Federal Police's (BPOL), two new Eurocopter EC155 and AS332, and Helicopter Flight Training Devices (FTDs) at BPOL's new Simulator Centre in Sankt Augustin, Germany, which opened in July 2013.

The award-winning Christie Matrix StIM™ WUXGA 1-chip DLP® solid state, LED-based projectors will power the new FTDs with a field of view of 200° horizontal by 68° vertical for training for both day and night operations.

Frasca say they chose the Christie Matrix StIM projectors because they were the only viable dual normal/IR projection solution on the market. The projectors were new so Frasca had a lot of design questions and, as with any complex project, customer support is critical to success to ensure they met the high quality required.

The Matrix StIM uses Christie InfraScene™ to provide independent control over both visible light and the infrared spectrum for a more realistic training experience with real night vision goggles (NVGs). Through InfraScene the Christie Matrix StIM accurately depicts day and night scenes as well as independent, stimulated NVG images of airports, hospitals, and maritime features in relation to civil SAR and law enforcement mission training. [\[web site\]](#).



BADEN WÜRTTEMBERG: The south western German state of Baden Württemberg has ordered six Eurocopter EC145 T2 helicopters, becoming the first law enforcement customer for this evolved version of the EC145 [BK117] rotorcraft.

When delivered in 2015-2016, these EC145 T2s will provide the force with a highly capable multi-role fleet to replace a mixed fleet of two other helicopter types, the MD902 and the EC155.

Although its service entry has been delayed by avionics integration issues Eurocopter's EC145 T2 is an eagerly awaited type that incorporates new Arriel 2E engines and the Fenestron shrouded tail rotor, along with upgraded main

and tail rotor gear boxes to take the BK117 line to another level.

Baden Württemberg has been an exclusively loyal Eurocopter customer for decades, firstly with the BO105 and earlier versions of the BK117 as well as the EC155 they still operate so the manufacturer welcomes their return to the brand.

The aircraft will be equipped with a modern mission management system that facilitates the EC145 T2's multi-role capabilities in law enforcement. Its primary role for observation and surveillance is supported by forward-looking infrared (FLIR) and daylight cameras.

In the Landespolizei Baden Württemberg rotary wing flight operations started in the late 1960s with a Sud SA318C Alouette II and had moved on to the current fleet mix ten years ago. [ECD]

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INDIA

There are no independent police aviation units in service but contractors are used to fly police missions and have done for a decade or so. In recent weeks there have been troubles among some of the contractors who have threatened strike action in the face of being asked to fly operations against armed groups known as Naxal's without either enhanced payment or protection.

Five helicopter pilots from India state-owned operator Pawan Hans have quit to protest against flying missions into areas controlled by these armed radical communist group, supportive of Maoist political sentiment and ideologies, and active on the eastern side of India.

The five senior pilots have all been with Pawan Hans over 15 years, and their departure will hit the operator hard. In a message sent to the company, the pilots contend that operating under constant stress is now impossible for them, effectively saying it is a safety issue. They have been flying for the Police in Naxal affected areas for the last five years in helicopters neither armed nor protected, furthermore the pilots do not have a military background.

The five who resigned are the DGM Operations, M V Alexander, the DGM Training, AP Singh, the DGM Air Safety, E Samuel, the DGM Coordination, A Manchanda and another DGM R Oahatkar.

Pawan Hans are contracted to provide the police with pilots and it is therefore their problem to resolve. [Helihub]

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ITALY

POLICIA NATIONAL: AgustaWestland has delivered a fifth AW139 helicopter which will be based in Reggio Calabria. The contract, which was signed in July last year, includes a total of eight of the helicopters. Designated UH-139C, the Italian Police's helicopters operate from bases in Southern Italy (Bari, Palermo and Reggio Calabria) as well as from Pratica di Mare close to Rome. The Italian Police AW139 configuration includes a high definition latest generation FLIR, satellite communication system, Trakka searchlight, rescue hoist and a cabin mission console. The latest aircraft also includes an advanced HD video down link which will also be retrofitted to the Italian Police's UH-139 helicopters already in service. [AW]

NORWAY

AIR SUPPORT: Enterprise Control Systems Ltd have announced that they have recently secured a major contract to supply a substantial number of Handyview hand-held, COFDM receivers to the Norwegian Police Air Support Unit.

ECS has supplied the Norwegian Police with a digital video capability for their aircraft since 2004 and this contract will further enhance their existing system in delivering real-time imagery from the aircraft to operational commanders on the ground.

Colin Bullock, CEO of ECS commented, "We are delighted to assist the Norwegian Police Air Support Unit in making even more extensive use of their digital video downlink capability. The ECS

Handyview enables our customers to extend their use of real time, secure, video surveillance to multiple ground based users involved in the complex operations of today."

The ECS Handyview receiver is available in both Standard Definition (SD) and High Definition (HD) versions. Both versions use an integral COFDM demodulator, down-converter, battery, speakers and ruggedised monitor to provide high quality monitoring of the video and audio transmission. The unit contains sophisticated decryption to maintain a high level of security. The receiver is available in standard frequency bands between 1.3 and 5.3 GHz and at a nominal weight of 2.6kg it is one of the lightest professional receivers in the World market, as well as being fully compatible with all of the ECS COFDM range of equipment. This superior capability provides the user with real-time imagery and data that can aid significantly in the intelligence gathering process in air surveillance operations.

ECS' Business Development Manager for Europe, Paul Taylor, along with ECS' Swedish partner SAIAB are also delighted in securing this contract and look forward to working with the Norwegian Police Air Support Unit and other significant Scandinavian customers to deliver COFDM data link solutions for both police and military users. Paul commented "We are confident that the capabilities of the ECS Handyview receiver will exceed the expectations of the customer; the Handyview is a small, compact, COFDM handheld receiver which is optimised for viewing real time images in crucial situations and has been successfully proven worldwide."

This latest contract confirms the growing success of ECS' range of COFDM uplink/downlink systems, which are currently supplied to a large number of international helicopter providers and police forces alike.

Numerous law enforcement and security agencies around the world have also selected ECS to supply COFDM equipment to fulfil their air surveillance requirements.

www.enterprisecontrol.co.uk



The ECS equipment was integrated into the EC135 at ECUK in Oxford ©EC

SOUTH AFRICA

POACHING: The Paramount Group has again donated an aircraft to fly in support of the Kruger National Park. A Eurocopter Gazelle helicopter has been handed over to SANParks to fight rhino poachers in South Africa's largest game reserve.

The Eurocopter 341
Gazelle ©IFF

This, the fourth helicopter to be operated in the park, was donated by the Ichikowitz Family Foundation in association with Paramount, South Africa's largest private aerospace and defence group, and is part of a wider effort by the Foundation to stop South Africa's poaching scourge.

The Gazelle, one of a number acquired by Paramount for upgrade and modification, will be based in Phalaborwa and will be used over the northern Kruger National Park. It has been configured for the anti-poaching role by Paramount's Advanced Technology Division to include a night vision capable cockpit.

The Ichikowitz Family Foundation has made other contributions to the fight against poaching, and previously donated a Seeker MK II surveillance aircraft to SANParks, which has

been flying in the Kruger National Park since December 2012.

A total of 891 rhinos have been killed across the country in 2013, 223 more than last year.

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UNITED KINGDOM

SCOTLAND: The only Police Scotland helicopter crashed into a crowded public house on the banks of the River Clyde in Glasgow around a mile upstream from its home base on November 29, 2013. The Eurocopter EC135T2 helicopter G-SPAO was leased from Bond Air Services [BASL] and normally flew from their company heliport further along the River Clyde. Ten people, including two police observers and a civilian pilot, died as a result of the incident.

At about 2222hrs on Friday night the public house, the Clutha Vaults located in Stockwell Street, Glasgow, was struck on its flat roof by a helicopter reported to have fallen from the sky with its rotors barely rotating and with little or no forward speed. The roof of the single storey Victorian building collapsed into the bar and the helicopter penetrated the interior below largely intact. There was no fire but large numbers of injuries as well as the deaths.

The UK Air Accident Investigation Branch along with the BFU from Germany, Eurocopter, Turbomeca and BASL all attended the crash site to investigate.

In the early days after the crash speculation was rife about what was instantly seen as a mechanical failure likely to affect the 1,200 strong EC135 line as a whole. Earlier in 2013 the BASL EC135 fleet had been unilaterally grounded, this was short lived and not repeated by other operators but it did serve to create doubts in some quarters.

The immediate victims of the November 29 crash were Robert Jenkins, 61, Mark O'Prey, 44, Colin Gibson, 33, and John McGarrigle, 57, Samuel McGhee, 56, Gary Arthur, 48, helicopter pilot David Traill, 51, and PCs Kirsty Nelis, 36, and Tony Collins, 43. Another man died later in hospital.

The AAIB issued an initial report a week after the crash that confirmed the wreck had fuel on-board, that the main rotor and Fenestron were not rotating at normal speed and ruled out many of the mechanical failure scenarios but the accident investigation has a long way to go. [AAIB/media/PS]

NPAS: In the wake of the accident Police Scotland were without air cover. Naturally there were sensitivities both with the police and BASL and although the new organisation has no links to Scotland in its set up NPAS in England quickly offered to step into provide air support. NPAS were officially aware of the need early on the Saturday morning [30th]. Following the tragic events of the Friday night NPAS was put on notice to provide mutual aid support from NPAS Newcastle in the early hours of Saturday morning. The spare police role equipped aircraft operated by BASL was in any case unavailable in maintenance, having the ring frame reinforcement done on the tail, but the primary delay was to be other issues.

The arrival of a Scotland specific NPAS aircraft was set in train on the Saturday but delayed sufficiently to allow Police Scotland time to let the families of the deceased know that a blue and yellow aircraft was returning to the skies. That was completed on Monday, in time for NPAS to commence operations from HMS Gannet (the Royal Navy SAR Flight based at Prestwick) later that day.



©Jan Holland Twitter



The EC135 was flown up from Oxford
©PAR

The designated aircraft, G-CPSH the NPAS Reserve EC135T2 kept at Oxford, was flown up to NPAS Hawarden [in Cheshire] by Capt. Dick Ormshaw the Eurocopter Chief Pilot on Sunday, ready to deploy to Prestwick on Monday.

NPAS Hawarden took the initial lead [as they had for the support of the 39th G8 summit at Lough Erne Resort in County Fermanagh, Northern Ireland last June] and completed area familiarisations and liaison with Police Scotland ASU management and BASL pilots. By the Monday afternoon NPAS were on site providing a two-shift (19-hour) service.

The initial aircraft, G-CPSH was not NVIS equipped and that limited the scope of the operations to nationwide by day and the lowlands & Glasgow – Edinburgh belt by night initially operated with a scratch crew. The service was upgraded a few days later by bringing in G-HEOI, one of the more modern EC135s from NPAS Halfpenny Green near Birmingham. That offered an NVIS capability and a review of the night limitation. [NPAS]

The laws affecting Police Scotland and those in England & Wales [and Northern Ireland] are very different but they are ultimately interoperable as far as providing mutual aid is concerned.

Setting up this operation was also probably eased by the Chief Constable of Police Scotland having an English police background.

Sir Stephen House QPM joined Sussex Police in 1981 and served in uniform operational posts in that force, Northamptonshire Police and West Yorkshire Police.

In 1998, he joined Staffordshire Police as an Assistant Chief Constable, in 2001, he joined the Metropolitan Police in London as a Deputy Assistant Commissioner, was appointed to Assistant Commissioner and then in 2007, he took up post as Chief Constable of Strathclyde Police and in October 2012, he was appointed as the first Chief Constable of Police Scotland. [PS]

HOW SAFE IS THE EC135?

It was an inevitable question and one that most people felt unready to answer instantly. When pressed though the numbers appeared modest. Around 40 EC135s have been written off for various reasons – a modest number when you consider that there are about 1,100 of them out there. But when it comes to assessing how many mechanical failures have led to serious or fatal crashes there seems to be a void – most cannot think of any. The crashes [as opposed to hull losses by other means] include pilot error, CFIT and unknown causes and in fairness is reduced by the number of ‘certain’ deaths survived simply because the airframe is designed to JAR27 and very crashworthy. The previous Scottish police EC135 accident was a real basket case but it was not fatal and the crew limped away.

Jeremy Parkin at Helihub has more precise figures. His data states that of 1,120 built, 31 have been written off of which eight involved fatalities on emergency services. That does not include hulls lost in a hangar fire and the West Midlands police arson).

0047 D-HMVB 25-Nov-99 Basephol, Germany	Police
0069 N601FH 30-May-06 Washington, DC	EMS
0203 SE-HPS 24-Apr-07 Goteborg, Sweden	Police
0336 N136LN 10-Jan-05 Potomac River	EMS
0359 HA-ECE 31-Jul-08 Kiskunlachaza, Hungary	EMS
0546 G-SPAO 02-Dec-13 Glasgow UK	Police
0674 OE-BXF 30-Mar-11 Achensee, Austria	Police

Flight International list a slightly higher loss rate of 44 airframes including the ones lost by fire but highlight the ‘extremely low’ accident rate of one incident every 64,400 hours for a fleet that has now accrued nearly 3 million flight hours. [Flight/Helihub]



PREVIOUS SCOTTISH ACCIDENTS

1969 Chief Constable walked into tail rotor of Bell JetRanger – survived with serious head injuries.

1990 Bell JetRanger crashed into tenement building in snow storm killing one observer Malcolm Herd

2002 Eurocopter EC135T1 [pictured right] crashed in remote field and destroyed. No fatalities. [PAR]



Quite where police air support in Scotland will go in the immediate future is unclear. A single airframe covering the whole of Scotland is insufficient for events planned in the coming year – unless a heavy reliance on CCTV or mutual aid from NPAS is planned.

This year Scotland will be hosting the 20th Commonwealth Games, an international, multi-sport event involving 70 teams of athletes from the Commonwealth of Nations. The event was first held in 1930 and takes place every four years. Glasgow 2014 will be held from 23 July to 3 August. The Games will play host to 4500 athletes and sell 1,000,000 tickets with the event aided by an army of up to 15,000 local volunteers. Glasgow 2014 Ltd is the official name for the Organising Committee tasked with delivering the Games in partnership with the Scottish Government, Glasgow City Council and Commonwealth Games Scotland. The Organising Committee for Glasgow 2014 has appointed Selex ES as its Official Protective Perimeter Security Provider. The agreement will see Selex ES provide a wide range of physical security measures to secure over 20 Games venues, including the Athletes Village. The programme will consist of security fencing, CCTV and security lighting as well as security management systems.

The design phase of the contract will begin immediately and all installations will be completed by early July 2014. <http://www.glasgow2014.com/games/our-sponsors>

NPAS: According to the original plan the Metropolitan Police were to join NPAS at the start of January 2014. This is no longer the case.

A number of issues have arisen in the eyes of the police in London and as a result they, like Wales, are delaying the start-up date. The Metropolitan Police are fully supportive of NPAS and intend to join in October 2014.

The first element of the unsettled business is over maintenance. A few months ago it was announced that the in-house maintenance at Lippitts Hill was to close down in March/April in line with the intention to bring in a common standard of maintenance across NPAS. This will now remain with no end date in place.

The specifics of the other operational issues relating to this delay are not public domain but they are seen as details that need clarifying rather than an area of major disagreement.

Ed: with a police air support unit that is currently flying three EC145 helicopters in excess of 3,300 hours almost wholly upon London business there are grounds for wondering where there is slack to perform the intended tasking for other areas. The current workload includes working up towards the long delayed fast roping and winching tasking.

At the core of the NPAS plan is for London to provide 24/7 cover across the whole of southern Britain. The actual need may not be massive but extracting one aircraft from the Lippitts



The London EC145 fleet was delivered with rappelling gear but training has only recently started ©File



The Metropolitan Police helicopter unit Twitter page @MPSinthesky continues to attract the attention of a growing number of followers that include the National and International media. When the unit posted images of a fog bound City of London the images sprang up across the globe. At least most now acknowledge the source where earlier they simply used the images unmarked. The other image, left is one they posted of their control room at Lippitts Hill [MP]



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The NPAS P68 is fitted with a Churchill Navigation system ©NPAS

Police Aviation Centenary 1914—2014

Hill fleet can simply mean that the Metropolis, arguably the busiest area in the UK, may have to go without. The details need to be clarified and that may mean another aircraft being based there or different aircraft types.

Essex Police a former operator of its own helicopter out of Boreham, Chelmsford is using the existence of the NPAS as a reason to close down its marine unit.

Essex Police are responsible for covering 350 miles of coastline and has modest marine resources served by eight constables and a sergeant and a pressing requirement that many other forces face – *saving money*.

As part of its operational change programme, Essex are to close its dedicated unit as a distinct team but will retain a “degree of capability and expertise”. The officers will be redeployed and its fleet of one large vessel, three smaller rigid-hulled inflatable boats and two jet-skis reassessed.

Essex say that while coastal search and rescue remains the responsibility of the HM Coastguard, officers would still be able to offer support and that the NPAS would also help provide the capability to respond to coastal incidents.

The force is evaluating its marine fleet, including one large vessel, three smaller rigid-hulled inflatable boats and two jet-skis and will sell any equipment that is not needed. [ExPol]

GREATER MANCHESTER: Later this month Greater Manchester Police are to commence training on the NPAS Vulcanair P68 trial aircraft.

GMP's own operation using a BN Defender has meanwhile fallen foul of cost cutting and has been 'parked' and is said to be up for disposal.

The Defender was never part of NPAS and the whole cost of continuing its operations fell to GMP. At least part of its original role was as back up to the Explorer helicopter which is now part of the NPAS helicopter fleet; the removal of the back up role and meeting the whole cost of a separate base for undefined 'other duties' made the closure inevitable. [PAR]

WALES: The Dyfed-Powys Police are supporting their retained AW109E Power helicopter as they continue to negotiate with NPAS about the future. Unusually they announced that their helicopter is temporarily out of action due to a gearbox issue and that emergency air coverage for the force is being provided by the South Wales and Gwent police helicopter an asset that also remains outside NPAS.

Dyfed-Powys Police and Crime Commissioner Christopher Salmon said: “The helicopter gearbox has an issue, discovered in routine maintenance on December 6.

“The aircraft is due to be back in action next week (*note: w/c Dec 23*) but the work will leave us with a repair bill of around £250,000. This will be funded from Dyfed-Powys's annual policing budget.

“With our aircraft down, we have an agreement with the South Wales Police and Gwent Police to use their helicopter in case of emergency. Police forces routinely share in this way when aircraft are being serviced or repaired.

“As is widely known, I am negotiating with NPAS, the National Police Air Service, regarding the future provision of a helicopter service for Dyfed-Powys.

“Our NPAS agreement, when finalised, will allow us to avoid such one-off repair costs and will offer us a service that's at least as effective as that we have now.”

Dyfed-Powys Police is geographically the largest force in England and Wales. The force has a nine-year-old fourth generation Augusta 109e Power helicopter. It is used in cases such as searches for missing people, suspects and vehicles, casualty evacuation, transporting specialist teams and gathering intelligence.

To search a square mile of land can take 12 police officers more than 450 hours. A helicopter takes 12 minutes to search the same area. [DPPC]

Ed: It might be said by those of a less generous nature that the prevarication over joining NPAS has cost Dyfed dearly.

I remain 'not quite sure' what a fourth generation Augusta [sic] is and Turbomeca may well be mortified to know that a 135T2 means Type 2, that leaving a P2 in danger of being a Part 2 I guess. Still we aren't all spotters I guess.

UNITED STATES

NATIONAL: In April last year, Sean Collier, police officer on the campus of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, was shot and killed by suspects connected to the Boston Marathon bombing. Officer Collier's brother, Andrew Collier, has begun a petition asking Congress to designate a national holiday to honour first responders for their service.

To learn more about this effort and to sign the petition, click on the link below.

www.change.org/firstresponders

FEDERAL: Last month CBP's Office of Air and Marine [OAM] took delivery of its last American Eurocopter AS350 helicopter under its current contract. The OAM provides direct air and maritime support to multiple agencies tasked with border protection and law enforcement operations.

This delivery makes 84 such helicopters in OAM's fleet and provides the agency with improved capabilities, as it retires the last of its MD-500, MD-600 and OH-6 helicopters.

Since December 2008, CBP took delivery of a further 38 AS350 to almost double the number of this type in the fleet. The aircraft blends power, performance, specialized cameras and video downlink capabilities to make it one of the most flexible and capable air assets supporting CBP and OAM missions. The latest deliveries have been fitted with Trakka searchlights.

With the delivery of the final aircraft in the 5-year contract, OAM completes the largest single procurement of assets to date and continues to advance its law enforcement capabilities through the successful acquisition of new, cutting-edge aircraft to fulfill its border security and support missions.

The MD902 formerly operated by the Department of Justice for DEA operations for nearly ten years has been retired from service and sold. On delivery the airframe was billed as being the 'first of many' expected to enter service with the Federal agency. It seems that the disbelief of some at the time was well placed.

ALEA GEORGIA: The Georgia State Patrol will host the first ALEA Safety Seminar of 2014, January 28-30, in Jekyll Island, GA. The Southeast Regional Safety Seminar will be held at the Jekyll Island Club Hotel and offer water survival/egress training in addition to a full slate of educational and networking opportunities.

A group discount rate is currently available from the host hotel. Visit the ALEA website or contact ALEA Southeast Region Director David Gee at dgee@alea.org for information [ALEA]

ARIZONA: Soloy Aviation Solutions has reported the award of a contract for the sale of a Soloy Mark II turbine Cessna 206 Sentinel aircraft for law enforcement surveillance and patrol support by Arizona's Pima County Sheriff's Department. The Rolls-Royce powered Soloy 206 is replacing one of two ageing Helio Courier aircraft for the department.

Pima County is the seventh largest county and requires fast deployment of law enforcement surveillance over long distances with the ability to slowly loiter once on station. Pima considered a number of larger high wing turbine aircraft, such as the Cessna Caravan and Quest Kodiak but found they were simply too big and much more money for their budget.



The type was demonstrated at the 2012 ALEA Convention in nearby Reno Nevada.
©PAR

MARYLAND: The Harford County Sheriff's Office has taken delivery of a 1970 Bell OH58A+ helicopter, N554HC for limited annual use in the role of tracking down criminals and uncovering hidden marijuana-growing plantations. The costs of helicopter, "Eagle 1," are defrayed through a number of funds that enable local legislators to claim the operation is at no expense to local taxpayers.

Harford County acquired the '\$1M' helicopter at no cost through the National Defense Authorization Act, which allows the transfer of excess equipment to federal, state and local law enforcement agencies for homeland security operations. The estimated annual operating cost of \$125,000 for the helicopter will be paid for by drug seizures. The drug dealers of Harford County will fund the total cost, direct and indirect, of the aviation unit.

How much this fund amounts to was not disclosed publicly despite being the subject of both federal and local edit, but as it is able to fund two years of operations it is clearly in excess of a quarter million dollars.

Two deputies already trained to use the helicopter will be available on a part-time basis for airborne law enforcement, search, homeland security and critical infrastructure assessments, marijuana eradication and disaster assessment and recovery. – Harford County are also saying it will assist Maryland State Police and the Havre de Grace, Aberdeen and Bel Air police departments.

Ed: It is strange that despite such a long string of tasks and the relatively high level of equipment fitted [it has a FLIR 7500 sensor turret] there is a stated expectation that the aircraft will see little use – the official statement speaks of a meagre 25 flights each year.



NEW YORK: New York is demanding Bell Helicopter Textron fork over \$12.4M to replace an NYPD aircraft that was written off after it force landed in Jamaica Bay due to a mechanical defect, according to a new lawsuit.

The breach of contract suit, filed in Brooklyn Federal Court, contends that the city has the right to recover damages because the helicopter was delivered with a defective gear shaft.

The air-sea rescue helicopter had been operational only nine months when the engine failed on September 22, 2010, as six police officers were flying a security mission for a visit by President Obama.

The injured officers have already filed a separate lawsuit against Bell and engine maker Pratt & Whitney. [NYDT]



VERMONT: There is not a lot of police air support in Vermont. The state police use the local Air National Guard and they dropped out of ALEA about ten years ago. One Albuquerque company, ARA, thinks they may be interested in unmanned aircraft.

As a result of its ongoing conversations with law enforcement personnel, the Unmanned Systems & Security Product (USPD) Division of ARA demonstrated its Nighthawk IV Micro Unmanned Air System (UAS) to the Vermont State Police search-and-rescue and accident reconstruction teams and an Army Civil Support Team (CST).

The Vermont State Police created a training scenario using military airspace at an Army training facility to take an initial look at the Nighthawk performing missions.

The audience were said to be impressed with the Nighthawk's small size and ease of launch and recovery, and the hands-free autopilot operations. On-board high-definition imagery created a detailed photo, with geo-rectified precise locations, allowing users to conduct an aerial search with greater precision and faster response time than is currently possible. [ARA]



AIR AMBULANCE

CANADA

MANITOBA: The province has temporarily suspended medical transport service by STARS air ambulance after a patient's death on November 28.

The patient was being transported for cardiac arrest from the Southern Health Region to Winnipeg, but later died after arriving in the city. A doctor, paramedic and critical care nurse were on board at the time, along with the proper medical equipment.

STARS will remain grounded in the province until a critical incident investigation can be completed.

Lifelight and basic air-ambulance service has been expanded into southern communities and, if deemed medically necessary, physicians will accompany patients on land ambulance transfers during the pause in STARS service.

The non-profit aircraft and its medical team became a permanent fixture in Manitoba after being utilized in the province during the 2009 and 2011 floods. STARS operated 12-hour daily shifts out of Winnipeg.

FRANCE

BURGUNDY: INAER France has won the tender for the operation of Emergency Medical Services (EMS) helicopters in Burgundy. A few months ago, INAER won the EMS contract for the Provence Alp Cote D'Azur (PACA) region. These form part of the French Ministry of Health's new operational model of regional contracts to deliver state-of-the-art helicopters.

INAER will supply three EC135 helicopters by early 2015 for hospitals in Auxerre, Dijon and Chalon-sur-Saône. INAER already operates in Auxerre and has had the contract renewed, whereas in Chalon a new base will be created. The helicopter in Dijon will be available 24 hours a day for missions throughout the region.



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INAER continues to grow its presence in the French EMS market and now operates eight Eurocopter EC135s and nine Agusta 109s. INAER's modern fleet is equipped with the latest technology, including autopilot. INAER's helicopters are also equipped with Night Vision Goggles, the only civilian French company to hold the licensing for this.

From this month INAER France will operate a fleet of 17 helicopters dedicated to medical transportation and other specialised services, aircraft maintenance services for the state, such as the maintenance of 50 state-owned EC145s and through its subsidiary HeliDax, the provision of 36 EC120s for the Army pilot training. www.inaer.fr

RUSSIA

Last month Russian Helicopters demonstrated the medical versions of the light Ansat and Ka226T helicopters to officials at Zashchita, the Russian National Centre for Disaster Medicine, as part of a conference to mark the 20th anniversary of the Centre.

The version of the Ansat on show at Zashchita was designed for emergency medical evacuation and medical transportation purposes. It can reach speeds of 275 km/h and has a range of more than 500 km. The Ansat's spacious cabin can accommodate two stretcher patients and all necessary medical equipment.

The new light multi-role Ka-226T is available in two medical versions – one for evacuation purposes and one for intensive care. The medevac version comes with stretchers for two patients, oxygen tanks and essential medical equipment. It also has adjustable seats for medical staff.

The intensive-care version has room for one patient and for two medical workers to administer treatment in flight. The Ka-226T makes it easy to load and unload stretcher patients through a wide door at the back of the transport cabin. The on-board medical equipment meets international requirements and helps medical staff to operate highly efficiently. The Ka-226T's coaxial main rotors give it incredibly precise hovering ability, and make it easy to fly and highly manoeuvrable. The helicopter can take off and land in small spaces. It has a range of 500 km and top speed of 250 km/h.

Russian-made helicopters are reliable, efficient and safe. The Ansat and Ka-226T can operate in a broad range of weather conditions including severe icing, and can be stored outdoors.

Russian Helicopters gives special attention to environmental factors and efficiency. Its helicopters are fitted with the very latest high-performance engines. The Ansat is fitted with a Pratt & Whitney PW 207K, while the Ka-226T is powered by Turbomeca's Arrius 2G1.



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UNITED KINGDOM

NATIONAL: There was no direct grounding as a result of the EC135 accident in Glasgow, although BASL reported that two of its non-emergency services customers had voluntarily discontinued their flying pending their review. A matter of days after the incident in Glasgow BASL decided to temporarily ground its contracted fleet after one of the North West Air Ambulance fleet found an anomaly in the fuel contents and the gague reading. This affected a large part of the UK air ambulance fleet but there was cover from other dissimilar type operators [flying the BO105, MD902 and AW109] and the EC135 owner operators [Devon]. The grounding also affected the police aircraft in South & East Wales. Most were operational again within a few days but this is another example of a unilateral BASL grounding rather than a manufacturer or certification authority led grounding.

Being aware of the perceived threat that led BASL to ground their EC135s the UK police found another way around the problem. They simply increased the minimum amount of fuel carried pending investigations. Where flights in excess of two hours were commonplace the ruling reduced that time and effectively meant the NPAS aircraft carried a greater unused fuel load.

Chief superintendent Ian Whitehouse, NPAS chief operating officer, said: "Safety is the number one priority for the NPAS. Our decision on whether or not to suspend operations or ground any NPAS aircraft is based on advice issued by the CAA - the UK's aviation regulator and original equipment manufacturers. We remain, as ever, in constant communication with the CAA and other partners in the aviation industry.

"There is currently no notice in place from the CAA or the original equipment manufacturers to ground any aircraft and so we have not done so. If such a notice is put in place then we would immediately and carefully consider it.

"In light of the technical issue identified by Bond Air Services, as a precautionary measure, we are increasing fuel levels on all NPAS EC135 aircraft and increasing the minimum level of fuel which pilots are allowed to operate on."

In response to Bond Air Services decision to ground its fleet of EC 135s, BALPA said:

"Pilots are looking to the regulator, the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) and European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) to take charge and provide the industry with the information that has informed the decision to ground the Bond EC135 fleet. Flight safety is best served when there is transparency and openness and these developments leave everyone asking "Why?"

"This grounding confirms our belief that a fundamental review about how helicopter operations are regulated is needed; a point we will be making forcefully to the House of Commons Transport Select Committee in their upcoming helicopter safety inquiry."

Ed: The response from a Eurocopter apparently distracted by the holiday season and its forthcoming name change does not seem to have been very supportive of BASL/Avincis, a major customer.

The fuel problem was found in other airframes, though not many, but when EC highlighted the issue to the industry at large the tone of the warning was thought by some not what a good customer likes to read.

It may be that this has not come to light before [or had been masked] simply because the emergency services do tend to take sorties to fuel limits for a variety of reasons not common in straight commercial flying.



KENT, SURREY & SUSSEX: The charity has officially launched its 24 hours air ambulance service within the three counties of south east England.

Last month's launch built upon three years of research and preparatory work by the charity, their contractors [MAS] and the certification authorities [CAA/EASA].

Unlike much of mainland Europe, the HEMS service in the UK could only offer a daylight service. In the counties of Kent, Surrey and Sussex in the south-east of England the service traditionally operated between 7am – 7pm with two specialised medical teams deploying in two helicopters from Kent and Surrey, and relied upon the police and military to provide a little used night service. With the police stopping ambulance operations the charity deployed emergency response cars after dark. The teams attended about 1,500 missions and treated about 1,000 patients each year.

Research undertaken with TARN [the Trauma Audit & Research Network] has provided a clear indication of a greater than predicted patient need by night. The charity undertook its own prospective and retrospective audit of patient cases which identified that there were between 400 and 500 patients per year in the 3,500 square miles that is Kent, Surrey & Sussex who would benefit from night HEMS and also, most significantly, that about half of these cases were between the hours of 11pm and 5am. As this was the first in depth study involving input from most of the stakeholders for the first time the results contrasted greatly with the predictions of other UK charities when they set up their night services and also contrasted with the number of police night operations undertaken in earlier years. The latter was in place but very rarely used.

It was found that it was not possible to efficiently attend so many patients dispersed across such a large area by car and this led to the business case for a centrally-located helicopter and medical team. Following a change in Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) regulations in 2012, the charity replaced one of its older MD902 helicopters with a night-capable example which now operates from Redhill Aerodrome throughout the night.

Because of the region's size, complexities, and the presence of two major and many other minor airports, the decision was made to fly with two pilots rather than a single pilot operation alternative chosen by a number of other operators.

One flaw is the continued lack of useable helipads in the region – Southampton is the prime receiving site – and others are slowly coming on



Three emergency services MD Explorer's are based at Redhill [near London Gatwick Airport].

Top is the new night equipped air ambulance G-KSSA and outside were the standard aircraft G-KSSH and the co-located NPAS Explorer G-SUSX that still retains a small sign that belies its former night HEMS role. ©PAR

stream.

The night service has been operating since September last year, the official launch being delayed three months simply to ensure that any flaws were ironed out before going public. The duty police aircraft at NPAS Redhill did not wait, it removed its long standing 'Ambulance' logos to coincide with the start of operations and now operates a standard police observer complement rather than the mix of police and paramedics under Sussex Police control.

Although there are no specific plans in place to operate beyond the county borders the charity has not ruled out flying for surrounding charities that have not yet chosen to operate in the hours of darkness. [KSSAA/PAR]

LINCOLNSHIRE & NOTTINGHAMSHIRE: The MD902 Explorer operator based at RAF Waddington has also joined those operating 'night' flights but in contrast to the KSSAA their flights will initially be an extension of flying beyond the arrival of darkness as currently intended by most operators. At this time of year darkness falls at around 4pm and flying continues until about 7pm. This will extend the number of flight hours by 480 hours a year but will be reviewed in the light of experience and financial ability.

The adjoining air ambulance charities to the south also operate night flights but the ones to the west, The Air Ambulance Service operating AgustaWestland 109 helicopters, although technically capable are not. [Stamford Mercury/PAR]

LONDON: The capital city is to have a new helipad to add to the new one at the London Hospital and the one currently under construction St. Georges Hospital, Tooting. The new helipad will be built on top of the existing ten-storey Ruskin Wing building at the King's College Hospital in Denmark Hill, south east London.

King's is home to the largest Major Trauma Centre in the South of England. It is also the 'hub' for the South East London, Kent and Medway (SELKaM) major trauma network, which covers 5.5 million people, or 7.8% of the UK population.

The journey to the Emergency Department at King's from the current landing pad in nearby Ruskin Park takes up to 25 minutes. A helipad on the hospital site will ensure a patient arrives in A&E within 5 minutes, reducing transport time by 80%. The first few minutes after an incident is critical.

The new helipad at King's will be paid for from charitable funds with the assistance of £1M already donated by the County Air Ambulance Trust HELP appeal. There remains a need to raise a further £3.5M. www.togetherwecan.org.uk/kings-college-hospital

YORKSHIRE: The Yorkshire Air Ambulance has flown their first mission from the charity's new state-of-the-art air support unit at Nostell Priory near Wakefield.

The rapid response helicopter was called to a road accident involving a male cyclist and a vehicle in Holmfirth near Huddersfield and flew to the scene of the incident in only nine minutes. The patient was taken to hospital by land ambulance after his injuries were found to be non-life threatening.

Yorkshire Air Ambulance (YAA) has relocated one of its two helicopters from Leeds Brad-



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©YAA

ford Airport to the purpose-developed air support unit in the grounds of the Nostell Estate. The move will enable the charity to improve its coverage and response times to patients in the west and south of the county. The YAA's second helicopter will continue to operate from its base at RAF Topcliffe near Thirsk, covering the north and eastern part of the region. The new location will also mean better operational availability - given the lower altitude of Nostell compared to Leeds Bradford Airport which was often affected by fog.

As well as benefiting from an enhanced location, the new Nostell base boasts a larger helicopter hangar space, on-site accommodation, a dedicated fuel bowser, helipad facility and improved office facilities.

The move will also generate some cost savings for the charity from having on site accommodation and buying fuel directly from the supplier.

Nostell will be manned 365 days a year with emergency flights only taking place during daylight hours, in line with CAA (Civil Aviation Authority) and planning regulations.

UNITED STATES

IDAHO: In Twin Falls, Idaho the new hangar for the Air Saint Luke's helicopter is almost completed. Construction began last year. A 2012 Festival of Trees and last spring's Epicurean Event helped raise part of the half million dollars needed to pay for the hangar. The hangar is due to open this month.

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SEARCH & RESCUE

ARGENTINA

COAST GUARD: The Argentine Coast Guard [Prefectura Naval Argentina] are reported to be in negotiations for two Eurocopter EC225s and an option for a third aircraft. They are expected to replace the 1980 delivered SA330 Pumas, of which they have two currently on charge - serialled PA-11 and PA-13. A third was originally delivered but captured by British forces during the Falklands conflict of 1982.

With hoped for deliveries of the EC225s in 2014-5, these acquisitions would add to their current fleet of four AS365N2 Dauphins. two AS355NP Twin Squirrels delivered in 2011 and four surviving examples of six Schweizer 300C delivered. [Helihub]

AUSTRALIA

NEW SOUTH WALES: The two Westpac rescue helicopter services based in the northern half of NSW will be part of one single tender to be made by the Hunter and New England North West Westpac Rescue Helicopter Service under its existing Air Operating Certificate.

The Government announced earlier this year that it would award only two contracts for NSW, one for the Sydney and southern regions and one of the northern regions.

The Lismore based Westpac Lifesaver Rescue Helicopter Service and the Hunter and NE/ NW Service both say their similar and much praised community-based structures made it possible for the one tender bid to meet Government requirements.

The Government indicated earlier in the year that it would welcome tender from existing operators under consortia type arrangements. [Argus]

SOUTH AUSTRALIA: It is claimed that the tourist beaches of Adelaide will be less safe this summer because a cut to helicopter shark patrol funds has forced the axing of weekday flights.

As temperatures heat up and thousands of swimmers flock to the city's beaches, Surf Life Saving SA wants the State Government to reinstate \$140,000 it has cut from helicopter shark patrols last summer.

Without the funding, lifesavers warn they will only be able to conduct helicopter patrols at beaches on weekends and public holidays, and not on hot weeknights or during some public swimming events.

The \$140,000 cut from helicopter funding had been transferred to the fixed-wing patrols. This meant the helicopter's flying hours had been cut from 300 to 210 over summer.

The Government says the funding change means the fixed-wing plane can run an extra 170 hours of patrols, -flying seven days a week. But surf lifesavers argue the helicopter is better for swimmers' safety and the fixed-wing plane's hours have been increased because it is cheaper to run.

The helicopter is more agile and responsive and could fly low to herd a shark out to sea or haul swimmers from the water.

The fixed-wing plane will provide coverage of the metropolitan coastline from North Haven to Rapid Bay between 11am and 8pm seven days a week, extending to the South Coast between Victor Harbor and Goolwa on weekends, public holidays and school holidays.

Mr O'Brien said the Government had provided \$362,000 from the Community Emergency Services Fund towards this season's patrols by UniSA and Surf Life Saving SA.



AUSTRIA

ZURS: Austrian operator Wucher Helicopter has started its seasonal operation of the "Gallus 1" emergency helicopter. Eurocopter EC135 OE-XHZ is the subject helicopter, and the winter season was launched in early December from a base at Zürs to cover the winter season on standby at Zürs in the state of Vorarlberg. This is the western most tip of Austria and close up to the borders with Liechtenstein and Switzerland. This seasonal operation provides extra backup to the year-round "Christophorus 8", which is based in Nenzing. Last year it was called out over 350 times. [Helihub]

NORWAY

Amid the recriminations surrounding the sale of VIP EH101 helicopters to India AgustaWestland have sold the AW101 to Norway as a replacement for their ageing Sea King helicopters.

The Norwegian government said it had inked an option to fine AgustaWestland in case two former chief executives are found guilty of corruption, an important clause in the \$1 billion deal that was signed last month. The government ordered sixteen AW-101 search and rescue helicopters. [AW]



INDUSTRY

Hard on the heels of a successful Dubai Air Show, **Quest Aviation Solutions** announced it is broadening its relationship with MD Helicopters and effective immediately will take on sales of its Multi Mission family of helicopters in both India and China. Quest will support India and China from its sales offices in Bangalore and Beijing.

"We are delighted to have been appointed by MD Helicopters as their agent in China and India to complement our exclusive sales status role in the UAE for the MD product range," said Quest Aviation Commercial Director Mike Creed. "Both of these markets have vast potential, especially for special missions such as EMS and police applications and we look forward to selling these extraordinary helicopters to two of the fastest growing markets in Asia."

Erickson Air-Crane Incorporated has won a 10-month contract to provide fire fighting services to the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality in Turkey. The Company noted that this was its first fire fighting contract in Turkey, opening the door to an important new market.

The **UK Civil Aviation Authority** (CAA) has simplified the approval process for all hand-held radios capable of 8.33 kHz channel spacing. The decision follows a fresh review by CAA specialists which concluded that radios conforming to existing European standards for non-airborne operation can provide the required levels of safety and performance for airborne use.

The approval takes immediate effect and allows pilots of 'non EASA' aircraft', to use hand-held radios on their Aircraft Radio Licence outside of Class A, B and C airspace.

The CAA state that this decision is the latest example of its declared intent to introduce a more proportionate and risk-based regulatory regime for the UK GA sector. With the creation of a dedicated GA Unit within the CAA - due to open for business in spring 2014 – similar announcements are expected to follow.

As planned, the first run of the Ardiden 3C helicopter engine, named WZ16 in China, jointly developed by **Turbomeca (Safran)** and **AVIC Engine** on an equally shared basis, was successfully achieved at Turbomeca Bordes (France) plant. This significant milestone confirms the good aeromechanical behavior and performances of this new generation engine and allows engagement in the test and certification phases of the development program. Preliminary testing of its major components has demonstrated the relevance of the technological choices.



©Safran

This Ardiden 3C / WZ16 engine jointly designed by Turbomeca and AVIC Engine will be aimed at the growing 6 to 8 tons helicopter segment. The modular design and dual channel FADEC makes this engine highly reliable and easy to operate, with the benefit of a low fuel consumption.

Powering the AC352 AVICopter helicopter, the Ardiden 3C/WZ16 engine will provide to the operators an unmatched level of performances, easy maintenance and reduced operating costs enabling their aircraft to fulfill the most demanding missions in a competitive environment.

Alpha Star Aviation Services (operator of the similarly named air ambulance service) has signed a distribution agreement with Spectrum Aeromed for exclusive rights to supply all Spectrum Aeromedical Air Ambulance Interior Solutions/Products to customers in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Sultanate of Oman, United Arab Emirates, State of Qatar, Kuwait, Kingdom of Bahrain.

This agreement allows them to provide customers with a superior Air Ambulance solution for their VIP jets that is reliable, easy to install and doesn't sacrifice quality of care or comfort.

In 2016 **TETRA contracts** with the police service begin to expire and the Home Office is currently in the process of reviewing the future communications options. The aim is to provide a replacement for Airwave using next generation commercial networks (4G LTE). The new service will be called the Emergency Services Network. B-APCO supports the ESMCP approach to provide the ESN through the use of 4G/LTE as the platform, and the need to drive down costs through the use of commercial networks.



An advanced video game style training system developed to help emergency service personnel prepare for crisis scenarios - such as train and plane crashes and terrorist attacks - is set to transform its users ability to prepare for incidents.

Currently emergency personnel at venues such as airports must plan costly live training exercises, but the virtual reality 'CRISIS' system will allow them to prepare for these incidents at the push of a button.

The **Middlesex University** led project presents emergency workers with a crisis situation in an interactive virtual world using a complex 3D view of the scene. Trainees navigate through the environment and build up a situation assessment of the incident which then guides their decision making process, all the time communicating with fellow trainees as the incident develops in front of them.

CRISIS (Critical Incident management training System using an Interactive Simulated environment) was funded by the European Commission and developed with 12 partners across Europe including airports in Portugal and Iceland who are already using the system.

Incidents presented have varying levels of complexity and can be created by training managers. Using the Variable Uncertainty Framework, the scenarios can play out differently every time they are run with the system responding in different ways dependent on the trainees' actions, with random events occurring in order to test reactions. www.mdx.ac.uk



India is to deliver two **Hindustan Aeronautics** Limited (HAL) HSA 315B Cheetah/Cheetal utility helicopters to Afghanistan this month.

The new-build helicopters, which will be used for observation and reconnaissance purposes, are being supplied to the Afghan Air Force (AAF) as part of a wider defence and security co-operation deal between the two countries.

Operated by the Indian armed forces in the mountainous north of the country, the Cheetah/Cheetal is based on the Sud Alouette/Lama.

LZPD NRW, the state authority for central police services North Rhine-Westphalia and **Frequentis AG** signed a contract last month to enable the integration of the 60 or so integrated command and control centres [CCC] for fire protection and emergency medical services into to the German BOS digital radio network (BOS – German: Behörden und Organisationen mit Sicherheitsaufgaben). Frequentis is supplying five CCC concentrators based on the Frequentis Unified TETRA Gateway.

Frequentis will be delivering the technology to the five state's technical centres located at Cologne, Düsseldorf, Essen, Münster and Dortmund.

Back in the heady days of 1991, **Robinson** built no fewer than 402 R22s in one year at their California factory in Torrance. By comparison, the most recent 200 R22s have been produced by Robinson Helicopter Co at a much more leisurely rate over the last four and a half years.

Robinson have advised HeliHub.com that the current R22 production rate is one per week, with a lead time from order of 8-10 weeks. [HeliHub]



It is now 20 years since Bristol UK based **Powervamp** moved into the aviation support businesses, in those two decades they have grown to be a well respected brand in aircraft ground support at operator level and supporting the vast infrastructure at some of the world's major air shows including Paris and Farnborough.

Originally set up to supply the needs of road based transport – providing a means of starting public service vehicles in crammed bus garages on dark and freezing winter mornings was challenging enough for the compact battery packs produced. Originally Powervamp marketed aviation products through supplying a later rival, Red Box, with battery packs for units made up from bought in parts from January 1994 whilst developing the product in house as a response to user queries.

Richard Roller the CEO of Powervamp has always stated that all conventional batteries are the same and generally they are all bought in from the same supplier, companies such as Powervamp can only seek to enhance the capabilities of the product for the end user at a price they are happy to meet.

After formally dissolving the tie up with Red Box earlier that year Powervamp launched its product line onto the aviation market at the Helitech Show in October 1997.

Selling itself as 'A new name in the world of aircraft starting and portable ground power' but based upon the track record of the units already in circulation the company unveiled a range of integrated ground power units for both fixed and rotary wing aircraft types, operators and ground handling organizations and offered an ever growing range of enhancements to the basic battery box. For the first time all components were designed and manufactured in-house and enabling them to take full responsibility for their ultimate quality.

Since that time Powervamp has developed and enhanced the basic battery in a box to provide a range of additional services beyond simple engine starting.

Early on the business was faced by a growing needs of law enforcement operators wishing to undertake training on their EO/IR camera systems on the ground without the need for using the main aircraft batteries—or even worse, starting the engines. In the early days these cameras were not widely used but the period since the early 1990s has seen a growing expectation that all new police aircraft will be delivered with them and the training need has therefore grown exponentially.

Powervamp developed more capable systems that included inbuilt chargers and connections to the mains retaining surge protected transformers to step down the power to the operating voltage of the aircraft system. The result was still portable and light but often resulted in the creation of multi-element systems mounted on carts.

That need may now taper off with the development by others of sophisticated PC based trainers but carrying spare power packs will always be a requirement.

Twenty years on Powervamp not only powers up light aircraft of all types, it also offers ground power to passenger jets of all sizes – although not quite in the original context of portable!



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INCIDENTS & INCIDENTS

23 November 2013 Beechcraft King Air 200 N912SM. Air ambulance of St. Mary's Care-Flight, Grand Junction Colorado operated by Air Methods. Aircraft at cruise in IMC icing conditions flying from Grand Junction to Englewood, Colorado, USA. Right side windscreen failed. Only one layer of the windscreen broke and the windscreen remained in place. The destination airport was the closest airport and the pilot landed there without incident. The patient transfer was completed. [Concern]

25 November 2013 Beech 200 King Air N. Air ambulance of Intermountain Lifeflight, Salt Lake City, Utah. Experienced a multiple bird strike after departing airport at night. Damage and bird residue found on left wing, undercarriage door, propeller spinner and air intakes. [Concern]

29 November 2013 Eurocopter EC135T2 G-SPAO. Police helicopter of Police Scotland operated by Bond Air Services out of Glasgow. Helicopter with three crew crashed on flat roof of a crowded public house and penetrated floor below killing the crew and a number of people inside [Media/BASL/EC/AAIB/PS]

19 December 2013 Air ambulance of Native American undertook a precautionary landing at the Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport after apparent electrical problems whilst undertaking the transporting of a sick child when pilots radioed they could smell smoke. There was no visible damage to the aircraft. [KPHO].

22 December 2013 Sikorsky S-76. C-**** Air ambulance of Ornge, Canada. An Ornge air ambulance helicopter was grounded outside Thunder Bay following an incident that left its rotor blades damaged. The blades struck a tree during a landing to pick up a patient at a residence south of Kakabeka Falls in Gillies Township. The helicopter received no other damage. [CBC]

23 December 2013 Bell 206 JetRanger Policia Colombia. Two police officers were injured when a police helicopter was blown up by a rebel group in Briceno, in the northwestern province of Antioquia. An explosive device, planted on the 206, went off minutes after the crew left the cabin. The injured police officers included a pilot and a technician [Global Times]



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LETTERS

Letter to Editor

It's been another year to remember for Devon's Air Ambulances and it's all down to you!

Thanks to the Devon people, the county has two state of the art Air Ambulances, flying up to 14 hours a day.

This year has had so many highlights, from the arrival of our new state of the art second owned aircraft GDAAN and celebrating our 21st birthday, to another successful motorcycle ride out and exceeding expectations in membership for our in house lottery (in fact we've reached 2014 targets already) to achieving £1M worth of sales for the first time in our Charity shops.

The icing on the cake was being shortlisted for three Awards of Excellence by the Association of Air Ambulances, and winning the campaign award for 'Devon Air Ambulance on Tour'. Our pilot Rob Mackie won a 'Pride of Exeter' award and we were shortlisted for a Pride of Plymouth (emergency services category), Western Morning News Business Award Employee of the Year (Adam Short – highly commended) and our CEO Heléna Holt was named in the top 30 CEOs on social media (Guardian Voluntary).

We can't afford to rest on our laurels though. We have to raise in excess of £4.5M every year, but we know with your support that's possible. This sum is also due to rise substantially, in fact by over £1M year on year, as we look to our strategic plan to further increase the service. We will be doing this in a few ways:

Working with the community to identify local helipads to facilitate services after dark

Introducing a new advanced clinical skills programme for our highly experienced paramedics

Extending operating hours all year round

None of this would be possible without your support and fundraising and taking the Charity and service to your hearts. Thank you so much. We wish you all a peaceful and relaxing Christmas and a happy and healthy 2014.

Sarah Burden
PR Manager



Heléna Holt, CEO, Devon Air Ambulance Trust with one of the two Devon EC135 helicopters

ILA Berlin Air Show
May 20-25 2014
Berlin ExpoCenter Airport

BRITISH APCO
Knowledge Exchange for Public Safety Communications
The Annual Exhibition and Professional Development Workshops
Manchester Central 1 - 2 April 2014

MOVE ALONG THERE PLEASE

Did your Christmas dinner arrive by unmanned air vehicle? Did any of your presents arrive by such means?

Of course not, but who can blame Amazon for 'filling their boots' on this little PR stunt. It reverberated through the media for days on end in December. Nothing like a bit of positive PR to get the tills ringing. If only I knew what set that little coup off I too would use it!

Meanwhile the mailman has been and left a card saying we were not in and there is a parcel to be collected from the depot.....



At first sight it looks an unlikely marriage of new technology with old but the manufacturers claim it works.

After hearing about some drowning deaths in the area of the Caspian Sea (north of Iran), RTS Lab sought a life-saving solution and came up with a surface rescue robot for use by lifeguards. After manufacturing and testing it successfully they developed a faster system that is now the Pars Aerial rescue robot.

Unlike the earlier system the aerial robot can save multiple people from a distance by dropping them a life ring long before a lifeguard would be able to swing out to them.



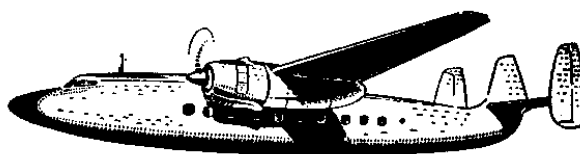
Pars is an Aerial robot designed and made for saving human lives. The primary purpose is the saving of people drowning near coastlines but developed versions can be utilised for other purposes including the monitoring of marine and off shore structures and taking movies and still images. It is GPS guided and can return to its original position automatically.

The robot was tested on the Caspian Sea during mid-August, thirteen tests being undertaken in a 4 day period to prove the viability of its life ring releasing system, flight stability and simplicity of control in the SAR role.

The current design of Pars can fly for ten minutes at a maximum speed of 10 m/s [22.4mph], thus it can be used in missions with a 4.5 km [2.8 miles] radius range. Tests were completely successful and all of the expected goals were achieved. Development continues prior to introducing it to international markets.

The final test compared the performance between robot and human (lifeguard). The goal of this test was rescuing a drowning person 75 metres [246 feet] away from the coastline. The robot undertook its life preserver drop mission in about 22 seconds leaving the lifeguard lagging behind at 91 seconds.

How times have changed. Not so long ago selling 1,000 aircraft of a single type into the civil market was stuff of pipedreams but such numbers are chicken feed today. Just days after taking delivery of its very first Airbus A321 aircraft, JetBlue Airways placed a new order for 15 A321ceo (current engine option) and 20 A321neo (new engine option) aircraft on 29 October, tipping the A320 family order book over the 10,000 mark.



The New York Air National Guard asked the USAF for help in finding a multimillion-dollar military drone that crashed into Lake Ontario last month.

The Syracuse-based 174th Attack Wing asked the Air Force to send an HC-130 search aircraft to look for the missing **General Atomics MQ-9 Reaper** lost during a training flight.

The unmanned aircraft took off from Wheeler Sack Army Airfield at Fort Drum in northern New York and crashed in eastern Lake Ontario about 12 miles from the lake's eastern shore and 35 miles from Fort Drum.

Initially a U.S. Coast Guard helicopter and vessel looked for the aircraft, but that search was called off because of bad weather and the search effort was passed to the Air Force because the losers do not have aircraft of their own.

Readers intending to attend this year's PAVCon may be glad to hear that Ryanair is to start flying from Brussels' main Zaventem airport, more than 30km (20 miles) closer to the city than its current base at Charleroi to the south.

Ryanair says that it is because large airports are offering it more competitive deals as they try to replace capacity cut by legacy carriers. Nearer the truth is that customers are finding the Ryanair fares no longer the cheapest, and even where they are, not competitive when ground transfer costs are included.

Ryanair says that it is overhauling its customer service model to attract business travellers, who are often willing to pay a premium for more convenient airports, flexible tickets and free baggage allowances.

Anyway do not get too excited, it seems that the only routes to be connected to the new location near Brussels by Ryanair are in the Spanish holiday islands so it looks like Charleroi or nothing for now. Another Ryanair problem is costs. Oddly you can do a return trip from Brussels to Madrid for under €100 but if you start in Madrid it costs over €150.

Must be the uphill stage over North Portugal!



And talking of PAVCon, the newly revised website will be on-line in a day or so and all the advertising slots are up for grabs in the new season.

Now is the time to book your Delegate or Exhibitor place and as ever airborne law enforcement professionals are free.

PEOPLE

Richard Sharp is the new Business Development Manager for FLIR Systems and responsible for the sales and support of sensors in Europe and beyond. Richard is based at 2, Kings Hill Avenue, West Malling, Kent ME19 4AQ UK and can be contacted there on his direct line +44 1732 221253 or by cell/mobile on +44 7889 806373. His E-Mail is: richard.sharp@flir.uk.com

RECENT EVENT

MILIPOL PARIS 2013 - the 18th exhibition was held November 19-22 at Paris Nord Villepinte – just a short coach ride from CDG airport. The modern exhibition site has its own dedicated TGV train station and hosts other events at the same time enhancing all the infrastructure and services needed to optimise the exhibition. Familiar faces in the exhibits hall included Airborne Technologies from Austria, FLIR, Wescam and Rohde & Schwarz. Trixeye, an autogyro manufacturer from Austria is like so many others promoting the genre for use by police in the developing world offering a compact EO/IR system attached to the side. Another company was displaying a whole aircraft x-ray machine [right] designed to undertake an interior cavities search of smaller aircraft [up to bizjet size] for drugs etc.

A long established biannual event it attracted 915 exhibitors from 49 countries including eight new countries.

In all there were 25,834 visitors from 150 countries with 45% from outside France, a growth in the number of international visitors of 12.5%.



UPCOMING EVENTS

IFSEC International, primarily a security installers event, is the latest exhibition to migrate to London Excel on 17-19 June 2014. This time the loser city is Birmingham.

Research has revealed that 75% of the audience said they will be able to travel to London quicker than it would take to arrive in Birmingham and there will be discounted rates on transport, accommodation, and entertainment available to sweeten any other costs. A new "Plug and Play Zone" will allow installers to get hands-on with the latest kit of the showfloor. Many want to attend organised offsite visits alongside IFSEC International. Some 42% value face-to-face communication, and 55% say they are more likely to attend IFSEC International due to the increased amount of activities in and around the new London venue.

www.ifsec.co.uk

