

Police Aviation News

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PAR

BOTSWANA POLICE

- MORE AS350s



NPAS GROUPING NEARLY COMPLETE

WHEN 'FREE' TURNS OUT COSTLY

SIMULATOR FOR HEMS MEDICS

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POLICE AVIATION

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION: Evidence of the positive aspects of the PAvCon Police Aviation Conference emerged last month with the news that the Federal Police in Germany are talking direct to the US based Airborne Law Enforcement Association at specific flight safety level – the PAvCon Dividend.

Timm Paulsen the Safety Officer from the Bundespolizei, based near Bonn, has joined the ALEA Safety Officer monthly conference calls with excellent interaction and information sharing.

Thomas Helbig M.A., the Assistant Chief Constable (Colonel) and Head of the Federal Police Air Support Group told Police Aviation News that Timm Paulsen taking part in the ALEA Safety Officer's conference is "definitely the result of the last PAvCon in Bruxelles" where he met Florida based police pilot Bryan Smith the ALEA Safety Officer and greatly enjoyed the discussion. After returning to Bonn he asked Timm Paulsen to get into contact with him and ALEA. He went on "This contact is definitely an outcome, besides many others, of the PAvCon-platform."

In addition to this element of the International cooperation the conference call gave the opportunity for the regulars at PAvCon to speak and continue previous extensive contact started in Germany in 2012.

While Colonel Helbig may have to personally miss this year's PAvCon in Breda due to Germany hosting a G7 Summit he is looking forward to being the co-host with Bavaria of the 2016 PAvCon in Munich. [PAR/GD/TH]

AUSTRALIA

WESTERN AUSTRALIA: The State of Western Australia was briefly without aerial law enforcement after both the Chief Pilot and Deputy Chief Pilot resigned unexpectedly. The *Western Australian* suggested that the resignations were linked to personality clashes within the police Air Wing but a senior police source denied this.

Western Australia Police started operating in September 1992 with a Kawasaki-built BK117B2 (known as "Polair 61"), to which they added a new AS365N3+ Dauphin ("Polair 62") in June 2012. They also operate two Pilatus PC12 fixed wing, but these are more for transportation around the vast area of the state and not for aerial law enforcement.

Police helicopter operations resumed in Western Australia after a couple of days. – the Civil Aviation Safety Authority stepped in to allow the Police Air Wing to change its license from commercial to private so the fleet could carry out its usual operations.

Meanwhile training and checking functions usually conducted by the chief pilot would be carried out with the assistance of the Victoria Police operation.

FRONT COVER: Additional examples of the Airbus Helicopters AS350B3e have been ordered for delivery to the Botswana Police. Image © Airbus Helicopters

In the wake of this story, but not necessarily connected, police used a leased helicopter to take detectives into an area near Kimberley to investigate the death of a man at a bush community.

A 20-year old man was found dead at the Wungu community, 70 km east of Halls Creek but officials were unable to gain access to the site due to heavy rain and floods cut off roads.

BANGLADESH

BORDER GUARD: It is reported that they are to set up an air wing as part of an official counter to an increase in cross-border crime. Their prime focus is drug trafficking across the borders with Myanmar and India (particularly Yaba), where there is a 400km unfenced and unguarded land border. [Helihub]

BOTSWANA

POLICE: Late last month the service signed a contract for three new Airbus Helicopters AS350B3e 'Ecureuil' Airbus Helicopters aircraft for its Police Air Support Branch.

The new helicopters will be customised to the Botswana Police Service's specification, including the installation of night vision equipment for night-time operations and other law enforcement equipment. The start of delivery of the new aircraft is scheduled for later in 2015.

The additional helicopters with their enhanced capability will fulfil Botswana's requirement for an expanded airborne law enforcement and crime prevention force.

Airbus Helicopters will also train Botswana Police Air Support Branch pilots and mechanics. [Airbus Helicopters]

CANADA

RCMP: An internal evaluation that has reached the eyes of the media before official release claims that the RCMP lacks a "national picture" of its aircraft use and needs, creating potentially costly inefficiencies.

In the vast country flight operations operate as 19 individual air sections, each with its own way of doing business, at an annual cost of \$32.8M in 2012-13.

The evaluation due to be released later this month believes that the RCMP would benefit from developing a national, co-ordinated approach to delivering air services.

TORONTO: Many in this city of some 600,000 thought the police were without air support until a matter of weeks ago. Now the secret is out and it is known that they have a clandestine Cessna 206H equipped with a surveillance camera and it has already been used successfully in the war on drugs.

It has been a rocky road. In 1997 it was announced that the city was to acquire three Schweizer helicopters to patrol at a total cost of \$4.5M from 1998. That project fell at the first fence. In the spring of 1999 there was a renewed push to get helicopters but that too failed but led to a trial in 2000-01.

In 2001 the local paper ran a story on a confidential Toronto police request for \$851,000 from the city to replace an ageing surveillance plane was made in November 2002. The Cessna Stationair 206H to be fitted with surveillance gear, would replace an aircraft based at Buttonville airport that was outdated and posing health and safety issues. The old aircraft, which has a trade-in value of only \$41,000, had been used primarily for drug investigations.

Even then local politicians were declaring surprise that they even had the old aircraft let alone needed a new one. Apparently the police never mentioned the old fixed wing when regularly applying for various sums to buy helicopters – some time candour can be counter-productive.

In March 2003 the Ontario budget included provision for a helicopter worth up to \$1M for the Toronto police force 'to enhance security in Canada's largest city.' That was cancelled after the administration changed in late 2003. In subsequent years helicopters remained on the agenda but made no headway – even though there was a genuine offer of a free helicopter

at one stage. That was dragged out by the politicians and the offer was finally withdrawn in exasperation in 2006.

More recently much surprise was again expressed when it appeared that Toronto Police-owned a white Cessna 206H, marked C-FZRR. It seems that the very type that they had been seeking a decade ago made its way into police possession. The \$500,000 white 2004 model Cessna 206 H is based at Buttonville Airport and is equipped with an infrared camera. It is registered to the Toronto Police Services Board and is in the care of a detective. Has it been there for ten years?

FRANCE

CHARLIE: Special police forces and the military were at the forefront of anti-terrorist operations in the wake of the attack on satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo in Paris early in January.

The fatal attacks claimed the lives of 12 people in the publishing attack and another handful in a copycat hostage taking in country areas north of Paris.

The seventeen dead included Economist and regular magazine columnist Bernard Maris, 68, known to readers as Uncle Bernard, Cartoonists Georges Wolinski, 80, and Jean "Cabu" Cabut, 76, Charlie Hebdo editor and cartoonist Stephane "Charb" Charbonnier, 47, who had been living under police protection since receiving death threats; Cartoonists Bernard "Tignous" Verlhac, 57, and Philippe Honore, 73; Mustapha Ourrad, proof-reader; Elsa Cayat, psychoanalyst and columnist, the only woman killed; Michel Renaud, who was visiting from the city of Clermont-Ferrand; Frederic Boisseau, 42, caretaker, who was in the reception area at the time of the attack and two male police officers Franck Brinsolaro, who acted as Charb's bodyguard, and Ahmed Merabet, 42, who was shot dead while on the

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ground.

A second death of a woman took place the same day when a police woman was killed by a second terror suspect.

The French Authorities pulled out all the stops in searches for the terrorists and involved both the Gendarmerie [effectively the state police] and army helicopters.

The types noted in use included army Puma supplementing Gendarmerie AS350 and EC145 employing mainly low level visual observation techniques. [PAR]

ISRAEL

POLICE: Israeli firm RT LTA based in Yavne, Israel has announced that it has been awarded a two year lease contract to provide the police in Israel with its Skystar 180 aerostat observation system. The police will not own the systems, they will call in RT LTA when needed and they will provide the complete system and operating crew.

The Skystar 180 system is a small, portable aerostat, especially suited for tactical intelligence assignments and security operations, both military and civilian. Carrying a payload of up to 20kg [44lbs], it provides persistent surveillance of various events, from an altitude of 300 metres. Equipped with a powerful day and night camera, this unmanned system requires only two operators, and can stay in the air continuously for 72 hours in 'any' weather condition.



RT LTA's systems have already seen extensive use by the Israeli military and were recently leased by the Jerusalem municipality to monitor and control violent outbursts in the city. It has been used for intelligence operations in 10 countries in 5 continents for civil and military operators in countries such as Afghanistan (by US and Canadian Army), Mexico, Russia, Africa, Colombia and Asia. [UAS/www.rt.co.il]

KENYA

POLICE AVIATION: PAN has regularly reported upon the apparently dire condition of Kenya police aviation but a view into the reasons that the situation is so negative has been highlighted by a story emerging this month from official sources.

The only remaining airworthy police helicopter, a Russian designed Mil 17, is grounded because a replacement main rotor system bought from suppliers in Ukraine last year for a significant amount only had two flight hours left and these have now expired.

The National Police Airwing (NPSA) bought the system comprising five blades for the MI-17 helicopter, registration 5Y-EDM at significant cost – the figure of 13 million Kenya Shilling has been stated and confirmed. Exchange rates given are around \$140,000 or £95,000 [for time expired parts]. Even when they arrived in country they then lay at the airport awaiting clearance.

The rotor system had already done 27 flight hours and the NPSA officials were told as much when they bought it. Its flight capability was little more than flying from Nairobi to Mombasa at which time it was grounded as time expired.

The Interior ministry's Strategic Communications Director Mwenda Njoka has been openly talking about the mess he is investigating. At the core of the problems have been what he describes as internal turf wars at the air wing. He says that the air wing is not managed well. This is compounded by the presence of other established networks and cartels at the police headquarters, the ministry and at the air wing.

The unit has four MI-17 helicopters, registration numbers 5Y-STA, 5Y-SFA, 5Y-EDM, and 5Y-UKW respectively. Three are not serviceable while the 5Y-UKW has been grounded since it was involved in an accident in Kapsabet where the then assistant minister the late Mr Orwa Ojode and the then Commissioner of Police Maj Gen Hussein Ali escaped unhurt. The government has announced plans to lease at least five aircraft for the service and the air wing's deputy director has said they had ordered other blades and that the helicopter would soon be serviceable.

The unit has another helicopter, Bell 206 L4, which is also unserviceable with a snag in the turbine. Investigations show that spare parts to the aircraft have been brought on several occasions only to disappear. Meanwhile the air wing continues to fly its fixed wing assets including a Cessna 208 Caravan. [The Nation/PAR]



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UNITED KINGDOM

METROPOLITAN: The Metropolitan Police is to join NPAS on March 31 after the Commissioner Bernard Hogan-Howe and Home Office officials made a decision in mid-January.

Early in January, Prospect a union representing a range of engineers, scientists, managers and specialists were welcoming the Metropolitan Police management board's decision not to privatise its air support unit but within days that tentative pleasure crumbled.

The union raised concerns over the proposed transfer with the Metropolitan Police Commissioner Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe in October and thought it had secured the future of its member's right up to the wire.

Even on the day PAN received the news that NPAS had 'won' the Prospect national secretary David Luxton was visiting his members at Lippitts Hill and had not been told that the Commissioner had already decided days before.

SOUTH & EAST WALES: The unit based at RAF St. Athan near Cardiff joins NPAS from the start of this month. The leased EC135T2 G-WONN has returned to Bond Air Services at Staverton. Recent Twitter traffic by SAEW suggests that they will start operations using the EC135P2 G-CPAS formerly used at Tees side Airport.

There will be significant changes at the unit. In addition to a new management structure, new pilots, new aircraft and reduced staffing overall the most recent UEO Sergeant Andy Morgan retired.

These recent decisions leave just the Humberside Police to join the NPAS operations some time next year to complete the transfer of all England and Wales police air units to NPAS..



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UNITED STATES

FEDERAL: Last month PAN ran the story about Italian Police starting to use high end unmanned aircraft.

As a counter to the potential future success of that project are reports that the primary law enforcement/Homeland Security operator of Predator B unmanned [and unarmed] craft in the USA – the US Customs and Border Protection [CBP] are not doing so well and have the previously announced plans to expand its fleet on hold.



It seems that with its restricted operational area of airspace the Reaper's are not working out. Designed for flying a long distances to an area of operations and then loitering at altitude over a fairly large area the craft do not take too well to undertaking a short transit to what is in airspace terms a narrow and short patrol line adjacent to the international border with Mexico.

The CBP agency no longer plans to acquire 14 more medium altitude unmanned air systems and faces stinging new criticisms about the effectiveness of the current fleet of 10 aircraft.

The agency's fleet are so restricted by budget, operational and weather constraints that the aircraft have completed 22% of planned flight hours, according to the report by the Office of Inspector General (IG).

Although the sensors on the craft have detected thousands of suspected illegal immigrants after they have crossed the border, it is not being used by the CBP for the strategic purpose of tracing their routes back to where they crossed the border. The IG has recommended that the \$443M set aside for more Reapers be used on something more useful.

The report also highlights one of the largely hidden truths about UAVs in that it costs only about \$2,500 per flight hour to operate the Predator B but overall costs are nearly six times higher after factoring in salaries for pilots and maintainers, depreciation and the cost of maintaining the sensors.

The Predator B fleet faces several weather-related restrictions. The CBP does not allow the UAS to operate in stormy weather or where there is cloud cover. [Flight/PAR]

FEDERAL: Last month for the first time West Coast US Customs and Border Protection agents fired warning shots from a helicopter across the bow of a suspected drug smuggling boat off the coast of San Diego County.

Shots were fired when the panga boat, spotted 24 miles off La Jolla Saturday night, wouldn't stop for authorities.

The panga stopped immediately after the shots were fired, and three men were taken into custody.

The crew of a US Coast Guard fixed-wing aircraft spotted the panga as it sped north toward Santa Catalina Island. CBP boats in the area and a helicopter patrolling around the island were called in, and people on the panga could be seen jettisoning bales overboard. A search was started for the bales, which likely contained marijuana.

ARIZONA: Pinal County Sheriff's Office lost a MD 500E N34CT in a June 2013 accident. As a replacement it has purchased a MD 600N helicopter, making it only one of two law enforcement operators of this type in the USA. The other being the Dale County Sheriff in Alabama. The Pinal owned 600N was formerly on the civil registry in the US and then

New Zealand before being re-imported back to the USA. It now carries registration N375SD and is being role equipped with the expectation that it will enter service later this month. We hope to have an image next month. [Christian Shepherd]



BROKEN BAD: In the evening of a day last month a witness called Tijuana Municipal Police after watching something fall from the sky and land in the Pueblo Amigo complex parking lot, just southeast of the San Ysidro Border Crossing into the USA.

When police arrived they found a broken silver and black unmanned aircraft – said to be a Spreading Wings S900 model hexacopter - with six packages of crystal meth attached to it. The drugs weighed about 6.5 pounds [3kg], according to police.

Ed: Chrystal meth is not new to the US market and neither is the method of delivery but occasionally overloading means that the carrying craft simply cannot carry enough of the stuff successfully. The S900 costs around \$4,000 and with crystal meth around \$80 a gram the load was over \$200,000 worth so it is economic to risk losing the odd flight.



CALIFORNIA: 2014 was a record year for the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (LASD) Volunteer Search and Rescue (SAR) Teams. They responded to 597 missions, nearly a 20% rise over 2013, and saved dozens of lives. This increase can be attributed in part to social media and the posting of extreme videos, showing hikers performing high-risk outdoor adventures.

The rescues involved everything from missing hikers, motorcycle crashes over the sides of highways, cliff rescues, and even dog rescues in all kinds of environments from snow storms to blazing heat, from sea level to 14,000 feet, even at the bottom of mine shafts, day or night.

The Los Angeles County Sheriff's SAR program consists of eight teams throughout Los Angeles County with 170 Reserve Sheriff's deputies and civilian volunteers who donate their time performing these life-saving rescues. They are available 24/7 and respond at a moment's notice. Also, besides being skilled mountaineers, they are all Emergency Medical Technicians, providing the highest level of care to anyone injured in the forest.

SAR Teams perform these rescues frequently in partnership with LASD Air 5 Rescue helicopter. This combination of the full-time paid air rescue crew combined with the SAR Teams on the ground make the LASD mountain rescue program the most highly trained and proficient in the country. [LASD]

MICHIGAN: The Michigan State Police (MSP) is working with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to become one of the first police agencies in the nation to obtain authorization to fly an Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS).

In September 2013, the MSP purchased a small quad-rotor Aeryon SkyRanger for trials and to develop policies and procedures for the safe and effective implementation of this equipment. A year ago they received a Certificate of Authorization (COA) from the FAA to conduct training flights with the UAS near the MSP Training Academy.

A site visit with the FAA is scheduled in the near future to review the request for authority to fly the quad-rotor for law enforcement support missions across the whole state. Potential missions include search and rescue, crime scene and crash investigations.

The UAS is always flown by a two-person crew, with one acting as the pilot and the other as a safety observer. The FAA certified pilot has received specific training from the manufacturer in the safe operation of the UAS. The device must remain below 400 feet and always be within line of sight of the crew. Many additional safety factors are included with the design of the device.

Ed: MSP operate two helicopters and a fixed wing across the state. If things were not already difficult for improving sales prospects in the USA a furore was raised when a small drone ended up lodged in trees at the White House and President Obama was alleged to be calling for greater regulation of unmanned craft as a result. Nothing worse than violating any US Presidents air space intentionally or not!

NEW JERSEY: A former Vietnam-era Army helicopter that was given to the Newark New Jersey under the 1033 Program at no cost has ended up costing the force more than \$2M.

The 42-year-old Bell Kiowa chopper N12NP was one of two delivered to the police, the first as a flight worthy option the second to provide useful spares.

Not for the first time public officials and the media have expressed shock and horror at the supposed free gift costing money to run. When you pay nothing two million dollars seems a lot, if they had paid market price for the airframe the amount would seem like small change.

Public records show the cash-strapped force spent more than \$2M on refurbishing, maintaining and operating the aircraft during a time when Mayor Cory Booker was forced to sack 167 police officers in 2010 over mounting budget problems.

Documents obtained by NJ Advance Media show maintenance contracts alone approved by the Newark City Council have totalled \$1.13M in the past five years.

This included a \$27,412 invoice to strip, apply corrosion coating and paint the aircraft, plus new rotor blades that cost \$143,386.

Other costs include annual storage and hangar fees of \$3,600 at Kearny heliport and insurance premiums of \$30,000 a year. Then there was \$961,000 that has been spent on pilot salaries. The first airframe - call sign Able-1 - was delivered to the city in 2005 from the U.S. Army base at Ft Drum, NY, the second, the spares ship, was received in 2007.



Able-1 arrived as a basic olive drab painted army craft and it was painted in the gleaming black-and-white livery of Newark's police cruisers. It was equipped with a gyro-stabilized camera system feeding images into BMS downlink, a Lo-Jack receiver to track stolen cars, a Spectrolab SX-16 searchlight and a GPS navigation system.

The city employed the newly retired Chief Pilot from NYPD, Ken Solosky, as its own Chief Pilot and he both imparted training to a partner, flew with him and undertook almost daily operations. At first, the helicopter spent a lot of time on patrol, flying five days week, five to six hours a night but the budget troubles intervened in 2010 and hours were severely cut

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back, with both the airframe and pilots grounded and turned over to the State Police for around a year.

Able-1 was reintroduced a year later after a sharp rise in crime. Along with the airframe came a full time pilot and a part time Chief Pilot but since its return there have been significant periods of downtime blamed on maintenance issues.

As part of the research for their story NJ.com learned that the Defense Logistics Agency sat they have distributed 577 helicopters have been distributed under the project since 1996, many of them early model Kiowa's identical to the aircraft received by Newark, others being the Hughes OH-6A.

Ed: This is far less than the 3,000 that the DoD said they would be distributed at the start of the plan, perhaps fortunately for industry.

NORTH DAKOTA: In Grand Forks a bill introduced in the North Dakota Legislature would require police to get a warrant before using an unmanned aircraft for surveillance. The proposal would prohibit law enforcement agencies from using an unmanned aircraft to observe people, businesses or personal property, without first obtaining a warrant in order to gather evidence of criminal activity.

Warrants to conduct surveillance with unmanned aerial systems could only be issued in the investigation of a felony, and not "misdemeanours, traffic infractions or other non-felony violations of the law."

A number of exceptions are written into the bill, including using UAS for research and training, patrolling national borders, immediate danger to life or bodily harm, or a weather-related catastrophe.

Al Frazier, Grand Forks County deputy sheriff and chief pilot for its UAS, said he has "serious concerns" about the bill.

Local law enforcement has used small UAS primarily on areas where a crime has already occurred, looking for lost people and assessing erosion damage. [Dickinson Press]

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AIR AMBULANCE

KENYA

PROPOSAL: The Kenya government has launched its first national helicopter air ambulance service but its use will be limited to helping its security forces during an emergency on battlefield rather than the wider population.

Some soldiers and policemen have bled to death or have died of dehydration in remote areas of Kenya because of long delays in getting them to hospital and it is hoped that this deal with the Red Cross and private firm AMREF Flying Doctors will improve survival rates. Retrievals from the battlefield will be by air and ground vehicles.

According to President Uhuru Kenyatta, the service was vital to ensure they received instant treatment before they arrive at the hospital and thereby to boost the morale of security personnel facing multiple threats.

SIERRA LEONE

EBOLA: Volga-Dnepr Airlines has completed its latest flight in support of the global relief effort to counter the outbreak of the Ebola disease by transporting medical equipment from Oslo to Freetown, Sierra Leone, on behalf of the Norwegian Red Cross.

The flight utilising an IL-76-TD-90VD needed to be operated at short notice to deliver urgently needed equipment for a new Ebola Treatment Centre being set up in a remote region 350km from Freetown. Within 72 hours of the flight leaving Norway the cargo had reached its final destination and was ready to provide assistance to combat the disease, which has already claimed some 8,000 lives in West Africa.

Volga-Dnepr completed its first flight to help with the international response to the Ebola outbreak in October when one of its An-124-100 freighters carried three multi-purpose Mi-8 helicopters from Moscow to Sierra Leone for the United Nations (UN) emergency health mission.

More recently, another An-124-100 freighter has operated to five cities in Congo, Ghana, Mali, Guinea-Bissau and Ivory Coast to deliver more urgent equipment. The flights to Kinshasa, Accra, Bamako, Bissau and Abidjan carried five 20-ton containers, part of the Chinese government's programme to help countries in West Africa affected by the virus. The An-124 operated from Tianjin, China. The cargo included single-use protective suits, respirators, glasses, boot covers and other equipment used as part of the anti-epidemic measures being taken by healthcare workers operating in the worst affected areas. [V-DA]

UNITED KINGDOM

LONDON: London's need for a second emergency helicopter was highlighted last month when the charity announced that the capital will be without an air ambulance for three weeks. The downtime is not unusual – it is the normal annual maintenance period for the MD902 Explorer – but the charity are now saying that new European regulations have prevented the charity that runs London's Air Ambulance from using its usual replacement aircraft while its helicopter undergoes annual maintenance. There are very few spare MD902s available and these are usually contracted to customers, the charity used to call in an AS355 to stand in as the spare aircraft but the smaller craft is inadequate for the advanced role the charity now flies.

This leaves the charity trauma team of a hospital surgeon and advanced paramedic reliant upon a car – which they do anyway at night and in bad weather – but every little difficulty can be seen to have a silver lining when it suits the charity fundraising team.

It costs about £5M a year to run London's Air Ambulance, which is based on the roof of the Royal London hospital in Whitechapel and serves the 10 million people who live or work within the M25.

It receives about £1.3M in "benefit in kind" from the NHS, with Bart's Health NHS Trust paying the salaries of the trauma doctors and London Ambulance Service paying for the para-

medics. The rest is raised from public and corporate donations.
A leasing deal for an additional aircraft is hoped to be concluded in the coming weeks.

Work has started on the third helipad for London at King's College Hospital, Denmark Hill in south London. The £4.5M charity funded project is scheduled to be completed later this year. [bbc]

WILTSHIRE: The new charity air ambulance's new helicopter airlifted a patient on its first day of operations on January 9.

The crew were tasked to a road traffic collision involving a pickup truck and a HGV at a slip road off the A417 near Cirencester in Gloucestershire. [WAA]

YORKSHIRE: Paramedics at the Yorkshire Air Ambulance have partnered with suppliers of polar expedition equipment to design a unique casualty bag.

The air crew worked closely with specialist company Snowsled Polar Ltd to re-design their successful standard casualty bag to specifically meet the requirements of the rapid response emergency charity.

Almost all Yorkshire Air Ambulance (YAA) patients are secured on an immobilization board and then put in an insulated casualty bag, before being carried to the helicopter and airlifted to hospital.

Recent research suggests that a reduced core body temperature in a trauma patient can have a significant detrimental effect on their outcome.

The new bespoke design has a mat built in at the bottom to give better insulation for casualties and has been modified to make them a lot easier to carry people in.

Additional features include such as a zip system to provide access to different areas of the patient without having to open the bag completely and being made longer to accommodate a long-leg splint.

The modifications also include a wipe-clean outer material and non-absorbent lining which means the bags do not have to be laundered after each use. They are also much easier to pack away and store on the aircraft. YAA have been able to buy four new casualty bags.



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UNITED STATES

NEW MEXICO: The Sandoval County Fire Department is getting a new Care Flight operated helicopter to cover its 3,700 square miles of responsibility. With some five-to-six medical helicopters a week flying into the county from facilities based in Santa Fe and Rio Rancho there is clearly a need. The problem is they're not always available, so crews end up having to get there on the ground.

It takes some EMT crews up to two hours to get from rural Sandoval County to the hospital. The department's hoping the helicopter will cut that time in half.

The department hoped to have the operation up and running by the end of January using AgustaWestland AW109 N365AA [KRQE]

OHIO: Acute Care Nurse Practitioner [ACNP] students specialising in flight nursing are about to use the first motion simulator based on a medical helicopter airframe in the USA. It will include many advanced features usually seen in pilots training aids including movement and projected aerial views to demonstrate different attitudes and weather conditions.

The basis of the simulator is a retired Sikorsky S-76 fuselage offering a 10 feet by 7 feet cabin space that provides suitably cramped space for five occupants – usually a 'patient' three student nurses and an instructor – in an environment that demonstrates movement, noise and vibration as well as differences in temperature and pressure.

A sound system and lighting controls allow trainers to manage the audio and video image capabilities inside the fuselage, replicating the noisy and sometimes poorly lit conditions of flying. The fuselage windows have been replaced with a double pane Lexan™ screen utilizing a rear projection system to simultaneously display real-world views of particular mission scenarios that include take-off, landing, hover, and transition of the various phases of flight. Video-recording capabilities offer the ability to record and store data for post training debriefings, research analysis and marketing.

The basis of the simulator was acquired for \$5,000 from H P Aviation and scrap yard in Oldsmar, Florida and the FAA approved interior fittings were taken from a former Metro Health Medical Center life flight helicopter acquired from Arrow Aviation in Lafayette, Louisiana for \$10,000. All the components were brought together by Redbird Flight Simulations in Austin, Texas at a total cost of around \$600,000 and installed at the Case Western Reserve University [CWRU] facility in Cedar Road, Cleveland with the help of Hartzell Propeller Inc. in Piqua, Ohio.

The only other similarly comprehensive EMS training rig is located in Germany. That equipment located within the Hannover Medical School since 2010 and based on a retired BK117, offers 2-axis motion, noise and projected images. The airframe experience is backed up by the use of several different 'smart' manikins that likewise provide realistic input to the training including speech, breathing and pulses. The Ohio project builds upon the lessons learned creating 'Christoph Life' and hopes to offer a more capable system.

The Ohio based trainer is installed and operating but now faces a period of user training with the expectation that ACNP will be officially launching the system in early May.

Training activities include CRM and medical practice training for civilian air medical crews, as well as providing a resource for research. The critical care transport simulation scenarios are shared locally with community providers, nationally with government flight teams, and internationally

In addition to the sophisticated training device Bell Helicopter donated a 430 helicopter to the Frances Payne Bolton School of Nursing's Dorothy Ebersbach Academic Center for Flight Nursing [DEACFN] Program at Case Western Reserve University. The aircraft will be



©Image by
Roger Mastroianni.

used to provide students with hands-on training demonstrations and active teaching simulations at the Wright State University's National Center for Medical Readiness, a 55 acre disaster training site near Wright Patterson Air Force Base, Dayton, Ohio known as 'Calamityville.' This will allow the nursing school to offer specialised disaster training opportunities.

"Our customers use our products for critical, life-saving missions all around the world," said Jeanne Connor-Osborn, key market segment specialist for Bell Helicopter. "We are honoured to make this donation to help prepare students for a future career in the medical field." <http://flightnurse.case.edu/> [Celeste M Alfes/Bell/PAR]



The view from inside the simulator cabin
©Susan Griffith

Ed: The choice of primary airframe for this conversation was undoubtedly influenced by the affiliation of the faculty with Cleveland Clinic's Critical Care Transport Team which operates three Sikorsky S-76 C+ currently based at Cleveland Clinic main campus (Cleveland, Ohio), Richard E. Jacobs Health Center (Avon, Ohio) and Cleveland Clinic Twinsburg (Twinsburg, Ohio). Cleveland Care also operate four Cessna Citation 5 Ultra fixed wing. Another affiliate Metro Lifeflight currently operates the EC145 but the interior for the project came from one of their earlier S-76 fleet.



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FIRE

AUSTRALIA

NEW SOUTH WALES: NSW's urban fire fighting force says it has been left under equipped after the state government decided to sell a helicopter used to battle extreme fires and rescue people from floodwaters.

Fire and Rescue NSW says the loss of the helicopter, which was in high demand during the 2013 Blue Mountains bushfires, is "a concern". It means that what is claimed to be Australia's busiest fire fighting force no longer has dedicated aerial support.

The Fire Air 1 helicopter was formerly shared between NSW Police and FRNSW. The ageing BK117B2 was decommissioned in June last year. It has been mothballed and will be sold.

The fire service used the helicopter to transport equipment and personnel, carry out reconnaissance, water-bomb fires and winch people from floods. It enabled a rapid response to complex emergencies such as metropolitan bushfires, storms and floods. [SMH]

SEARCH & RESCUE

FALKLAND ISLANDS

AAR Airlift division has been awarded a contract by the United Kingdom Ministry of Defence for Search & Rescue (SAR) and Support Helicopter services in the Falkland Islands. The contract is valued at approximately \$275M (approximately £180M).

AAR Airlift, together with British International Helicopters (BIH) and Air Rescue Systems (ARS), will provide a combined SAR and Support Helicopter service to the British Forces South Atlantic Islands (BFSAI) operations. The operation will use AgustaWestland AW-189 SAR helicopters, Sikorsky S-61 support helicopters, flight operations, maintenance, logistics and facilities support at the Mount Pleasant Complex in the Falkland Islands and surrounding maritime region.

The mission includes all-weather SAR, helicopter emergency medical services, rescue hoist operations, passenger and cargo transfers, and night vision imaging systems. Readiness states vary from 15 minutes to 60 minutes response and require a 24/7/365 alert posture. Performance on the 10-year contract will begin in April 2016.

ITALY

There are times when bad luck appears in threes and it was the case with Italy last month.

The country was involved in the aftermath of a ferry disaster off Albania when the Norman Atlantic caught fire killing thirteen people.

Within hours of that disaster Italian sailors were obliged to intercept a freighter carrying more than 700 mostly Syrian migrants which had been heading for the rocks of Italy's south-eastern shore on autopilot, having been abandoned by the people smugglers who had navigated it from Turkey via Greek waters.

The Moldovan-registered Blue Sky M cargo ship got to within five miles – 45 minutes' sailing time – of a disaster before six navy officers were lowered on to the ship by helicopter and succeeded in bringing it under control.

Although ultimately all survived the near wrecking many of the migrants on the ship were treated for hypothermia and broken limbs.

The third incident came to notice two days later after a migrant passenger aboard another abandoned vessel alerted the Italian authorities by ships radio, leading an Italian military helicopter crew being scrambled to save hundreds of migrants apparently abandoned on another cargo ship sailing along without anyone at the helm in rough conditions in the Mediterranean. The Ezadeen, a Sierra-Leone-flagged vessel, required sailors to be lowered to secure the ship and doctors allowed on aboard to replace the people smugglers that had

left them to their fate.

The coastguard asked for assistance from Icelandic patrol boat Tyr, which was in the area on a mission with Frontex, the European Union's border agency.

The Tyr was able to draw alongside the runaway ship, but the weather conditions made boarding impossible so their three doctors were winched on to the merchant ship by helicopter.

The number of people attempting to reach Europe by sea from the Middle East, Africa and Asia reached a record in 2014, of those more than 170,000 people have been rescued by Italy in the last 14 months and hundreds, possibly thousands, have perished trying to make the crossing.

The traffickers who earn thousands of dollars for every person they put to sea from Libya and other departure points in North Africa have increasingly abandoned the boats to their fate.



©Icelandic Coast Guard

UNITED KINGDOM

Once a fully operational RAF Station, Wattisham is now only home to a search and rescue helicopter unit, 'B' Flight of No 22 Squadron, equipped with 2 Sea King HAR3A helicopters. It has been announced the Sea Kings will cease operations on July 1. Other bases will gradually follow as the new outsourced fleet come on line.



A Sea King at Wattisham in 2006 ©PAR

This will be the first military SAR unit to close to make way for new operational bases to open as part of the UK's national Search and Rescue contract, which won by Bristow Helicopters in 2013. From April 1 through to 2017, UK SAR coverage will change from its current mix of military and civilian operations to a wholly civil-supplied contract with ten bases at Caernarfon, Humberside, Inverness, Lee-on-Solent, Manston, Newquay, Prestwick, St Athan, Stornoway and Sumburgh. [HeliHub]

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INDUSTRY

Less than two weeks after announcing its Transport Canada certification [see last month], **Eagle Copters** announced the receipt of FAA certification for their Eagle 407HP conversion. By virtue of a Supplemental Type Certification (STC), the upgrade replaces the OEM-installed Rolls Royce C47 turbine engine with a 'next-generation' Honeywell HTS900 turbine engine, significantly improving the Bell 407 helicopter's high altitude and hot ambient temperature performance.

SIMAVIA USA based in Prescott Arizona has announced its Airbus AS350-B2 simulator that is manufactured to FTD Level 5 standards (with capability to be upgraded to FTD Level 6 and FNPT II). The simulator employs the latest technology to improve the overall feel and give students and pilots the best training experience possible.

SIMAVIA USA manufactures devices that cover flight-training from start to finish: consultation, design and manufacturing—to—secure delivery, installation and ongoing training. The devices are available to both United States FAA specifications, including BATD, AATD, and FTD levels 4-7 and to EASA/JAA specifications to include; FNPT-1, FNPT-2, FNPT-3 and FNPT MCC.

SIMAVIA USA's product line also includes a procedural trainer, which is frequently referred to as a Parts Task Trainer (PTT). It is aircraft specific and is used for initial familiarization of specific cockpits. Typically, the cockpit has the correct gauges, switches, indicators and etcetera, so that the student knows where everything is located, and depending on the client's complexity requirement, aircraft systems may function and fail as in the real aircraft. Generally such devices are used for procedure training that allows pilots to practice tailored procedure skills and cockpit work flows relevant to the aircraft that they will fly. This training is then followed with more advanced training in higher-level simulators or the aircraft itself. www.simaviausa.com +1 (928) 237-5050

AgustaWestland announced that the new generation AW169 light intermediate 4.5-tonne class helicopter has entered full scale production, with the first aircraft now on the final assembly line at its Vergiate facility in Italy. The event marks a major milestone ahead of EASA certification, with deliveries to the first batch of customers set to start in the 2nd quarter of 2015. The AW169 is the first all new aircraft in its weight category to enter the market in nearly forty years.

The AW169 flight test programme, utilizing four prototypes, has so far amassed over 1200 flying hours during flight testing in Italy, the UK and USA. A second AW169 final assembly line is planned at AgustaWestland's Philadelphia plant in the US, while AgustaWestland's Yeovil plant in UK is already playing a key role in the production of rotor blades and tail rotor transmission system. In parallel to the start of full scale production, AW169 training systems are being established at AgustaWestland's Sesto Calende Training Academy in Italy, including a level-D full flight simulator and maintenance trainer.

Turbomeca (Safran) is setting up new manufacturing capability at its facility in Bordes (France). After years of testing, Turbomeca has entered serial production of parts using the latest additive manufacturing, or 3D printing process. Bordes facility is one of the first of its kind to serial produce additive components for aerospace propulsion industry in France.

Arrano test and production engines will feature fuel injector nozzles made using Selective Laser Melting (SLM) techniques. This leading-edge manufacturing process will also be used to manufacture Ardiden 3 combustor swirlers. These engines are Turbomeca's latest models and amongst the most advanced turboshafts ever designed.

Additive manufacturing produces parts to a three-dimensional CAD (computer-aided design) model. Unlike traditional manufacturing processes (forging and machining) which are based on material removal, additive manufacturing builds layers, each between 20 and 100-micrometers thick, of fine metal powder to produce complex-shape parts. In the case of SLM, a computer-controlled laser shoots pinpoint beams onto a bed of nickel-based super-

alloy powder, to melt the metal in the desired areas.

Additive Manufacturing also simplifies the manufacturing process. A traditional fuel-injector nozzle is made up from dozens different pieces. Arrano component is made from one single piece of material and features advanced injection and cooling functions. One SLM machine is already in service, and qualified for mass production, with others to be integrated over the coming years.

Additive manufacturing is part of Turbomeca's ambitious "Future Line" programme designed to improve all its manufacturing capabilities.

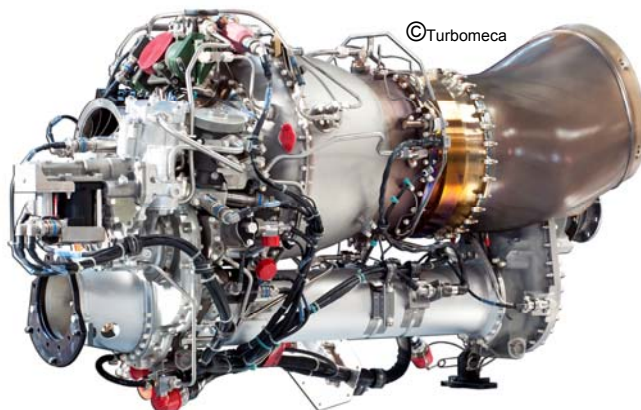
Turbomeca has gained EASA type-certification for its Arriel 2N turboshaft, the latest member of the Arriel 2+ family. The new engine, which first ran in September 2011 at Bordeaux, offers lower operating costs, increased reliability and superior performance over its predecessors.

Airbus Helicopters has selected the Arriel 2N to power its latest AS565 MBe Panther. Like the two other family members, the 2D and 2E, the Arriel 2N features a combination of new and proven technologies. It has a new axial compressor, new high-pressure compressor diffuser, new high-pressure turbine material and new-generation dual-channel Fadec,

This combination delivers 17% more take-off power (986 shp/735 kW compared to 840 shp/626 kW) than the current Arriel 2C. It has also been provided with a special 30-minute take-off power rating for the most demanding missions

A new Engine Data Recorder, together with a turbine blade-creep monitor, further shifts the emphasis from traditional to preventive maintenance. The innovations also drastically reduce unscheduled removals, significantly improve airframe availability and contribute to a TBO (Time Between Overhaul) of up to 3,500 hours (at entry into service), then up to 4,000 hours at maturity.

During the past 40 years around 11,500 Arriel units have been produced, together logging more than 42 million flight hours. With power outputs ranging from 650 to 990 shp, the Arriel family now powers over 40 different helicopter types.



The **UK Home Office** has scrapped the fourth contract, or Lot 4, of the new Emergency Services Network (ESN) framework, saying in light of new commitments undertaken by the UK's big four mobile network operators (MNOs) it was now redundant.

Lot 4 was designed to address mobile network access for the emergency services in remote and rural areas of the country, as well as national parks and other areas of outstanding natural beauty, that could not be covered by Lot 3 – the main ESN mobile contract.

Having evaluated the tenders it has received on Lot 3, the Home Office has decided the main contract bids offered "unexpected and significant" improvements to coverage in poor signal areas, rendering Lot 4 pointless in its current form.

The specifications of ESN were developed alongside the emergency services networks and will also add vital broadband data capabilities the current Tetra system cannot provide.

The ESN contracts are set to be awarded in 2015 and the new network will begin to go live



as existing contracts expire, beginning in 2017. The total value of the contracts is thought to be between £555M and £1.2bn.

It will cover 250,000 operational staff at 44 police and crime commissioner services, 50 fire and rescue authorities, 13 ambulance trusts, the National Crime Agency, the British Transport Police, the Ministry of Defence Police, the Civil Nuclear Constabulary and the National Police Air Service.

In addition, more than 400 government, local public safety and non-governmental bodies will potentially be able to use it.

A spokesman for Airwave said: "It is against the rules of the Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme for us to talk about our bid strategy, nor anything to do with this bid. [Computer Weekly]

The first **EC135 T2+** helicopter in a planned fleet of modern, twin-engine, rotary-wing aircraft being acquired by the Australian Defence Force (ADF) for its new Helicopter Aircrew Training System (HATS), has successfully completed its first flight in Europe.

Under the HATS project, a joint training scheme for both Army and Navy aircrew will utilise some 15 Airbus Helicopters EC135 T2+ trainers, along with EC135 flight simulators and a new flight-deck equipped, sea-going training vessel.

Boeing Defence Australia (BDA) is the prime contractor for the new training system, partnered by Thales Australia which will provide the flight simulators. See image page 28 [AH]

Meanwhile Bond Air Services, Staverton, in the west of England took delivery of a second EC145T2 helicopters. This one is believed intended for service with the Scottish Air Ambulance Service. [via Helihub]

Following the acquisition of Avincis Group (Avincis) by Babcock International Group PLC in May 2014, the process to integrate the business into the Group has progressed well and this has resulted in the Avincis name being dropped to become Babcock Mission Critical Services (Babcock).

The local companies which make up the business, delivering vital services to their customers across 11 countries, will retain their individual names under the brands Australian Helicopters, Bond, INAER, Norsk Helikopterservice and Scandinavian AirAmbulance.



The AS365 Dauphin rotorcraft full-flight simulator at **Airbus Helicopters'** Singapore-based training centre has been upgraded to provide highly realistic training in both day and night search and rescue (SAR) operations, offering pilots the unique capability to safely practice these demanding life-saving missions.

The upgrade was made by Airbus Helicopters Southeast Asia at its Seletar Aerospace Park facility, incorporating a CMA9000 flight management system into the AS365 motion-based flight simulator, and updating its APM 2010 4-axis autopilot with the SAR mode. It is the interface between these two avionics units that enhances the SAR operations training.

This will enable flight crews to experience the operational environment during SAR missions while using all capabilities of the CMA9000 system and APM 2010 autopilot – including flying with precision navigation guidance, performing search patterns and hovering, as well as scenarios for deploying rescue dinghies, flares and smoke markers.

The CMA9000 is a highly capable flight management system used on helicopters operated by many emergency services providers, law enforcement organizations and government agencies. The APM 2010 is a digital dual-duplex autopilot that reduces pilot workload for

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increased mission effectiveness and enhanced situational awareness – while providing unique automatic hover stability with very high precision.

Search and rescue training with the newly enhanced full flight simulator at Airbus Helicopters Southeast Asia will begin in March, with the Royal Thai Police as the inaugural customer. This law enforcement agency currently operates one AS365 N3+ Dauphin configured for SAR missions with the CMA9000 flight management system, as well as an electrical hoist, rappelling installation, cargo sling and search lights. A second similarly-equipped AS365 N3+ will be delivered to the Royal Thai Police later this year.

The AS365 Dauphin full-flight simulator at Airbus Helicopters Southeast Asia began operation in April 2012, and to date has been used for the training of more than 300 pilots from over 20 countries. www.airbushelicopters.com.sg

In a court ruling, the **Ministry of Defence** (MOD) and the Secretary of State have been told that the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) is the statutory regulator required to determine safety standards for civilian aircraft using government owned military aerodromes.

Previously, as part of a policy of attracting 12,000 more business jets a year to RAF Northolt in west London, Ministers had repeatedly argued that they didn't need to meet stricter, costlier civilian safety standards – only military ones – and that the CAA had no regulatory powers at military aerodromes.

This meant that smaller private airports reliant on business jets were being significantly undermined, as RAF Northolt became a competitor without incurring the higher costs of complying with civilian safety standards.

London Oxford and Biggin Hill Airports lodged an application for a Judicial Review, arguing that military aerodromes should be regulated by the CAA and subject to equivalent safety standards that would apply to civilian airports, as mandated by the UK Civil Aviation Authority (UK CAA).

This Judicial Review has now clarified the position – the CAA and the Secretary of State for Transport are responsible for the safety of all civilian flights using RAF Northolt and other military aerodromes in the U.K. The safety of military flights remains the responsibility of the

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Military Aviation Authority.

Although this was a case directed primarily at protecting fixed wing operations it may have some impact on rotary civil emergency services operations, some of which enjoy the benign effects of having the military as hosts. In avoiding meeting CAA regulation the military have been putting off expensive enhancements to their properties for decades. There is a suggestion that if the MOD have been unfairly competing with the private sector the compensation bill could run into many tens of millions. The cost of improvements to these airfields and the associated compensation can only result in them either leaving the pseudo civilian operation market or dramatically increasing associated rents.

Bell Helicopters has received an Approved Training Organization (ATO) certification from the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA).

With this approval, the Bell Helicopter Training Academy (BTA) is authorized to provide Part-FCL training courses for European customers, including the use of Flight Simulation Training Devices (FSTD) for the Bell 407 and Bell 429 aircraft models.

Bell Helicopter is the first organisation outside EASA member states approved as an ATO to provide Part-FCL type training courses, including the use of FSTDs for the Bell 429 and Bell 407 aircraft.

The ATO approval is a significant step in the company's plans to open a regional training centre in Valencia, Spain early next year in a partnership with sister companies TRU Simulation + Training and Textron Aviation.

The new centre furthers the collaboration initiated at Farnborough where Bell Helicopter and TRU Simulation + Training announced their collaboration on the full flight simulator on the Bell 525. It also furthers Bell Helicopter's commitment to increase resources and regional support in Europe, starting with the announcement that its facility in Prague, Czech Republic would serve customization, delivery and aftermarket service for Europe.

(L-R): EASA's Flight Standards Director, Trevor Woods; Bell Helicopter's General Manager, Customer Training, Ray Lamas; Bell Helicopter's Senior Manager, Domestic Training Opportunities, Charles Fisher at the signing ceremony

Last month the **Emergency Situations Committee** under the Kazakh Ministry of Internal Affairs launched a lawsuit against Eurocopter Kazakhstan Engineering LLP for failing to meet its public procurement obligations.

According to the Supreme Court website, initial proceedings started on January 14 and the case will be heard by the Specialized Inter-district Economic Court of Astana, beginning in February.

No details have been made public as to what the specific obligations the company failed to meet. The plaintiff however, is seeking a modest sum of US \$52,675 equivalent.

The joint venture – Eurocopter Kazakhstan Engineering LLP was set up to produce helicopters in the country under a framework agreement between NC Kazakhstan Engineering JSC and Eurocopter in late October 27, 2010.

In the last few years the country has been taking delivery of EC145 helicopters final numbers of which are expected to reach around 45 units but less than half that number are actually on order. The last order was for eight in 2012; six in a medical evacuation configuration for the Ministry of Emergency Situations, along with two to be operated by the Ministry of Defence for search and rescue missions. [Tegrin/PAR]

In what may be the final salvo in the exchange of fire between **Bell Helicopter** and what is now Airbus Helicopters the Federal Judge in the case of the copy skid undercarriage, Robert L Wilkins, granted a permanent injunction to Airbus Helicopters in ordering Bell Helicopter Textron Inc. to stop making or selling helicopters with infringing landing gear. This is the latest stage of the court wrangle and the result of a specific request made to him in October last year. [L360]

INCIDENTS & ACCIDENTS

26 November 2014 MDHI MD902 N902LC Air ambulance of Cox Air Care, Springfield, Missouri operated by Air Methods. Responding to multi-victim vehicle accident in a rural part of Stone County, Missouri. Aircraft directed to land in open field short distance from accident site. All crew members in NVGs and observing. Approximately 20 feet from touchdown, PIC noted a power line in his peripheral vision. Moving as a result of rotor wash made contact with main rotor blades. Power line snapped; aircraft lurched sideways but landed safely in field. Were found to be temporary power lines to a new construction site. Damage to 3 of 5 main rotor blades and small hole in pilot side window. [Concern]

31 December 2014 Bell 206L N57AW Cochise County Sheriff leased from Airwest Helicopters LLC, Glendale. Two people killed were when a helicopter leased by the Cochise County Sheriff's Department crashed in transit to Sierra Vista Municipal Airport from maintenance in Phoenix. The pilot, retired Glendale police Officer Jeff Steele, 48, and mechanic Marc Hansen, 59, were both employed by Airwest Helicopters LLC and not sworn officers. The aircraft was overdue and found by tracking the pilot's cell phone to an area south of Interstate 10 just outside of Benson, about 50 miles east of Tucson AZ. [Media]

31 December 2014 Airbus Helicopters AS355 Malaysian Police. The helicopter carrying aid to displaced flood victims in north eastern Malaysia crashed, injuring four crew members, in the badly hit Tanah Merah district in Kelantan state near the Thai border as it was trying to deliver food packages to victims. Local reports state the AS355 landed closer to houses than normal and was severely damaged and smoking heavily. Four police officers were injured in the incident: Police Air Unit pilot Inspector Amirul Adli Ahmed, co-pilot Assistant Superintendent Hasni Hassan, crew member Sergeant-Major Mohd Hook Abd Majid and Lance-Corporal Arhafidah Zakaria. [Media]

31 December 2014 MD530 N500KK Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department. The helicopter crashed on a residential street northeast of downtown Las Vegas and two police officers were taken to a hospital for treatment of moderate injuries. The crash occurred just seven minutes after the aircraft took off from its base at North Las Vegas Airport, about 5 miles from the crash site. The pilot and co-pilot were helping with a search for a stabbing suspect at the time. The wreckage didn't catch fire. At least one of the four main rotor blades appeared to be missing and a landing skid collapsed.

4 January 2015 Airbus Helicopters EC135T2 G-EMAA Air ambulance of Midland Air Ambulance operated by Bond Air Services. While operating at Biddulph, UK undertook precautionary landing when encountering IMC/fog. Parked up overnight awaiting clearing of conditions. [Stoke Sentinel]

6 January 2015 Airbus AS350B3 I-LASW. Helicopter on firefighting operations with bucket deployed landed on safely at the village of Pertica Bassa, Lombardy, N Italy after suffering mechanical issue with tail rotor. [Helihub]

9 January 2015 Robinson R44 VH-YMD Australia Northern Territories Police/Alice Springs Helicopters. A helicopter involved in the search for a drowning victim in Central Australia flipped and crashed into the bank of the normally dry Todd River at a remote location north of the Telegraph Station during the search for 23-year-old Rowley Hill – subsequently found dead the following day. Despite the helicopter flipping, neither the pilot nor the police officer on board were injured but the damage will require ground retrieval. [AuNews]

10 January 2015 Bombardier LearJet 31A Air ambulance of Airlift Northwest operated by Aero Air. On visual approach to Anchorage International Airport the crew encountered

tered wake turbulence from a Boeing 777. The aircraft executed an uncommanded 90 degree right roll. The pilots applied appropriate corrective manoeuvres, abandoned the approach, initiated the missed approach procedure, and landed successfully. There was no damage to the aircraft. One of the flight nurses sustained a minor leg injury. [Concern]

17 January 2015 Westland Sea King '25' Royal Navy Rescue 177 based at HMS Gannet [Prestwick Airport] suffered a mechanical issue whilst undertaking a search of Ben Nevis. The aircraft developed the fault while on a mission to airlift members of Lochaber Mountain Rescue Team up to the CIC Hut on Ben Nevis to search for two climbers reported missing when they failed to return from a day out on the 4,409ft peak. Another Royal Navy helicopter, Rescue 178, was brought in to complete the operation on Sunday. [LMRT]

22 January 2015 Eurocopter AS365C 6559 US Coast Guard. Hit bird whilst returning from an offshore facility inspection flight and made a precautionary landing in a store [Target] car park in Kemah, Texas [Click2Houston]

SAFETY

One year ago, safety experts at the United States Helicopter Safety Team (www.USHST.org) declared that 2014 would be a pivotal year as the helicopter community worked to stem a discouraging increase in fatal and non-fatal accidents. A renewed safety education and communication effort succeeded in reversing the trend as U.S. helicopter accidents totalled 130 during 2014, the lowest total since the early 1980s.

According to preliminary data, total helicopter accidents decreased by 11% to 130 in 2014 compared to 146 in 2013 and fatal accidents decreased by 30% to 21 in 2014 compared to 30 in 2013. Compared to 2005 (the year before the IHST was established), total accidents are down 30%, from 185 to 130.

PEOPLE

The Helicopter Association International (HAI) announced the winners of its Salute to Excellence Awards in nine categories. They include, among others, two helicopter search-and-rescue (SAR) teams and a firefighting pilot who refused to give up on a crew on the ground.

The Salute to Excellence Awards recognise those who, through either a single act or a lifetime of service and dedication, exemplify the best of the helicopter industry. Below are three of the winners most associated with the emergency services theme of PAN.

MD Helicopters Law Enforcement Award—US Park Police “Eagle 1” Aviation Unit.

The Award for 2015 goes to the crew of the United States Park Police Aviation Unit Eagle 1 for their role in responding to the shootings at the Navy Yard in Washington, DC, on Sept. 13, 2013, including the rescue of a critically injured shooting victim.

Located directly across the river from the Navy Yard, pilot Sgt. Kenneth Burchell, and rescue technician Sgt. David Tolson, along with a local police officer to help coordinate radio traffic, were over the scene within four minutes of the initial request for help. After picking up a SWAT officer, the crew returned to the building, where a Park Police officer and four civilians had taken cover. After lowering the SWAT officer to help keep the rooftop secure, the crew hoisted the critically injured woman and airlifted her to a nearby hospital.

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After returning to the scene and picking up Park Police Officer Michael Abate, Eagle 1 returned to the scene to extract the three remaining civilians while Officer Abate provided cover with a long gun from the helicopter above.

All told, the crew of Eagle 1 spent five and a half hours in the air that day, rescuing survivors and supporting ground personnel in their efforts to track down the gunman and secure the area.

Airbus Helicopters Golden Hour Award—Snohomish County Helicopter Rescue Team.

Lost or injured hikers and climbers in Washington State's rugged Cascade Mountains have no better friends than the Snohomish County Helicopter Rescue Team, which is part of the Snohomish County Volunteer Search and Rescue program.

2014 was another busy year for the team, known by the call-sign Snohawk 10. In March, they were one of the first helicopters on scene following the deadliest landslide in US history, in Oso, Washington. In the first three hours following the landslide, working closely with a US Navy helicopter from NAS Whidbey Island, the two helicopters pulled 14 people from the treacherous slurry of sand, silt, clay, and fallen timbers.

The Helicopter Rescue Team responds to an average of 80 calls each year. Although affiliated with the county sheriff's office with some positions staffed by deputies, most on the team are volunteers, with many paying for their own equipment and specialized training.

Appareo Systems Pilot of the year award—Gary Dahlen.

In the early days of California's King Fire last September, the firefighting community very nearly suffered a loss to rival the 2013 Yarnell Hill Fire in Arizona which killed 19 firefighters or the 1994 South Canyon Fire which claimed 14 smokejumpers lives, but for the efforts of Gary Dahlen, this year's pilot of the year.

A dozen firefighters, having been out all night trying to establish a fire break, were working to isolate a spot fire when the wind came up, fanning a blaze that had been behind them and quickly cutting them off.

Ten miles away, Dahlen was waiting as his helicopter was refuelled when he heard a call unlike any he had heard in nearly 30 years of aerial firefighting: "All available helicopters, prepare for an emergency launch."

After locating the crew, which had dug in and deployed their individual fire shelters, Dahlen saw the crew was only moments from being overrun by a wall of flame. But he also saw a slim avenue of escape. Dahlen called the crew's leader on the radio and told him the men



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had to immediately abandon their shelters and sprint toward his helicopter. Throughout the crew's dash up a dirt road, Dahlen kept in contact, guiding the crew and urging them on until they were clear of the flames.

Gary Dahlen's quick thinking and actions almost certainly prevented the deaths of a dozen firefighters that day.

The Salute to Excellence Awards will be presented at the annual Salute to Excellence Awards dinner during HAI HELI-EXPO 2015. HAI HELI-EXPO®, the world's largest trade show and exhibition dedicated to the civil rotorcraft industry, will be held in the Orange County Convention Center in Orlando, Florida, March 2-5, with the exhibit hall open March 3-5.

SHOWTIME

The recent of AviationExpo Europe and European Helicopter Show have been replaced by a similar General Aviation event called EFA Prague, 'Europe's Festival of Aviation in Prague.' The event will take place at Prague-Kbely Airport from June 11 to 13, 2015.

This offers a unique opportunity for both the fixed-wing and rotary manufacturers, their representatives, together with associated product and service providers, to access the Central and Eastern European Market at one time at a new Prague-Kbely Airport location that is close to international links.

Supported by the Czech Ministry of Defence and Interior, the objective behind EFA Prague is to provide the most effective showcase to enable exhibitors to feature the very best offerings to visitors in all key sectors of the industry.

These include private, commercial, aeromedical and rescue, Homeland Security and military to the widest possible audience. Bringing both events under one name will help to promote sustainability and structure for the EFA Prague itself and also to the exhibitors and visitors.



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FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Commercial UAV EXPO will take place at Caesars Palace in Las Vegas from October 5-7 2015. The organisers, SPAR Point Group, are claiming that *dozens of leading UAV/UAS companies, individuals & media have pledged support for the event.*

Exhibitors include UAV manufacturers, component and sensor manufacturers, software providers and service companies.

Ed: This is a different event and organiser to the similarly named event that took place in London UK late last year operated by Terrapin.

DIARY

12-13 February 2015 Aviation Festival Asia. Suntec Convention & Exhibition Centre, Singapore

Comprising a mainly airline mix of five complimentary events together as one the Aviation Festival in Asia. Mainly aimed at bringing together senior executives from airlines and airports across Asia Pacific and the Middle East to network and share ideas on how to boost profits and improve passenger experience. They expect 1,000+ attendees and 150+ industry leading speakers. It offers keynote interviews, interactive roundtables, workshops and plenty of networking opportunities.

The World Low Cost Airlines Congress Currently in its 11th year, is a premium conference for international delegates to gather and share their insights on the low cost airlines industry of the Asia Pacific region.

Air Experience Asia the Air Retail Show and the Aviation Interiors Show are about improving the passenger experience for airlines and airports and themes include communication channels (social, mobile), airport experience, on-board look and feel, passenger communications and much more.

The Aviation IT Show explores use in commercial aviation from back-office operations through to customer experience with input from Qatar Airways, Air France KLM, All Nippon as well as airports in Sydney, Delhi & Hyderabad and Los Angeles. www.terrapinn.com



23-26 February 2015 IDEX at the Abu Dhabi National Exhibition Centre, Abu Dhabi, UAE. All guests are required to register as visitors to attend IDEX. The quickest way to do this is to complete the IDEX visitor registration process online. www.idexuae.ae

23-25 February 2015 Border Management Summit, Washington DC. This includes a presentation on Utilizing Unmanned Aircraft for Border Management. The promotional text states that Effective surveillance is a must when it comes to border control and management; but how do we make that happen in the most cost-efficient manner? The debate over unmanned aircraft as being a solution continues as many wonder does the cost outweigh the benefits and are the rumours of these drones only being used 40% of the time actually true. This session will deliver best practices as to how Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) are being used to protect national borders.

The organisers are working with the key stakeholders who are setting the specs for current and future RFPs and RFIs. Including: Michael Fisher Chief US Border Patrol Customs and Border Protection, Kenneth Fletcher Chief Risk Officer Transportation Security Administration, Joseph Campbell Deputy Assistant Dir. CID FBI, Thomas Homan Executive Associate Director Enforcement and Removal Operations US immigration and Customs Enforcement. The event is being run by IDGA in Tampa, Florida. Contact details for the event are +1 212-885-2677 www.idga.org





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To be held at the end of this month near Melbourne, Australia is the Avalon Airshow. One potential absentee exhibit is the Airbus Helicopters EC135 T2+ the first of which, 841, recently flew for the first time in Europe. Note the *conspicuity* colour scheme favoured for its good visual signature in challenging VFR conditions.

The helicopter will serve in a joint training scheme for both Army and Navy aircrew utilising 15 of the EC135 alongside flight simulators and a new flight-deck equipped, sea-going training vessel.



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