

Police Aviation News

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PAR



NPAS DOWNSIZE

FUNDING ISSUES OBLIGE THE UK TO SHED BASES
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PAN—Police Aviation News is published monthly by POLICE AVIATION RESEARCH, 7 Windmill Close, Honey Lane, Waltham Abbey, Essex EN9 3BQ UK. Contacts: **Main:** +44 1992 714162 **Cell:** +44 7778 296650 **Skype:** BrynElliott **E-mail:** editor@policeaviationnews.com

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EDITORIAL

In what might be said to be the operational plan that should have been created in the first place the UK National Police Air Service has set out intention to completely reset its operations and operational bases.

There were many that said NPAS should have taken over the existing police force based operations and then modified them in the light of what was found. Instead a plan that did not stand the test of time was devised in which the multitude of different models was modified from the start. The plan upset a large number of people and yet has still ended up being radically rebuilt in the light of experience even before the original plan was fully instigated. Many of the different operations were simply impossible to instantly turn into the National model.

The new plan, the outline of which is set out in this edition will, as predicted in this publication, sweep away the MD902 Explorer and bring in fixed wing aircraft over the next few years but it is the base closures that will surprise most. Some unexpected existing bases are to go and some very predictable ones including Lippitts Hill, arguably the cradle of modern UK police air support, will be given up.

There remain a lot of unanswered questions and, similar to the last plan, some elements are yet to be agreed. The savings could be illusory, those vacated premises may each have outstanding leases to be serviced by someone and disposal of the Explorer maintenance contract may have penalties. To the outsider it seems that NPAS volunteered to be responsible for them. That is the type of unexpected problem that was faced when the 2012 plan expected to simply take over the Humberside unit.

Although this move is undoubtedly the right one for the long term development of police air support in the UK I suspect that, like all plans with a two year timeframe, it will not finish up exactly as planned.

Bryn Elliott

COVER IMAGE: This issue includes another lengthy review of what is going on in NPAS Towers. One of the long predicted victims will be the MD902 Explorer fleet and that is a development that I know will irk many of the older UK police aviation professionals, if indeed there are any left. The cover image is of G-SUSX the aircraft normally based at Redhill in Surrey. [PAR2013]

POLICE AVIATION

AUSTRALIA

NEW SOUTH WALES: An armed robber who escaped from prison after his Russian lover hijacked a helicopter and airlifted him out of the jail exercise yard is appealing to have one of the conditions of his parole changed, lifting a ban on the pair from having any contact.

John Killick and Lucy Dudko pulled off one of Australia's most notorious breakouts when Dudko forced a helicopter pilot at gunpoint to land in the compound of Silverwater jail in 1999.

The infamous couple cherished the 45 days they spent together before being caught but were subsequently banned from seeing each other until 2022 - when he will be 80 years old and she will be 64. The pair have not seen each other for fifteen years.

Killick, who was released in 2014 after serving 15 years for a string of armed robberies appeared before a NSW parole hearing appealing to have his 24 hour electronic leg tag, and the ban on seeing Dudko, removed. The reason for the request is unclear but both are independently writing books on their escapades.

CROATIA

POLICE: AgustaWestland has announced that the Croatian Police has placed an order for one AW139 helicopter. With this order, the AW139 will enter for the first time in Croatia, replacing an older model following a competitive tender issued by the Croatian Ministry of Interior. The project is co-financed with EU Internal Security Funds 2014/2020.

The Croatian Police AW139 configuration includes a high definition latest generation FLIR turret, HD video link system, searchlight, rescue hoist and a cabin mission console. The helicopter will be operated mainly in Border Control operations, including maritime tasks. The contract includes a significant training package, including the licensing of six pilots and 13 technicians.

Ed: The type for replacement is believed to be a single AgustaBell 212. Last year the police in the region started taking delivery of examples of the EC135 from Spain.

EQUATORIAL GUINEA

Last month's Africa Cup of Nations soccer matches shed a little light on the activities of the former UK police EC135T1 helicopter fleet, or at least the former Suffolk Constabulary helicopter G-SUFF, now marked with the military serial "70" and Gendarmerie titles.

The Equatorial Guinea football federation has been fined the equivalent of £65,500 by the Confederation of African Football following the crowd trouble which overshadowed the Africa Cup of Nations semi-final between Equatorial Guinea and Ghana.

The host nation's governing body has also been ordered to meet the cost of treatment for the Ghana supporters who were injured by flying missiles during the game at the Estadio de Malabo which Ghana won 3-0.



ITALY

POLICE: AgustaWestland completed the delivery of the Italian Police's AW139 helicopters at the end of December 2014. Deliveries started in mid-2013 and now eight aircraft are in service at five different bases in central and southern Italy comprising three aircraft in Pratica di Mare close to Rome, two helicopters in Reggio Calabria and one each in Bari, Palermo and Fenosu.

Thirty-one AW139s are currently on order or in service with Italian Government operators including the Italian Coast Guard, Guardia di Finanza (Customs and Border protection) and Italian Air Force Designated UH-139C, the Italian Police's AW139 configuration includes a FLIR, satellite communication system, searchlight, rescue hoist, cabin mission console and a high definition video down link. Over 1500 flight hours have been logged by the fleet so far and training has been provided to approximately 50 aircrew and 70 maintenance technicians.



PHILLIPINES

NATIONAL POLICE: After a long process of re-examining the evidence the Court of Appeal has exonerated two high-ranking police officials implicated in the questionable purchase of three Robinson R44 helicopters for use by the PNP.

The court granted the petition filed by police superintendents Roman Loreto and Emilando Villafuerte which sought the reversal of the 2012 order by the Office of the Ombudsman that found them and twelve others guilty of serious dishonesty and conduct prejudicial to the best interest of the service.

The appeals court said the Ombudsman erred in ruling that the two officials were part of the conspiracy to defraud the government over the purchase of overpriced second-hand helicopters.

The court held that there was no evidence to show the pair took part in the alleged conspiracy. They were not signatories of any document relating to the procurement of the three helicopters, nor part of the team who inspected the procured helicopters or signatories of the payment documentation.

The case stemmed from the PNP's questionable purchase of a fully equipped Robinson R44 Raven II Police and two standard Robinson R44 Raven I in 2009/10. It was held that these were not new airframes but that the price was as if they were new. [Inquirer]

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UNITED KINGDOM

NATIONAL: The National Police Air Service has confirmed plans to move to a 15-base model. The announcement means 19 rotary aircraft (helicopters) and four fixed-wing aircraft will be in operation once all the plans are in place. There are currently 23 aircraft in the yet to be completed NPAS fleet.

The underlying principle of NPAS is a national service, coordinated by a lead force in West Yorkshire for local delivery. The nearest available NPAS aircraft now attends requests from forces rather than under the old model where individual forces would own and operate their own helicopter in isolation. NPAS also means that there are reserve aircraft on stand-by in case any aircraft have maintenance problems. NPAS have already achieved overall savings of 23%, amounting to £11.

The Accountable Manager for the National Police Air Service, Chief Superintendent Ian Whitehouse, said:

"NPAS needs to find further substantial financial savings with a target of 14% of revenue cuts over the next three years. This is on top of the 23% savings already made. "Local police forces facing similar savings are looking at how they rationalise their estate and ways of operating and NPAS is no different in this regard. "There is no easy way of doing this and difficult decisions have to be made. On Thursday (19 February) the National Police Air Service Strategic Board therefore decided to move to the 15-base model.

"This move will help improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the service and mean that every base supports police forces 24hours a day. It is a move based on an analysis of potential threat, risk and harm to the public we serve. "Part of the move will also see four fixed-wing aircraft form part of the fleet. These will be based out of the East Midlands Airport. Fixed-wing aircraft are cheaper to fly than rotary aircraft."

In the official release some locations have been given non-standard names they do not use on such as their Twitter accounts so I have clarified.

The 15 surviving NPAS bases will be:

Newcastle	Wakefield [NPAS Carr Gate]
Barton	Hawarden
Birmingham	Boreham
Benson	Filton
St Athan	Redhill
Bournemouth	Exeter

In addition there will be two new bases at **East Midlands Airport** (one for fixed wing aircraft, one for rotary aircraft) and **Elstree** north of London to replace Lippitts Hill. Both of these locations are subject to contract and will require finance for new buildings.

The following bases are to close in the financial year 2015/2016

Rhuddlan actually a purpose built site police aviation structure called NPAS St. Athan [North Wales] - closes 15 September 2015

Halfpenny Green [Wolverhampton] - closes 1 January 2016

Pembrey a purpose built structure still operated by Dyfed-Powys Police - closes 1 January 2016

Ripley [Derbyshire] a purpose built structure - closes 31 January 2016

Sheffield [South Yorkshire] - closes 1 February 2016

The following bases will close in the financial year 2016/2017

Tees Valley [Cleveland] **Warton** [Lancashire]

Wattisham [Suffolk] utilises a Cold War strengthened hangar recently refurbished.

Husbands Bosworth [Leicestershire], a purpose built police aviation structure.

Lippitts Hill (subject to contract negotiations)

The '15' bases will be divided into four different regions using only EC135 and EC145 helicopters and the fixed wing.

NPAS states that the fixed wing will have patrol areas around Yorkshire, East Anglia and Wales and the collocated rotary wing operation will commence upon closure of NPAS Rip-

ley.

On the positive side all of the bases will now be operating 24 hours and placing this enhancement attracting an additional TFO into each base so each will have 5 rotary pilots and 11 TFO's though London [Elstree or wherever] will have 10 pilots, 22 TFO's and 2 Base Managers.

The system is now working through a 45 days consultation period into April on the proposed model and may be tweaked as a result.

Backgrounder

Having brought together most of a disparate range of police helicopters across England and Wales National Police Air Service (NPAS) was faced with having to face up to major additional cost cutting measures that ended up with this list of closure bases.

Currently, NPAS has 20 bases, with three more set to be 'added' by September 2016 so the cuts include those not yet under their control. It is a moot point whether it is 15 bases or 14 with the two proposed for East Midlands Airport being counted twice. Not really acceptable even if they are a substantial distance apart and anyway no-one has yet contracted that move or the Elstree one.

Aircraft numbers are to be kept up but as predicted the Explorer's are to go – effectively replaced by the fixed wing fleet.

Some bases now operating were never intended to operate in the plan of 2012. Some were to close and others to relocate but not all of those closures took place and others continued beyond the planned date. Two sites, Sheffield and Birmingham, should have already joined those such as Devizes and RAF Wyton in closure without replacement but in the new plan Birmingham survives!

Media Confusion

In the early news reports NPAS did not say which bases would close if a decision to cut the number to 15 is taken and that left local newspapers free to speculate which might go. As a result various newspapers suggested that the most unlikely of candidates Exeter, Hurn and Barton [Greater Manchester] were to be culled. Little of this speculation was accurate and it was no doubt unsettling for those likely to be involved.

Now that the plan has been posted it remains flexible for a host of reasons including some unknowns on contracts for the new Fixed Wing aircraft – still in the tender process – and the new bases.

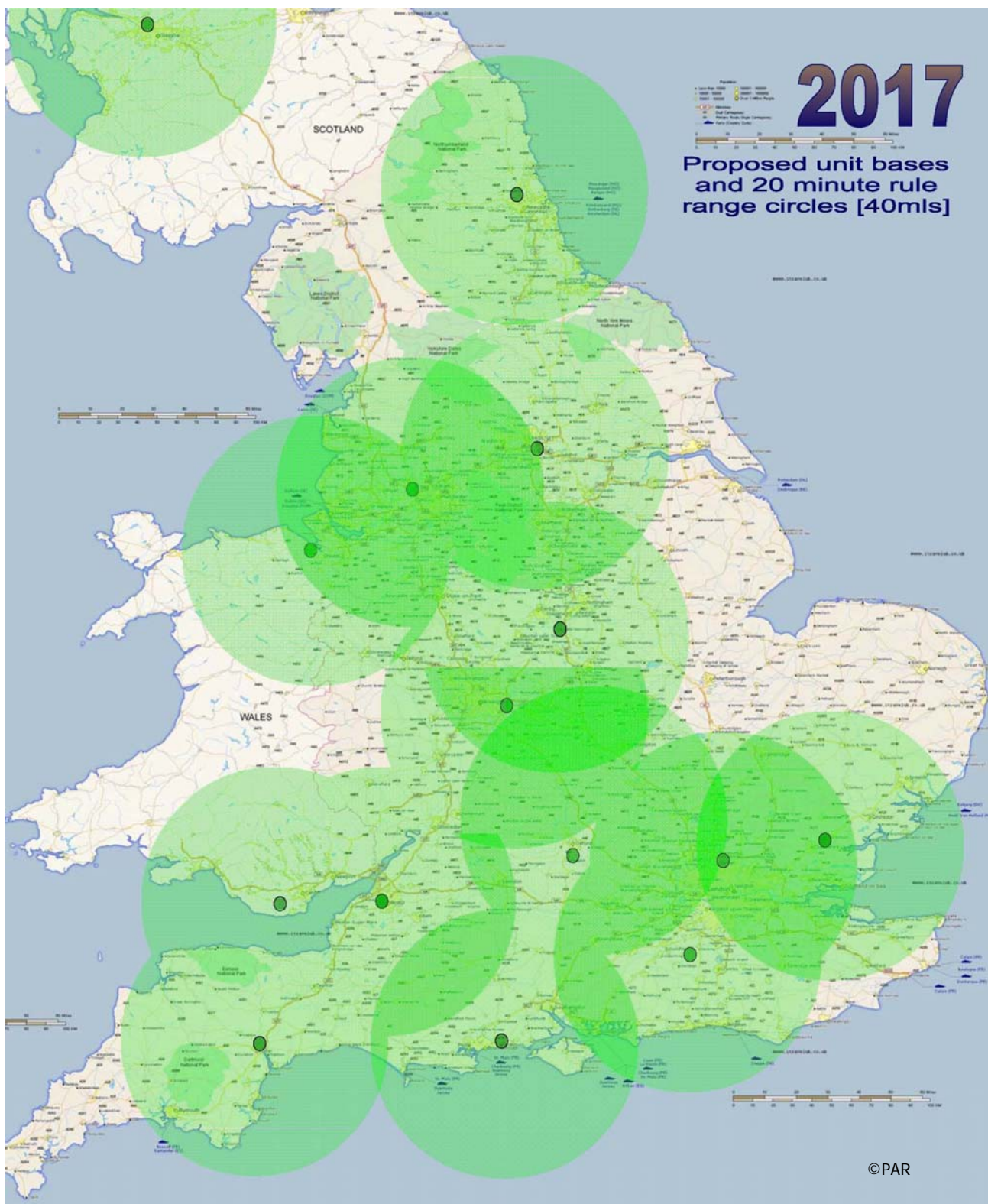


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Flexibility may prevail

Only a matter of weeks ago it was intended that the London operation was to give up two of its three EC145, that proposal has now gone, instead they will keep two with the third going to Hawarden in North Wales. That may be more sensible and ensure that with the nominally faster maintenance turnaround the London will always have one airframe to hand for rappelling and winching [if indeed that expensive activity is to continue].

There will be an EC 135 and two EC145's at a yet to be created and agreed 'NPAS Elstree' and the other EC145 will remain at NPAS Exeter.



THIS MAP GIVES SOME IDEA OF THE COVERAGE TO BE EXPECTED WITH 20 MINUTE REACTION TIMES BUT DOES NOT INCLUDE FIXED WING.

THE AREAS NOT COVERED ARE MAINLY AREA OF LOW POPULATION BUT SOME OF THEM HAD LOCAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR AIR COVER PRIOR TO THE CREATION OF NPAS.

Been there!

It is perhaps a matter of déjà vu with the swap of Elstree and Lippitts Hill as the Metropolitan Police helicopters only moved out of Elstree after the [Enstrom F28] helicopters were attacked there in the mid-1970s.

After local politicians effectively wrecked the financial viability of Lippitts Hill by successively driving out firearms, dog and cadet training [and incidentally took away the employment of a number of local people in support roles], the site was always going to be far too expensive for the limited coffers of NPAS.

Not the way it was supposed to go

These latest developments place NPAS well behind the conclusions of the 2011 RUSI Blue Light Air Assets report into what it saw as 'best case' recommendations of where UK police air support should be but that is 'old hat' as some will say, the world is full of reports that no-one followed at the time let alone recalled a few years later, and they mostly have different conclusions. That report would have suited a perfect world and was effectively calling for an even better capability than was ever achieved by the old 'Gold Standard' of UK Air Support. But even that report was blind in some areas in assuming that the existing air support was flawless in areas that it clearly was not. There was little acknowledgement of 'issues' like MD902s that were regularly missing 4-6 weeks a year without direct replacement and air support that shut down simply because the money was short. Any air support is effectively a costly solution to getting a high viewpoint and has always been vulnerable.

Still World class

The UK has largely been spoiled by the high standard of its air support and at times it is difficult to stand back and take a dispassionate viewpoint and compare it with other nations. Only recently has it even nominally become a constantly available resource, NPAS brought a limited national 24 hour service that simply did not exist before and even that service relies on relatively good weather conditions – you cannot fly a police mission in thick fog. Therefore you might conclude that even during the good days it only provided support half of the time in good weather where police work remains a 24/7/365 commitment.

If you contrast the newly announced more compact NPAS model with world standards it remains among the best available – assuming of course that NPAS does not further degrade the service it offers. Where the British version still offers a number of helicopters nationwide on what is effectively QRA [Quick Reaction Alert] 24/7 many other nations provide police air support to prior request and perhaps only from Monday to Friday daytime. Some operations have little interest in other than their own wellbeing at heart.

There is no standard model of police air support or levels of equipment. Many of the worlds police aircraft have never carried a FLIR, a winch or rope, some very sophisticated airframes see more hours shifting senior officers and gravel in sacks than ever supported officers on the ground. In short police air support reflects the culture it comes from.

Aircraft numbers are very difficult to quantify. You cannot exactly compare a 25 aircraft model in the UK with a similar number in another country when the UK airframes are each ramping up over 1,000 hours each annually primarily on supporting officers on the ground. A typical number of hours per year on world police aircraft rarely exceeds 400 so perhaps the fleet is actually doing the work of 60 in comparison with some countries.



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The Vulcanair visited Prague-Ruzyně on February 12 on a flight from Vienna and back to Wiener Neustadt. © Vaclav Kudela

The fixed wing trial aircraft has returned to Airborne Technologies GmbH, Wiener Neustadt in Austria at the end of the trial period. The former G-PGBR, a Vulcanair P68R c/n 457/R is now reported back on the Austrian register as OE-FGG.

NPAS is due to announce the result of tenders for a permanent fixed wing operation based on the information gained from the trial this aircraft was involved in last year. The final type selected is expected to be similar but it is too early to say whether the specific airframe will be included. [A-B Vaclav Kudela/PAR]

The carriage of firearms in UK police aircraft is not commonplace and only permitted by the CAA as an exclusion. The exclusion relating to the carriage of electroshock weapons (e.g. Tasers), was reissued last month.

Air Navigation Order 2009 exempts UK Police Officers from the provisions of the general legislation and allows them to carry tasers on aircraft, subject to conditions. The UK CAA, for the purposes of EASA Ops CAT.GEN.MPA.155(a), approves the transport of munitions of war within the United Kingdom, subject to the aircraft being operated by the holder of a UK AOC issued under EASA Ops; or an aircraft operated by the holder of a AOC. The police officer needs to seek prior approval of the aircraft operator for the carriage of the weapons and they must be in an appropriate container in a manner that will prevent accidental activation, and carried as the checked baggage of a UK police officer. Before any such flight commences the commander of the aircraft shall know the location of the electroshock weapons.

The newly reissued exemption, approval and permission supersedes Official Record Series 4 No. 1044, which is revoked, and operates until 28 February 2016 unless previously revoked. [ANO2009]

SOUTH YORKSHIRE: Although it actually had little real connection with NPAS the organisation took the brunt of the bad publicity surrounding a South Yorkshire Police officer being suspended over allegations he used the force helicopter to hover over dogging spots to video people having sex in 2008.

PC Pogmore was suspended in December over 'unauthorised use of force visual recording equipment' while working on the former South Yorkshire Police helicopter unit, now part of NPAS.

He is being investigated after it was alleged that he recorded activity at dogging spots and took the footage home to Rotherham to watch. A search of his home revealed no sign of the recordings. The claims reportedly arose as a result of him having marital troubles.

It seems clear that the helicopter was being used for a legitimate policing purpose and was being used to assist with operational policing so the allegation is whether or not he took away footage for his own purposes.

A second South Yorkshire officer and the pilot inside the helicopter at the time of the alleged incident were also subject to investigation. The sole connection with National Police Air Service identified by the newspapers in their stories is that the pilot is now employed by NPAS! The organisation was not created until four years later. [Sun/Worksop Today/PAR]

UNITED STATES

NATIONAL: Homicide detectives are investigating a deputy-involved shooting that left a man dead after he allegedly shot at a sheriff's helicopter and deputies on the night of February 2.

San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department Authorities in California received several 9-1-1 calls that someone was shooting in the area the 9000 block of Buena Vista in Apple Valley around 6:30 p.m. No one else was injured during the incident.

When deputies arrived, the unidentified man allegedly began shooting ineffectually at the deputies and helicopter. Deputies on the ground returned fired back striking and killing the man.

Homicide detectives are conducting the investigation as is protocol with deputy-involved shootings. [San Bernardino County Sun]

Less than a week later there was a near identical incident in Texas.

Austin police announced that a gunman had been shot and killed after he repeatedly fired at an AS350 helicopter operated by the department. The helicopter had been dispatched to investigate calls of someone shooting out streetlights.

The 27-year-old man shot at the helicopter for about 30 minutes before a police officer fatally shot him in an area of southwest Austin. At least one of the gunman's shots hit the aircraft's rotor blades and there were several other marks on the airframe caused by debris of the shooting. [Fox 29]



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AFRICA

MALAWI: The Airbus Corporate Foundation has used an Airbus A330 test aircraft to transport 33 tonnes of equipment (some, 3,000 kitchen sets, 9,000 mosquito nets and 4,000 tarpaulins) from Las Palmas, Spain to Lilongwe, Malawi, to provide emergency shelter after the country's worst floods in nearly a quarter of a century left thousands homeless.

The relief mission was organized jointly between the Airbus Foundation and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC). An Airbus A330 flight test aircraft, collected relief aid in the IFRC's hub in Las Palmas, Spain and arrived in Lilongwe, Malawi, on February 5.

When Cyclone Bansi hit Malawi in mid-January, floods left hundreds dead, over 120,000 individuals homeless and crops devastated. Malawi was the worst affected of three South-east African countries hit by heavy rainstorms. The Malawi Government has called for international aid and estimates that the current disaster will be 10 times more expensive for the country as the flooding in March 1991, which was then the country's costliest weather-related disaster.

Since its launch in December 2008, the Airbus Foundation has completed 40 relief or goodwill flights to destinations around the globe. [AG]

CANADA

ORNGE: It is reported that Ornge is looking at selling the remaining airframes of its fleet of AgustaWestland AW139 helicopters. They bought twelve of the helicopters in 2008 for \$148U.S. — even though only nine were needed — and they arrived two years later.

But now it seems that there is remorse in the HQ as it is clear that the new management now feel they cost too much to operate in the role. The large complex aircraft fleet produces a high fuel burn and is costly to maintain.



They are looking for something smaller and less complex and re seeking industry advice on possible replacements for the fleet of helicopters that serve as the backbone of its air fleet. The fleet of helicopters moved 3,125 of the some 8,000 patients that ORNGE transported last year by air and land.

ORNGE originally bought a dozen AW139 helicopters from European manufacturer AgustaWestland, including two fitted with seats for 12 passengers, meaning they couldn't be used as air ambulances. Those two aircraft were sold in 2013 for a total of \$20M.

The helicopters had a troubled entry into service, a poor cabin design made it difficult for paramedics to tend to patients, including performing CPR on a stretcher bed that was too high.

After ORNGE took delivery of the helicopters, AgustaWestland agreed to donate \$2.9M to ORNGE's charitable foundation. Of that, \$500,000 was spent on two custom-made motor-cycles.

ORNGE hopes to finance the purchase of 10 or 11 aircraft out of the proceeds from selling the AW139 helicopters, assuming they might realise about \$10M each.

ORNGE also operates a fleet of ten Pilatus PC-12 single-engine turboprop aircraft to transport patients over longer distances. Those were bought at the same time as the AW139 helicopters in a \$42M deal, even though the agency's own analysis said only six airplanes were needed. Two of those aircraft are now up for sale. [The Star]

EUROPE

DRF Luftrettung has published the latest figures for its operations across Europe in 2014.

Last year its crews flew a total of 37,811 missions (a slight drop from the 38,180 in 2013) from its 30 HEMS bases in Germany and Austria, including worldwide repatriations with its ambulance aircrafts.

Within Germany DRF Luftrettung flew a total of 35,368 HEMS missions. Apart from heart attacks, strokes and accidents were the most frequent reasons for alerts. 14% of the emergency helicopter missions comprised car accidents alone.

In addition to emergency rescue alerts, 23% of German-wide missions involved intensive care transports between clinics, e.g. caring for patients with respiratory distress syndrome or patients suffering from specific heart illnesses.

Air rescue in Austria

At its two HEMS bases in Austria, ARA Flugrettung, which belongs to DRF Luftrettung, flew 1,700 missions (2014: 1,858). Especially in the touristic high seasons in summer and winter, operations in mountainous areas were frequent. The helicopters based in Tyrol and Carinthia are equipped with a cable winch, which is essential for rescue operations in alpine terrain.

DRF Luftrettung and LAA (Luxembourg Air Ambulance) repatriated 743 injured or seriously ill patients (2014: 677) to their home countries under the name of EAA (European Air Ambulance).

DRF Luftrettung resigned from the EAA (European Air Ambulance) at the end of 2014. The EAA was founded as a joint marketing-organization of DRF Luftrettung and Luxembourg Air Ambulance (LAA) in 2008 to offer medical repatriations for insurance companies on the international market. Since January 2015 DRF Luftrettung has been conducting ambulance flights only for its sponsoring members.

Soon DRF Luftrettung will put its first EC145 T2 helicopter into service at its HEMS base in Munich shortly with further examples of the type entering service across Bavaria in the coming year.



INDIA

At the Aero-India air show in India last month it was announced that an air ambulance was being set up with the assistance of Turbomeca, Airbus Helicopters and Air Medical Holdings Group, in association with Indian operator Aviators Air Rescue.

The project is to begin with, Bengaluru, Chennai and Hyderabad getting dedicated air ambulance facilities.

The facility will be subsequently extended to Delhi, Mumbai and Kolkata. The country will have a total of 50 such ambulances and three to begin with during the launch. As per the agreement, Turbomeca will power a fleet of EC135 T3 helicopters with Arrius 2B2 engine.

The service would operate on a subscription-based model where an individual would be entitled unlimited access to the service. For individual subscription, the cost would be Rs 18,000 [\$290] per year, while that for couples and family, it would be Rs 30,000 a year. Special package rates have been made available for hospitals across Bengaluru to access an inter-facility capability for patients and organs.

The GVK EMRI group, which has 9,300 ambulances across the country, would provide the first mile and last mile connectivity for the air ambulance in the face of a lack of helipads. [SahilOL]

Ed: As is common in this region there are some inconsistencies which may be ascribed to either the inexperience of the originator or the reporting. Turbomeca have confirmed the story although there remain some unanswered elements about flight and landing permissions and the level of crewing. One statement is that the medical element would consist of two doctors with a minimum of three paramedics – and that the pilot will be a trained paramedic, suggesting some unlikely crewing options.

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UNITED KINGDOM

NATIONAL: Each of the UK charity air ambulances has started to receive a share of the £5M set aside by H M Government from the Libor fines.

The Association of Air Ambulances (AAA), which represents the majority of air ambulance operators in the UK, says the money will make a significant difference to patients across the UK.

Although known about some months ago the funding was only confirmed last month at a meeting between UK Chancellor George Osborne and the AAA, whose charity will distribute the money among 20 local air ambulance charities.

Each charity will receive £250,000 from the fund, which will contribute to a range of projects across the UK enhancing the lifesaving services provided by the local air ambulance charities.

Each local charity has outlined their plans for the funds, with a range of projects announced by the individual charities. The money will go towards the purchase of a range of flight and medical equipment, training, the extension of air ambulance operations into the hours of darkness, new airbase facilities and even charity fundraising activities.

Today's announcement is in addition to the Libor funds already allocated to three air ambulance charities and the announcement of relief of VAT on air ambulance charities and aviation fuel which was also announced last year.

Combined the changes will be worth over £15M over the next 5 years. www.aoaa.org.uk

Ed: All good news it seems but not everyone is happy and there are some aspects of the return of VAT on fuel which clearly rankle in some quarters. PAN is researching this.

CHILDRENS: The Children's Air Ambulance (TCAA), a part of the charity funded The Air Ambulance Service, has now completed over 100 transfers.

Their first patient transfer was carried out in May 2013 and the 100th transfer took place in October 2014, but this milestone was only announced widely at the end of January this year. Since then a number of other reasonably high profile missions have taken place.

In the same period each of the regional charity air ambulances has undertaken similar work in their own region but it all remains at a relatively low level with the TCAA working a national transfer service at a different level.

TCAA primarily work with seven clinical paediatric transport teams across the country, including Embrace Infant & Children Yorkshire & Humber, who completed the 100th transfer. Across the nation these niche market transfers have been at a fairly low tempo – under 2 each week – as existing HEMS services had always maintained. As they are a national service, albeit based in middle England, they have helped seriously ill children as far south as Taunton and as far north as Glasgow. The Charity receives no Government funding, and relies on the support of the public to help fund each of their transfers, which cost on average £2,800 to run, said to be around £1,100 more costly than the normal HEMS operations.

TCAA is associated with two other emergency HEMS services that undertake a more localised role serving a population of 3,277,274 living across an area of 3,850 sq. miles and these operated a total of 1,949 missions. Warwickshire & Northamptonshire Air Ambulance (WNAA) attended around 917 missions, while Derbyshire, Leicestershire & Rutland Air Ambulance (DLRAA) attended 1032 missions. Each of the three services can call upon variants of the AgustaWestland A109 helicopter. [TCAA/PAR]



©MPS



ESSEX & HERTS: Essex & Herts Air Ambulance Trust (EHAAT) has launched a new App for iPhone and Android smart phones. The EHAAT App has a unique function enabling users in the event of an emergency to give an exact six-figure grid reference to accurately pinpoint their location to the emergency services allowing the Air Ambulance to locate and treat the patient as quickly as possible.

The EHAAT App, developed by Rokk Media has a high-tech map functionality which is particularly useful to people who either live, work or take part in recreational pursuits in remote areas such as horse riding, mountain biking and rambling.

Holly Butler, Brand Development Coordinator at Essex & Herts Air Ambulance Trust, explains: *"Accidents do happen and if you find yourself in a situation where you do not know where you are, the EHAAT App makes it really easy and simple to alert the Emergency Services including the Air Ambulance and give them your exact location. You do not even need an internet connection just a network signal to make a phone call as the EHAAT App is developed to use your phone's built in GPS tracking. You can also activate an SOS flashlight via the EHAAT App which can help you see and be seen."* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qAWTLbsYH3Q&feature=youtu.be>



L-R: Hayden Brown (A Level Film Student), Laurie Phillipson (EHAAT Clinical Manager), Holly Butler (EHAAT Brand Development Coordinator), Richard McIlwaine (Selex), Sharon Peters (Codham Park Equestrian), Hannah Cohen (EHAAT PR & Marketing Coordinator) and Joanne Bareham (Codham Park Equestrian)

LONDON: Airbox Aerospace Limited, the specialist navigation provider, has provided London's Air Ambulance with its PANDA app for enhanced mission capability and situational awareness across the Capital and beyond.

PANDA (Planning, Awareness, Navigation, Documents App) is a portable tablet-based system designed to improve a pilot's knowledge of their environment whether at the planning, operational or debrief phase of a mission. Among the innovations included within the PANDA package are power line and obstacle avoidance, aircraft tracking, remote mission tasking and the ability to store and display multiple air and ground maps.

Customisations that have been made for London's Air Ambulance include the ability to search for a location using the A to Z page number and a system to make interactions with Heathrow airport more efficient.

Airbox products are already used extensively by the Police, Emergency Services and the Military for both air and ground roles; with London's Air Ambulance joining an ever increasing list of HEMS operators that includes Yorkshire Air Ambulance, ANWB in the Netherlands, East Anglia Air Ambulance and the Midlands Air Ambulance. www.airboxmissionsystems.net



UNITED STATES

CALIFORNIA: Last month Enloe Medical Center's FlightCare became the first in the world to use an EC130 T2 EcoStar helicopter as an air ambulance. The single-engine aircraft is retrofitted with the latest aviation safety technology and features a more powerful engine, a spacious cabin with new medical equipment, and a quieter sound signature.

Calif. FlightCare responds to an average of three calls per day within a 75-mile radius of the hospital. It has transported more than 17,000 patients and is California's only hospital-owned and operated air ambulance service.

Enloe purchased the EC130 for \$3.5M, including customised air-ambulance design, equipment, delivery and training. <http://inr.synapticdigital.com/enloemedicalcenter/flightcare>

SEARCH AND RESCUE

INTERNATIONAL

The *HRRA - Helicopter Rescue and Response Association* will be holding elections for President and Secretary during April 2015 for terms beginning on May 1st, 2015.

As per their bylaws eligible voting members have 30 days following this announcement to submit their nominations (self nominations are accepted). A brief biography and statement of intent (reason for applying for the position) must accompany the nominations. Nominations should be sent to Hank Reimer (Vice-President) hreimer@heli-rescueassociation.org

Candidates will have the opportunity to address the HRRA membership at the 2015 Helicopter Rescue Summit.

Immediately prior to the upcoming Heli-Expo in Orlando the HRRA will be holding a conference at the Orange County Convention Center, in the South Concourse, Room 210 A [9899 International Drive, Orlando, FL 32819]. The programme for the day which starts with registration between 7-30 and 8am includes an HRRA Briefing and presentations from a number of individuals and organisations including the lessons learned from AS 365 to AW 139 Aircraft transition by Jeremy Everly of Maryland State Police; briefings on Charlotte North Carolina FD & Army National Guard; CRM and the use of Standardized Checklists by a speaker from the United States Coast Guard; Tree-Top Rescue Techniques by StarFlight, Austin TX; Public Safety Aircraft Accreditation Commission by the ALEAs Jim DiGiovanna and that is just the morning line up.

This event is sponsored by Air Rescue Systems, Breeze Eastern, Zephyr International, HAI and FLIR Systems.

As the annual Heli-Expo draws near many might have been looking forward to the 'Goodrich' hoist users conference that traditionally precedes it.

Goodrich as such has now long gone of course but United Technologies the new owners have announced that they will not be running the event this year.

In a statement the company have said. *'Since our last Users Conference United Technologies Aerospace Systems (UTAS) Hoist and Winch has made it our priority to continue improving our products and services by conducting a variety of customer survey studies and*



evaluating participant results. The feedback received from these studies has provided UTAS several strategies geared to continuous improvement. United Technologies Aerospace Systems H&W is currently evaluating various aspects related to manufacturing procedures, repair, overhaul, business processes, quoting, and maintenance training program.' I guess that may mean they are thinking about what to do and decided to post pone the "Users Conference" normally attached to the Helicopter Association International Heli-Expo while they were thinking.

UTC will have a booth at the show and it looks like a few questions on this subject may pressure them to 'improve your experience' in future and to ensure they stick to their recent statement that there will be a Rescue Hoist Users Conference at the HAI Heli-Expo again in 2016.

UNITED KINGDOM

COASTGUARD: The launch of the civilian UK search and rescue (SAR) helicopter service was marked on February 26 in a ceremony held at the new SAR base at Humberside Airport.

Bristow Helicopters Ltd, will operate the Search and Rescue Helicopter service for the UK on behalf of HM Coastguard. The company was awarded the ten year UK SAR contract by the Department for Transport in March 2013. It will deliver the service from ten bases strategically located close to areas of high SAR incident rates.

These bases will go live in a phased approach from April 2015. The first bases to open will be at Humberside and Inverness. Bristow crews will deliver the UK SAR helicopter service with state-of-the-art helicopters, equipped with the latest search and rescue technology including night vision, mission management and increased onboard medical capabilities.

The UK SAR bases at Caernarfon and Kent will go live on 1 July 2015, followed by St Athan on 1 October 2015. Prestwick and Newquay will become operational on 1 January 2016 and the remaining three bases at Lee-on-Solent, Sumburgh and Stornoway will follow in 2017.

UNITED STATES

FEDERAL: Last month Cessna Aircraft Company announced an order from the U.S. Civil Air Patrol (CAP) for 21 new Cessna Skyhawk 172 aircraft, the latest in a relationship spanning 40 years. CAP, a federally chartered non-profit organisation and designated by Congress in 1948 as the Air Force auxiliary, performs services for the federal government and for states and local communities such as search-and-rescue and disaster relief.

The Skyhawk's, produced at the company's facility in Independence, Kansas will be delivered throughout the first half of 2015, replacing older models in CAP's fleet. In addition to the standard equipment on the aircraft, including the Garmin G1000 avionics suite, the new CAP Skyhawks will be equipped for glider towing.

The CAP operates a fleet of 550 aircraft, most of which are Skyhawk's and Cessna Skylane 182 piston aircraft. It also operates 46 gliders.

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INDUSTRY

Next month is the HAI Heli-Expo and regardless of the other goodies this annual jamboree provides it is certain there will be a keen interest shown in the **Airbus Helicopters** stand where they launch the new AS365 replacement the X-4.

The X4 is Airbus Helicopters's new generation medium twin-engine helicopter. Incorporating innovative technologies, the X4 will be tailored for a wide range of applications, including oil and gas operations, emergency medical services, public services, business and private aviation.

Mindful that the trouble with Heli-Expo that other announcements tend to get lost among the headlines Airbus Helicopters announced the decisions relating to the engines for the X-4 last month.

In 2012, Airbus Helicopters launched the X4 initial design concept around two highly capable turboshaft engines options: Pratt & Whitney Canada's PW210E and Turbomeca's ARRANO. At the conclusion of this preliminary phase, and founded upon a comprehensive market assessment, Airbus Helicopters has decided to amend the product positioning, consequently necessitating a significant engine power increase. Multiple scenarios have been studied with both engine manufacturers. Airbus Helicopters and Pratt & Whitney Canada have decided not to pursue a growth version of the PW210E engine for the X4 Program. Nevertheless, Pratt & Whitney Canada will continue to provide support until completion of the initial phase. Airbus Helicopters values Pratt & Whitney Canada as a strong partner on the existing EC135 and EC175 platforms and is collaborating with P&WC on new opportunities including the PW210. The X4 program will therefore enter into the full-scale development with a new uprated Turbomeca ARRANO engine. First bench testing of the Arrano took place in February 2014 with Type-certification in-line with the milestones of the X4 helicopter. X4 will be presented to the public for the first time at HAI on March 3, 2015

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Enstrom Helicopter's TH180 took its first flight February 6. The ground and flight test took about an hour. Flight speed and manoeuvres were remarkable. Details to be unveiled on the opening day of Heli-Expo in Orlando at booth #1828.

Companies concentrating on export rather than home markets are often a sign that the home market has become saturated by their product so it is actually good news that the homeland Avalon Air Show saw nothing of local company Avinet – they set off instead to Heli-Expo to showcase their Australian aviation software solution, **Air Maestro**, in Orlando, their fifth Heli-Expo outing.

Avinet can be found at booth #2760 where CEO Mike Mulvihill, Customer Support and Quality Manager Aleks Banas and Customer Support Analyst Phil Wu will be offering free Air Maestro demonstrations during the three day event. Attendees can also expect to see the Avinet team handing out assorted promotional gear along with an Australian Gift Pack in an exciting business card draw. Additionally, Avinet will be offering a 25% discount exclusive to Heli-Expo delegates for the duration of the exhibition, in celebration of their fifth consecutive show. Mike Mulvihill draws on his buzz for the 2015 expo stating, "To be travelling back to Heli-Expo for the fifth year, speaks for itself the level of impact we feel that this event has on branching out to the North American market. Air Maestro continues to advance and evolve as the users become more frequent. Air Maestro is an integrated web based software solution which allows aviation operators to update and manage important Flight Records, Safety Reports, Rosters and Currency requirements. Furthermore, the solution adheres to FAA regulatory requirements to ensure greater operational safety, efficiency and compliance. By attending Heli-Expo over the last five years, Avinet has maintained a comprehensive operational and safety management solution fit for the US market. Avinet continues to provide their services for a broadening circle of present and future customers. To speak directly to a consultant about how you can manage safety and compliance for your business, email sales@avinet.com.au or look for the Avinet booth at the show.

Ed: And they were not the only highly successful local absentees from the home airshow.

Market Research Reports, Inc. has announced the addition of a 54 page "Global Air Ambulance Market 2015-2019" research report to their website. It is forecast the Global Air Ambulance market to grow at a CAGR of 9.57 percent over the period 2014-2019.

www.MarketResearchReports.com



The Avalon Air Show will be the subject of a separate PAN treatise later this month linked to the annual Heli-Expo Show report. Here is a line up of Airbus Helicopters including one Rescue configured EC120, an EC130 and AS355N ©PAR

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Early last month **Embraer** successfully performed the first flight of the new military transport and aerial refueller, the KC-390. Test pilots Mozart Louzada and Marcos Salgado de Oliveira Lima and flight test engineers Raphael Lima and Roberto Becker flew the aircraft for 1 hour and 25 minutes, conducting an evaluation of flying qualities and performance.

The KC-390 is a joint project of the Brazilian Air Force and Embraer to develop and produce a tactical military transport and air-to-air refuelling aircraft that represents a significant advance in terms of technology and innovation for the Brazilian aeronautics industry. This is an aircraft designed to set new standards in its class, at a lower operational cost and with flexibility to perform a wide range of missions: transport and airdropping of cargo and troops, refuelling, search and rescue, and forest fire response, among others.

Embraer and the Brazilian Air Force signed the serial production contract for the delivery of 28 KC-390 aircraft and initial logistic support. Besides the order from the Brazilian Air Force, there are current purchase intentions from other countries, for a total of 32 additional aircraft.

Helicopteres Guimbal has just received the final certification of the Cabri G2 helicopter from the FAA. This success is the result of a smooth 16-month cooperation with the different specialists of the Federal Agency, including Operations, Flight tests and Documentation.

The Cabri G2 is now certified and flying in two-third of the world, including all Europe, New-Zealand, Australia, China, Hong-Kong, Vietnam, South Africa, the USA and affiliated countries.

The 100th Cabri G2 is now in the final assembly line in Aix-en-Provence. The whole fleet has logged approximately 50.000 flight hours with no injury, and the first helicopters have now flown about 4.200 hours and counting.



First US Registered Cabri
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Becker Avionics International announced that Ecolift Corporation, a leading Bell Helicopter distributor and aviation customizing firm, located in San Juan, Puerto Rico, has chosen the Becker DVCS6100 Digital Audio System for integration into Puerto Rico Police Department's three B429 helicopters.

The DVCS6100 Digital Audio System reduces engineering, certification and integration effort; thus, saving time and money. Designed for both fixed-wing and rotary-wing applications this superior system offers crystal-clear voice communication quality and proven Man-Machine-Interface (MMI). Each system offers up to 8, 16 or 24 transmit (TX) and receiver (RX) channels, an integrated warning tone generator, built in speaker amplifier and interface capability for 2 Cockpit Voice Recorders (CVR) and a Public Address Amplifier (PA). It is also the only commercial digital audio product available that can provide simulcast capability, a radio relay function and emergency/slaved mode operations. Since market introduction, over 1500 DVCS systems have been delivered to civil and military customers around the world, with all achieving outstanding field reliability.

At last month's **International Civil Aviation Organization's** (ICAO) Second High Level Safety Conference in Montreal, Canada, Aireon LLC and the Civil Aviation Authority of Singapore (CAAS) signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) to enhance aircraft tracking in the Singapore Flight Information Region (FIR). Through this collaboration, Aireon aims to work with CAAS to enhance surveillance coverage over the entire Singapore FIR with the



L3 WESCAM OFFER MX-7

It is real enough and works but it is a rare sight. L3 Wescam were showing a working MX-7 at Avalon last week to judge whether there is a need for it in the market. It is likely of interest to the light manned or unmanned world.

©PAR

deployment of a space-based ADS-B service.

The agreement is an important step forward in continuing to ensure safe, efficient and cost-effective air navigation services. It lays the groundwork for collaboration on the enhancement of surveillance and better provision of air traffic services through space-based ADS-B surveillance in the Singapore FIR and the region. Currently, the Singapore FIR is one of the busiest and most complex Asian-Pacific airspaces, and some parts of the region are not under surveillance coverage, such as remote areas and over the oceans. With the deployment of this space-based ADS-B service, the real-time positions and en-route status information of all ADS-B equipped aircraft flying within the Singapore FIR can be tracked.

At the same event Inmarsat announced its support of the regulatory body's recommendations to enhance aviation safety, saying it is ready to participate in the adoption of a performance-based standard for global tracking of commercial aircraft.

Inmarsat welcomed ICAO's conclusion that countries and industry should begin the voluntary implementation of global tracking which provide industry with viable options, as a matter of urgency.

ADS-C surveillance has already enabled increased aviation capacity and more efficient use in the oceanic regions. Contracts can be set to respond automatically at predetermined time intervals and to provide additional conformance monitoring capabilities.

Over 90% of today's wide-bodied trans-oceanic aircraft are currently equipped with avionics

compatible for ADS-C use, meaning it can be rapidly deployed to ensure global harmonization and operational seamlessness. ADS-C provides active aircraft position tracking by transmitting the aircraft's current position and the next two planned positions, allowing flight dispatchers and air traffic controllers to track the aircraft's progress and predict its next position.

According to **AOPA** deliveries of helicopters in 2014 plunged and are the area of greatest concern found in the General Aviation Manufacturers Association. Of special concern are sales of large helicopters used to ferry oil workers to offshore platforms.

Piston rotorcraft shipments dropped 31% from 335 units to 230. Turbine rotorcraft shipments dropped 22%. Averaged, total shipments were down 24% while billings were down 7.5%, from \$5.3 billion to \$4.9 billion.

The company traditionally blessed with the highest level of unit deliveries is Robinson; their experience is symptomatic of the problem. After having similar delivery levels in 2012 and 2013 based upon a bumper 45% increase in 2012 production over 2011, 2014 was a poor year. Robinson Helicopter's production for 2014 was 329 helicopters – 101 R66s, 186 R44s and 42 R22s, a huge 37% drop compared to 2013's production of 523. [Helihub/AOPA]

ALEA is now accepting award nominations and scholarship applications for 2015. The deadline for receipt of award nominations and scholarship applications is Friday, May 1, 2015.

The scholarships recipients and award winners will be announced during ALEA EXPO 2015 in Houston, TX. The scholarships will be presented during the General Membership Meeting on Thursday, July 16th. The awards will be presented during the Awards Reception on Friday, July 17th.

For more information about the awards and scholarships programme, or to submit nominations and applications, visit the ALEA website.

ASDMedia BV, Veemkade 356 - 1019HD Amsterdam, The Netherlands has announced an **Advanced ITAR/EAR Compliance Seminar** to be held on April 14 -15, San Francisco CA, USA. Read more information (agenda, list of speakers etc) on <https://www.asdevents.com/event.asp?id=3540>. Download the detailed agenda online and secure your seat today!

The Organization for Security and Co-Operation in Europe has lost contact with a Schiebel **S-100 Camcopter** unmanned air vehicle that was carrying out surveillance missions over Ukraine. Last August Schiebel was contracted on an indefinite month-by-month basis to provide 24h surveillance to the OSCE's Ukraine mission, which it began carrying out in October.

On February 3 the Ukrainian Special Monitoring Mission lost contact with the Schiebel 16km (10 miles) north of Mariupol – 96km south of the Russian backed rebel-held Donetsk region.

On February 2 another Camcopter returned from a mission with a hole in the rotorblade, which the OSCE believes to be the result of small arms fire.

Two systems consisting of four aircraft were based in Ukraine to provide a 24/7 surveillance capability to the mission, which with the recent incidents halves the number of vehicles currently available. [Flightglobal]



PDG Helicopters has been sold to its management by owners the Laing family in a deal worth over £20M.

The company, headquartered in Inverness and employing 85, provides specialist aerial support services across the UK and Ireland with a focus on infrastructure and construction projects. Formed in 1994 after the merger between helicopter groups PLM and Dollar, it has bases in Glasgow, Wolverhampton and Dublin, and its recent projects include the upgrade of the Beaulieu to Denny power line. It has a modest interest in the law enforcement market. The deal sees Lloyds private equity arm LDC take a majority equity stake in the business with management led by chief executive Jerry Francis investing alongside to take a substantial minority stake.

AgustaWestland has signed a contract with Lease Corporation International (LCI) for eleven helicopters valued at approximately €110 million (US\$125 million). The contract includes a mix of AW169 light-intermediate, AW139 intermediate and AW189 super-medium twin engine helicopters that make up the AgustaWestland Family of helicopters spanning the 4 to 8 tonne helicopter categories. The helicopters will be supplied by LCI's helicopter division to its clients in 2015 and 2016 to perform a range of missions including offshore transport, search and rescue and aero-medical transport.

AgustaWestland has approved the **FlightSafety** International Learning Centre in Lafayette, Louisiana, USA as an AgustaWestland Authorised Training Centre. FlightSafety International has been providing AW139 Training since May, 2013. Courses for the popular AW139 intermediate helicopter delivered from the Learning Centre benefit from an AW139 Level D qualified Full Flight Simulator which features FlightSafety's electric motion and control loading technology and new VITAL 1100 visual system. The advanced VITAL 1100 visual sys-

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tem provides highly realistic visuals designed for comprehensive training scenarios. It is optimized for training low level flight operations, offers increased scene content, vastly improved weather features and enhanced levels of detail for optimum cueing. VITAL 1100 delivers the ability for helicopter pilots and crews to be completely immersed in all training requirements. The level D device is complemented by a comprehensive suite of courseware and training aids.

The establishment of FlightSafety by AgustaWestland as an Authorised Training Centre represents the Company's commitment to strong training partnerships and to its expanding global support and training services.

Transworld Aviation (UAE) announced the selection of the Thommen High Performance Searchlight HSL-1600 with integrated IR filter for installation on Mi-171 helicopters operated in Africa for humanitarian missions. Stefan Weiss, the responsible Business Development Manager of REVUE THOMMEN AG stated: "We much appreciate this new business case which will provide a further proof for the user-friendly design of HSL- 1600, in particular for operations in harsh environments without sophisticated technical support." The HSL-1600 is free from any requirements for scheduled maintenance. It provides 1600 Watt with a Xenon



Supplied via THOMMEN

short arc lamp, an integrated Infrared filter and slaving functionality with cameras and/or mission support systems. The integral and rugged design enables cost efficient installation with minimum weight of internal cabling. The installed searchlight doesn't cause any flight operational limitations regarding airspeed, G-loads or others. It can simply being used without requiring additional care by the pilot or mission operator. Since start of the serial production HSL-1600 got installed on a continuously growing variety of helicopter platforms of all major manufacturers. Transworld Aviation headquartered at Dubai is one of the leading distributors and stockists in the field of aviation through strategic positioning in the supply chains of manufacturers and fleet operators. They support numerous aircraft types of more than 35 different OEM with parts and services throughout the territory of Middle East, Africa and Asia.

In autumn 2014 The **Canadian Amtech Aeronautical** Limited successfully achieved an amendment of the Supplemental Type Certificate (STC) for searchlight installations on Airbus Helicopter AS 350B, AS 350 B1, AS 350 B2, AS 350 B3, AS 350 BA, AS 350 D and AS 350 D1 with Thommen's HSL-1600. This STC, issued by the Canadian Transport Agency, is now close to being converted into FAA STC.

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Police Aviation News includes materials produced for it by Ian J Commin of Insight Design of North Burnham, Slough SL1 6DS. This includes the banner titles and the PAvCon logo. In addition from time to times images specifically altered by Insight Design and others but originally produced for McAlpine Helicopters [now Eurocopter UK], Oxford, will appear with permission of the original owner. In some cases it may not be possible to indicate the source of this material directly associated with the images used.

Along with other major US organisations the National Business Aviation Association (NBAA) has welcomed the release by the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) and Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) of a notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM) towards adopting a regulatory framework governing the commercial operation of small unmanned aircraft systems (s-UAS) weighing less than 55 lbs.

The NPRM proposes to regulate non-recreational use of s-UAS under a newly created Part 107 of the **Federal Aviation Regulations** (FARs).

Among the proposed requirements is that s-UAS flights would be limited to less than 500 feet above ground level in daytime only, visual conditions, with the operator or a visual observer maintaining non-technologically-aided line-of-sight with the s-UAS at all times in order to assure safe operations and to see-and-avoid manned aircraft.

The agency would also require s-UAS operators to pass an aeronautical knowledge exam and obtain an FAA UAS operator certificate, with biennial reexamination in line with recertification requirements for pilots of manned aircraft.

ACCIDENTS & INCIDENTS

10 January 2015 AgustaWestland A109K2 N. Air ambulance of Intermountain Life Flight, Salt Lake City, UT USA. Aircraft departed a landing zone in mountainous terrain after dark. Although snow accumulation had been cleared prior to departure additional snow had collected on windscreen prior to lift-off and failed to blow off during climb-out as was normal. This snow froze to the outside of the windscreen and additional snow/ice continued to accumulate until the windscreen was obscured about 30 seconds after take-off. In addition the inside of the screen fogged over due to the warmer moist air inside the aircraft. At 1500 feet agl the pilot declared inadvertent IMC (IIMC) due to an inability to see through the windscreen. It was unsafe to attempt to abort the takeoff and return to the LZ due to the lack of forward visibility. As the aircraft was in a valley with rising terrain on either side, the pilot transitioned to instrument flight and a maximum power climb was initiated in accordance with the IIMC protocol. During the climb to 12,500, the pilot engaged the autopilot, but it functioned erratically so the pilot disengaged it and flew manually for the rest of the flight. A safe landing was undertaken at Ogden airport. As a result of this event, the organisation is now considering a more formal approach to training front-seat medical crew members to assist the pilot in the event of specific emergency procedures. [Concern]

17 January 2015 Bell 407 N407CR Air ambulance of Med-Trans based Lewisville Texas, USA. Aircraft on approach to landing was flown to the right of centre line for landing at the base helipad. Fuel tank is installed right of the helipad. At approximately 10ft AGL, main rotor blades contacted fuel tank obstruction light. Pilot manoeuvred aircraft to the left, landing on the centre of the helipad. [Concern]

3 February 2015 Airbus Helicopters EC135 N105VU. Air ambulance of Vanderbilt Life-Flight Nashville, Tennessee, USA. Operated by Air Methods. Suffered bird strike. The helicopter encountered two flocks of birds, was vultures at 2,000ft MSL and at 120KIAS. While able to avoid the first flock of smaller birds, the vultures flew directly into the flight path. One vulture impacted and entered the aircraft through the co-pilot windscreen striking the aft facing medical crewmember on the back of the helmet and the aft bulkhead in of the passenger compartment. The pilot was able to safely land the aircraft at the local airport approximately 4 miles away without further incident. Damage limited to the windscreen and debris in the aircraft. [Concern]

8 February 2015 Airbus Helicopters EC145 CN-BZ? Crashed on snow covered mountainside. Some reports say EC135, but the Moroccan Royal Gendarmerie have both EC135 and EC145 and analysis of the accident photo confirms EC145, either CN-BZE (9344) or CN-BZF (9369). Reports also differ on date of event 7 or 8 February. [Helihub]

12 February 2015 MD500 operated by Precision Helicopters in Blenheim in the fire fighting role using a Bambi bucket operating over a wildfire near Marlborough, New Zealand. A huge blaze tore across some 400ha yesterday but 60 firefighters and an "aerial assault" from helicopters and planes combined with light rain to suck the life out of the fire.

Mr Andrews, a pilot with Precision Helicopters in Blenheim, crashed in shallow water

13 February 2015 Bell 206L4 N279AE Air ambulance of Air Evac Lifeteam. Undertook a precautionary landing with engine vibration in a field near HWY 76 and Industrial, White House, Tennessee, USA. [Smokey Barn/Helihub]

13 February 2015 MD900 G-HPOL. Humberside Police Helicopter Support. The crew have reported that their aircraft encountered a potentially "dangerous" incident as they photographed the scene of a crash in Grimsby, Lincolnshire. They were above Bethlehem Street in Grimsby taking photographs of the scene with the door open and the rear crew officer on a long safety strap after two pedestrians were involved in a collision with a van. The helicopter entered a 'vortex ring' that resulted in the photographer having to cling on whilst the pilot regained control. No damage and no injuries. [Twitter]

FLIGHT SAFETY

The FAA is ordering about 300 Enstrom helicopters to be grounded whilst initial investigations are made into the fatal crash of one of the type. It is believed that the helicopter's rotor blade came off.

In a similar instance of a suspect main rotor blade causing a crash in New Zealand the significant fleets of Robinson R44 helicopters in both New Zealand and Australia were grounded briefly last month.

The Scottish first minister Nicola Sturgeon has raised concerns about progress in the Clutha helicopter crash investigation in a letter to Prime Minister David Cameron in December.

Ten people died when the Police Scotland helicopter crashed into the Clutha bar in November 2013 and so far only an interim report has emerged from the Air Accidents Investigation Branch (AAIB) in April 2014. That found that both engines in the craft had failed, but did not set out the cause. In November, the agency said it still needed "several weeks" to complete its investigation and that is thought to actually stretch into the middle of this year rather than sooner.

Ominously the reason this matter appears to have the current interest of the politicians in Scotland is that the consequent delay to the procurator fiscal's investigations into the matter and the matter of criminal proceedings.

The crash of the Bond supplied police EC135T2 helicopter killed those on board, pilot David Traill and police constables Tony Collins and Kirsty Nelis.

Those killed in the pub were John McGarrigle, Mark O'Prey, Gary Arthur, Colin Gibson, Robert Jenkins, and Samuel McGhee. Joe Cusker was pulled from the wreckage alive but later died in hospital.



PEOPLE

Pilot Steven Judd, who will oversee the operation of Wiltshire Air Ambulance's pioneering new helicopter, says he is joining at an exciting time in the charity's history.

The charity's new helicopter is the first Bell 429 to operate as an air ambulance in the UK. It leases the helicopter from Heli Charter and Steven has been appointed as Group Chief Pilot.

MOVE ALONG THERE

The ALEA has a reduced membership rate for seniors [OAPs].

During their January 2015 meeting, the Board of Directors unanimously approved a \$10 reduction in the membership fees of those individual members 62 years of age and older. This rate reduction will be effective upon membership renewal following your 62nd birthday. Proof of age is required.

To take advantage of this offer, contact Benay Osborne (bosborne@alea.org; +1 301-631-2406) at the ALEA offices. [I must be due a rebate then!]

Broadcast television has lots of channels and lots of time to fill and here comes another unexpected programme formula that you might not have expected.

Shine TV a UK television production company making shows like Master Chef for BBC One and The Island with Bear Grylls for Channel 4 only spent a few days looking for its volunteers for the latest programme plot. They were looking for applicants for The Search a bold



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new series for Channel 4 that will follow a number of volunteers as they try to go off grid and become a fugitive in the UK. They were looking for men and women of all ages and backgrounds to try and evade capture from a team of expert trackers. They could be going it alone or with friends, family or colleagues for up to five weeks. Do not rush though the closing date for applications was February 15, 2015.

Ed: Strange that this is considered a new idea as I know of lots of former colleagues who did just that when they retired aged 50.... We have not seen them since but they may well be in a golf club bar somewhere...

Have you noticed that every aircraft project is marketed by its promoters as being 'perfect for police work'? It seems to be an integral part of the majority of projects.

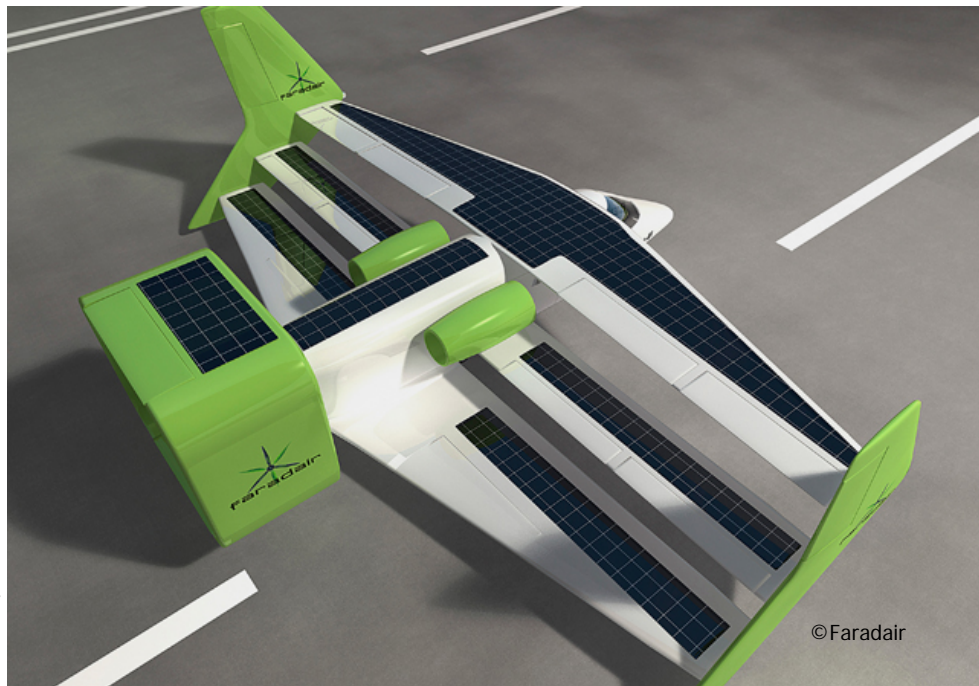
A new six-seater, fixed-wing aircraft that operates silently, takes off and lands in confined urban areas and at the same time ticks all the green boxes through a combination of hybrid engines, solar panels and wind turbines is being promoted by a group in the west of England. And to add to the mix it has unmanned capabilities in case of a pilot emergency.

Faradair a small, Cotswolds-based company is in the process of seeking investors to help turn its dream of building a prototype bio-electric hybrid aircraft (BEHA) concept into reality as early as next year.

BEHA is an all-composite, triple-box-wing, hybrid multi-engine concept that they see fulfilling a range of uses, from flying taxi to police helicopter replacement to coastal patrol to anti-poaching device. The aircraft's near-silent design

means it "could be phenomenal" at creeping up on poachers.....[Flight Global]

Ed: The fledgling company launched a funding initiative via the Internet in November last year, but failed to achieve its initial and very modest £20,000 (\$30,200) target – itself a long way off from the £3M minimum required to build the prototype. Perhaps the would be investors looked at the design and decided not to invest in what looks such a strange design.



UPCOMING EVENTS

Visitor registration for Defence and Security Equipment International (DSEI) 2015 is now open ahead of the world leading defence and security event, which is being held at the London ExCeL, 15-18 September.

DSEI organisers Clarion Events are expecting to exceed the record-breaking success of the

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15-18 September 2015
The World Leading Defence & Security Event
ExCeL, London - www.DSEI.co.uk

15-18 September 2015 - ExCeL, London

last event in 2013 which resulted in more than 32,000 visitors from 121 countries worldwide. Exhibitor bookings are far ahead compared to 2013 and the footprint of the event is expected to be larger. The event is quickly taking shape with 92% of the available exhibition space already booked.

DSEI Event Director, Duncan Reid explained, "Building on the success of DSEI 2013, this year will see the introduction of a number of new initiatives, advancing the event's offering for exhibitors and visitors alike. DSEI is recognised globally as an exceptional environment for military business networking and briefings. The event brings the entire supply chain together with the procurement and operational sectors. The addition of an online visitor portal - DSEI Communities - will help ensure that participants get maximum value from their attendance at DSEI. The service, which enables secure communication between users, helps to plan a visit in advance and capitalise on the exclusive networking opportunities for which DSEI is renowned".

Emphasising DSEI's reputation as a platform for global defence and security thought-leadership, there will also be a brand new one-day event on the Monday before the exhibition officially opens - DSEI Strategic Conferences - which will focus on the future of three crucial areas of technology: naval, medical and rotorcraft. Open to the entire international defence and security community, the Strategic Conferences will bring together speakers and delegates from a global military and security background.

DSEI this year will reach a new level with more visitors, exhibitors and delegations, as well as increased features, enhanced zones, and new conference and educational content. Over the coming months, further additions to the programme will be announced. www.dsei.co.uk

RECENT EVENTS

AVIATION FESTIVAL 12-13 February 2015

Whilst en-route to the Avalon Air Show in late February The Editor took in what was to this publication a new event in central Singapore – The Aviation Festival Asia at the Suntec Centre. Although it was in itself a small show it clearly has ambitions to grow large and that one over arching title covered a handful of little shows within the one title, all of which are firmly connected to the airline industry rather than the normal fare of Police Aviation.

Experience has yet again proven that you can nearly always find an interesting gem among a mass of apparently off message material.

There were some informative presentations on the latest developments in in-flight entertainment [IFE] and upcoming in-flight connectivity improvements; nothing there for PAN but interesting at a personal level for future air travel to other venues, I was after all heading south to Australia and these days IFE is quite important to me as a traveller.

The Bluebox Avionics booth mainly concentrated on the IFE product line that the show demanded but Kevin Clark the anchorman on the exhibit has other interests as well. He markets for AviT a co-located brand in Dunfermline, Scotland and they manage a technical publications product called eMan. They have been quite successful with helicopter operators and servicing operations in North America in particular with clients including the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP). They are now pushing eMan in Europe in the same way with success so far mostly with airlines and major MROs. That news is topical with the RCMP currently under fire for its widely dispersed aircraft fleet having a lack of connectivity. It seems that it not necessarily true for the engineering side.



For a company whose main interest lies in delivering the best entertainment experience of any portable IFE product in the sky. The Bluebox app is approved by all major Hollywood studios for delivery of early window movies not available to many other tablet and streaming solutions.

Aviation Festival may have been small but the same applies to all niche shows – they may be quiet [around 1,000 attendees was claimed over the two days] but the individual exhibitors would always be happy enough to get just a couple of good connections over the two days. In the burgeoning airline business even just a tiny contract can be worth hundreds of millions.

This is not a new show but its ten year history is more thanks to its component parts rather than the whole event. Terapinn the organisers of this show of shows hope to double or treble the size of the event in time for next year but that lofty ideal is unlikely to be met. Where the IFE market was fairly well represented by a handful of exhibitors in contrast the aircraft interiors show that was within this year's event seems to have amounted to just two exhibitors each with a row of seats displayed.

So, no tumbling aircraft in the sky but not all shows actually need that element.

DIARY

14-16 April 2015 Asian Business Aviation Conference and Exhibition, ABACE 2015 at Shanghai, China. The NBAA conventions, conferences, forums and seminars featured in 2015 are designed specifically for business aviation professionals, with a wide selection of programme content. This includes continuing education, professional development, and networking; forums to share industry best practices; venues to find the latest products and services for your operation; or some combination thereof. NBAA's Conventions are large-scale, 3-day events that facilitate networking, foster and grow client relationships, and feature educational programs on a wide variety of topics. Check out the website for NBAA's conferences and Regional Forums. These go more in-depth on a single facet of the business aviation industry. www.nbaa.org

15-17 April 2015 EUROPOLTECH, the International Fair of Technology and Equipment for the Police and National Security Services, which will take place at the EXPO XXI Warsaw International Exhibition Centre. Poland. [Gdansk International Fair Co., 11 Zagłowa str., 80-850 Gdańsk, Poland] Operated by MTG SA Gdańsk International Fair Co. in partnership with the General Headquarters of the Polish Police. EUROPOLTECH is Poland's most important trade event dedicated to law enforcement and special services and includes an Exhibition alongside the 7th International Police Conference on "Protecting the financial interests of Poland and the European Union" organised by the General Headquarters of the Polish Police. www.europoltech.pl The last event was attended by more than 6,300 trade visitors and over 180 international companies.

15-18 April 2015 AERO Friedrichshafen. 23rd edition. www.aero-expo.com.

21-23 April 2015 Search and Rescue Europe Bournemouth, UK. SAR Europe 2015 will bring together leading SAR practitioners from across Europe and North America to engage in comprehensive and productive discussions about how to increase the effectiveness of our SAR operations; from insight into front-line operations to addressing the latest technological advancements and moves to increase inter-agency cooperation. The central theme of this year's event will be reducing the search time, looking specifically at improving 24 hour surveillance capabilities and the use of UAVs and digital applications. Closely connected of course is the challenge of increasing integration and interoperability between national and international SAR agencies, with discussion not only on procedural and policy-based solutions but also on the C2 equipment available to facilitate this. www.searchandrescueeurope.com Annual Conference and Exposition. Location Western Region Location, USA. The annual AMTC provides up-to-date information on the latest techniques and innovative approaches to air medical practice from community experts while giving attendees lots of opportunities to earn continuing education credits. Top-notch keynoters and expanded educational offerings (including mechanics technical briefings, special information exchanges, new clinical sessions, scientific abstracts and poster sessions). www.aams.org



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LESS THAN 90 DAYS TO GO!

This years PAvCon, hosted by the airport developers, and AEC who fly from the airfield, is building up. The event in Breda in the south of the Netherlands will see a number of leading edge presentations and flight safety workshops in association with the Airborne Law Enforcement Association [ALEA]. The Editor and the Chairman will be meeting up with ALEA officials early this month to finalise details.

Exhibitor stall space is filling well with more exhibitors than usual selecting double frontages so the hall will be crammed full.

Confirmations of attendance from the speaker line up is growing daily but if you wish to exhibit and Network at this years event you will need to let us know. Details on the website www.pavcon.org

The control tower on the old side of the airport and above the new leaflet that will be circulating at this years Heli-Expo.