

# Police Aviation News

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Number 228 April 2015

PAR

AW189

READY FOR  
SERVICE

**PROTECTING THE RHINO  
METRO INTO NPAS  
CASH BOOST FOR HEMS**

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**COVER IMAGE:** Issued last month by AgustaWestland to mark a news story they were releasing on a new Search and Rescue operation out of the Falkland Islands this striking image of the AW189 destined for use by the AAR Airlift Group to fulfil a contract by the UK Ministry of Defence to deliver SAR in the 'Islands using a mix of two AW189s and two S-61s. The MOD's existing fleet is comprised of Sea Kings and commercial S-61s. The AW189s will be serving from early next year. This story first appeared in the Shows Edition of Police Aviation News covering the Avalon Show and the Heli-Expo in Orlando. It remains on the website if you have not already read it.. The same type is due to enter service later this year to form part of the contract to meet the UK SAR requirement replacing the iconic Sea King helicopters.



# POLICE AVIATION

## CANADA

**SASKATOON:** It has been almost a decade since the Saskatoon Police Service Air Support Unit took to the sky as a full time patrol support service after successful evaluation projects using Cessna single engine types.

In the years since they have used light unmanned craft including the Draganfly X6, a mini-helicopter locally produced but continue to use the manned fixed wing as a primary resource. The 2014 annual report states that the air support unit plane had its most successful year fighting crime with the crew credited with helping officers in cases of kidnapping, drug trafficking, stolen vehicles and impaired driving. Officials say it has helped reduce crime rate in the city by at least 10%.

In 2014, the ASU responded to 1,269 calls and has assisted the local Fire Department by watching for signs of a fire spreading to businesses or dwellings. Last year, 35 blazes were located using the plane.

In 2014, the plane logged over 850 hours.

The leased aircraft is non-standard in that it is equipped with a \$300,000 FLIR infrared camera purchased by Saskatchewan Government Insurance (SGI) and has recently been fitted with an exhaust pipe extension to reduce the noise signature night and day.

Currently, the unit's airport office is provided free of charge courtesy of the aircraft owners Mitchinson's Flying Service but having to share space with flight students does complicate confidential discussions at times. The cost of the aircraft lease was held at \$212,700 for both 2014 and 2015.

When the plane is not in the air, such as during maintenance, the six officers are reassigned to other duties within the police service.



## EUROPE

**FRONTEX:** The EU police agency Europol has set up a new team to break people-smuggling gangs who send migrants on perilous voyages across the Mediterranean.

The maritime intelligence unit, called "JOT (Joint Operational Team) Mare", is based at Europol HQ in The Hague, Netherlands.

The UK and 12 other EU countries are involved. JOT Mare will help the EU border agency Frontex and national police to track and stop the gangs at the head of Italy and Malta facing a surge of migrant boats heading for their shores.

More than 220,000 migrants entered Europe illegally in 2014, compared to 60,000 in 2013, the European Commission says.

There were more than 3,000 deaths of migrants at sea in 2014, and in 2015 there have already been more than 1,000.



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## SOUTH AFRICA

**POACHING PROTECTION:** Air Shepherd, a new initiative of the Lindbergh Foundation, is using sophisticated technology in attempts to thwart animal poaching in Africa. Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV's) or drones, have demonstrated success in stopping the poaching of elephants and rhinos in Africa. They are deployed with advanced infrared surveillance systems and supercomputer-based predictive analytic technology developed at the University of Maryland.

The combination of algorithms and aviation predicts where poaching is likely to happen with an accuracy level of 93%, apprehending poachers before they can kill. Tested on private reserves in southern Africa for two years, in over 650 missions, no animals were killed while Air Shepherd drones were in flight.

Last month the results of the work led SANParks [South African National Parks] to announce that the UAV solutions are an integral part of the current strategy to combat rhino poaching in the Kruger National Park, and that SANParks is undertaking further evaluation over the next year.

There is an alarming increase in animal poaching. In the past year poachers killed nearly 40,000 elephants and over 1,200 rhinos. At this rate both will be extinct within 10 years. Throughout Africa, an estimated 100,000 elephants were killed in the period 2010-2013.

Air Shepherd's proven and effective solution requires the raising of \$500,000 to support a one year programme at Kruger National Park with expansion planned over the next year to seven additional African countries.

Mobile Command Unit with drone (*photo: Air Shepherd*)

SANParks received initial grant funding last year to support anti-poaching operations in the Kruger National Park and this led to the purchase of the first helicopter ZS-OXK in September 2014.

Since then the Howard G Buffet Foundation had granted SANParks an additional amount in excess of \$3M to purchase a second Airbus AS350B3e helicopter, with similar specifica-





Chair SANParks Board, Mr Kuseni Dlamini (ranger uniform) cuts the ribbon to officially receive the new Airbus AS350B3e ZS-HJN sponsored by the Howard G Buffet Foundation. He's flanked by (clockwise) Messrs Gilberto do Nascimento from Airbus Southern Africa, Arnaud Montalvo - CEO Airbus Helicopters SA, the KNP Acting Managing Executive - Danie Pienaar, SANParks CFO – Rajesh Mahabeer, from Department of Environmental Affairs is - Ms Rose Masela, Deputy Provincial Commissioner Mpumalanga - Major General Phahla and Professor Graham Kerley – SANParks Board Member and a member of Howard G Buffet Foundation Grant Steering Committee.

tions of night flying capability, to further increase the capacity of SANParks' rhino anti-poaching flight operations.

The testing of UAV technology in Kruger National Park is implemented as one component of a suite of anti-poaching initiatives supported by the Rhino Protection Programme (RPP). The RPP is a collaborative effort between the Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA), South African National Parks (SANParks), Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife (Ezemvelo), and Peace Parks Foundation (PPF). The roll-out of this multi-faceted programme is made possible thanks to generous funding from the Dutch and Swedish postcode lotteries.

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## UNITED KINGDOM

**NATIONAL:** The upgrade programme of the older EC135T2s has commenced with the former G-SURY now stripped down to its basics and repainted in the new registration G-POLB.

I understand that the upgrades are being done in two parts – the T2s [2835kg AUM] are first being brought up to T2+ [2910kg] to allow extra endurance and some of the aircraft, including NMID and WCAO, have recently received that where G-ESEX has already had that for some time. The revision of the skid height and revised role equipment is more time consuming and will presumably lead to single aircraft being withdrawn from the fleet in turn. Those still awaiting the T2+ include NEAU, LASU and CPSH.

Re-registration process will not affect the whole fleet, just those having extensive work done.

The full G-POL\* sequence is not available anyway and so far only POLB and POLC have been secured, G-POLA is already in the fleet. There was a spurious G-POLC attached to an R44 twenty years ago by Sloane Helicopters as part of a marketing campaign for the type but G-POLI is real enough and belongs to another R44 that appeared at the Helitech Show at Duxford in 2009.

Reserving those registrations that are available would be expensive and in these days of cost cutting not a good example to set. Clearly the changes will go some way towards erasing the earlier history of the machines affected and that is controversial in itself.

As previously reported in PAN there has been a search undertaken to find the Great Western Air Ambulance Charity (GWAAC) and the National Police Air Service (NPAS) a new base location to replace their current base close to Hayes Way on the north side of the former BAE Filton Airfield. The search was being undertaken by property consultants for the Filton site owners, BAE after it was found that the large area required by the air support facility severely compromised the viability of the Filton sell off.

After looking at hundreds of sites in the West of England region, property consultants Alder King have concluded that a site near the Almondsbury Interchange is the only one that meets the needs of both helicopter services.

The proposed new site is on land close to the M4/M5 motorway interchange junction, just across the M5 motorway from the iconic RAC building in north Bradley Stoke and just over 2 miles north of the current base.

As proposed 90% of the suggested site would remain as grass, with 10% providing a small area of hard standing, a hangar for the helicopters and a new access road.

This is a proposal that might fall foul of planning rules that tend to deter new builds on green field sites and a formal planning application has yet to be made to South Gloucestershire Council. [BS Journal/Allinson]



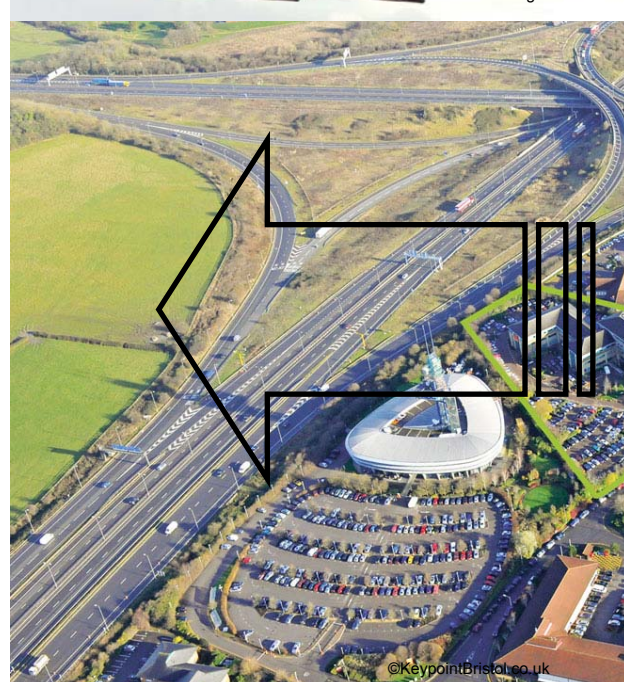
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**METROPOLITAN:** As this edition appears the independent London Metropolitan Police Air Support Unit is being taken over by NPAS.

More than a year later than planned the transfer of the three Eurocopter EC145 and the two hangar facility will be complete. Some time ago NPAS stated that the three aircraft G-MPSA, G-MPSA and G-MPSA are expected to take up the designations NPAS 61, NPAS 62 and NPAS 63 respectively. This is not thought to have changed. Engineering on site will pass to the existing Airbus Helicopters contract with some of the engineers being offered employment but most have either already gone or are awaiting redundancy.

The senior police officers on site including the UEO Inspector Richard Brandon and one of the sergeants, are returning to other, non-aviation, duties within the Metropolitan Police. The funding within NPAS will not support their retention although the Metropolitan Police will pay NPAS for the supply of police aviation services at a level similar to that recently provided in house [2,700 hrs pa].



*One of the last images Tweeted from the MPASU account was this final picture from one of the crews after they flew their last MPASU flight as India 99—an iconic call sign, originally an under cover designation, that now passes into history*

In an as yet unexplained development Nigel Wilson (b 2.11.1972) of Rockingham Grove, Bingham, Nottingham has been summoned to appear at Westminster Magistrates Court on 16 April in relation to a series of alleged offences related to the flying of an unmanned air vehicle. The Metropolitan Police released a list of 17 charges relating to offences in various cities including Liverpool, Nottingham, Leicester, Stoke-on-Trent, Derby, Manchester and London on eight dates in September and October last year. Most related to flying 'a small unmanned surveillance aircraft' over various football stadiums during soccer matches and in contravention of Articles 167 (1), 167 (2) (a) and 241 (6) of the Air Navigation Order 2009, Articles 166 (3) and Article 241 (6) of the Air Navigation Order 2009.



The exception to the football flying was on September 27, 2014 when flights were undertaken over sensitive area of central London. It is alleged that offences were committed at Palace of Westminster, when a craft was seen to be near the House of Parliament, by Queen Victoria Memorial Outside Buckingham Palace, and along the North Bank of River Thames near the moorings for the preserved cruiser HMS Belfast and The Shard building. [MP]

**SCOTLAND:** The Scottish Police Authority has announced the possible intention to procure services for the Provision of an Air Support Fixed Wing Service for Police Scotland. A requirement has been identified for an air support capability, comprising a rotary and a fixed wing asset. Police Scotland do currently operate a helicopter, the one formerly operated by the now dissolved Strathclyde Police, however this does not have the capacity to meet the national demand arising from the new countrywide force. The introduction of a fixed wing aircraft with the range to cover the rest of the country would allow this gap to be filled.

The preferred operating model in terms of coverage and operational efficiency, effectiveness and resilience, would comprise a helicopter located in the central belt and a fixed wing aircraft in the north of the country. The type they are expecting should offer them greater endurance and range with up to five hours flying time, a greater capacity to carry more passengers and payload and an enhanced all weather capability with de-icing equipment. [PS]

## UNITED STATES

**FEDERAL:** Last month Lockheed Martin delivered to US Customs and Border Protection (CBP) a further P-3 Orion aircraft for operations in the surveillance and drug interdiction role. This is the 12<sup>th</sup> of 14 aircraft in a Mid-Life Upgrade (MLU) modifications and phased depot maintenance programme. The MLU replaces the outer wings, centre wing, horizontal stabiliser and horizontal stabiliser leading edges. All necessary fatigue life-limiting structures are replaced, leading to significantly reduced maintenance and sustainment costs. This aircraft was delivered 37 days ahead of schedule.

The MLU will enable the P-3 Orion fleet to support operations for a further 20-25 years.

In addition to that delivery on March 19, a new HC-130J long-range search and rescue aircraft destined for the US Coast Guard was delivered and ferried to Lockheed Martin's Greenville, South Carolina, site for post-production modifications, including paint and finishes. This aircraft will be re-delivered next year. [LM]

**MARYLAND:** Prince George's County Police have added new life saving technology to its aircraft. Their new instrument called "Rhotheta" is designed to find stolen vehicles and missing people – including wandering dementia sufferers who are pre-equipped with the privately purchased device.



**GEORGIA:** In Lawrenceville the Gwinnet County Police is to have its two 27 year's old MD500E helicopters returned to the factory to be rebuilt into MD530F models at a cost of \$2.47M. The unit researched the options and decided that new airframes would have cost the county \$8.4M. In addition the existing camera system will be upgraded to FLIR STAR SAFIRE 380HDc thermal infrared compact imaging systems that will cost the county a further \$800,912. FLIR Inc. was awarded the contract for the system while Rotor Resources LLC was picked to do the re-wiring, night vision goggle lighting and searchlight replacement. The airframes are N5189K c/n 0095E and N1605K c/n 0247E. The first has already started conversion with an expectation that it will return in September. The second airframe should return by December. [Daily Post]

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# AIR AMBULANCE

## AUSTRALIA

**NEW SOUTH WALES:** The Toll Group has signed up for eight AgustaWestland AW139 helicopters to service their contract to perform EMS operations in New South Wales; deliveries start later this year and run into early 2016

The aircraft will be operated to perform missions in the Southern Region of New South Wales from newly constructed bases in Bankstown (Sydney), Orange, and Wollongong and from the existing base in Canberra as part of the newly established Helicopter Retrieval Network in New South Wales. The contract was signed during the Australian International Air Show at Avalon.

In addition to this order, Toll's base in Bankstown, will become an AgustaWestland Authorized Training Centre for the AW139 providing Australia's first AW139 Level D Full Flight Motion Simulator. The base will also include facilities for maintenance, crew training, the latest high fidelity virtual reality crewman and integrated crew training simulator and a full helicopter underwater escape training facility.

**VICTORIA:** Flight paths around 19 Victorian hospitals will be protected after an air ambulance helipad was shut down due to nearby construction work.

Helicopters have been unable to land at the Royal Melbourne Hospital since mid-February due to a crane on a nearby private development.

There are 19 helipads at Victorian hospitals without local council Design Development Overlays (DDO), making them vulnerable to shut downs due to construction work.

Air ambulances had to be diverted to the Royal Children's Hospital and The Alfred. [7 News]

## JAPAN

**NAGO, OKINAWA:** A privately operated emergency medical helicopter based in Nago is run by incorporated non-profit MESH Support.

The Northern Okinawa Medical Centre, a hospital in the city, started a helicopter service in June 2007 but found that it could not afford the annual cost of about ¥100 million [around \$800,000] to continue the service, which was terminated in May 2008.

The following year the service was restarted by attracting contributions from local residents and businesses. To prospective customers the service is attractive - in some areas of northern Okinawa Prefecture, getting to hospital in urban areas takes about two hours by road ambulance and the more remote islands lack facilities with proper medical equipment.

The amount of financial support has declined since the Great East Japan Earthquake in March 2011, with much of the supporting funding draining away towards disaster-hit areas.

That has led to the helicopter service being repeatedly suspended. MESH Support overcame the crisis through cost-cutting. It stopped outsourcing the entire operation to an outside company and started internally managing the service by leasing the helicopter. The operation is known to have used two Eurocopter helicopter's an AS350B JA9898 and AS355F2 JA9963.

MESH Support has about 7,500 members and about 70 group sponsors, including companies. Its operating costs are also partly covered by donations collected in boxes at stores supporting the organization's activities and vending machines from which a portion of the proceeds is donated.

Since the end of 2013 the operation has been receiving subsidies from Okinawa Northern Region Wide-area Local Public Bodies, a regional association of public entities, but the amount covers only half the annual operating cost of about ¥62M. The private sector remains a crucial source of support.

The helicopter has been called out around 850 times to transport such as victims of traffic accidents and people with respiratory diseases. [Japan News/Photo taken by Notoki Nakashima 2014/15]





## KUWAIT

The Ministry of Health in Kuwait will be operating the first two Bell 429s configured for Helicopter Emergency Medical Services (HEMS) in the Middle East. The purchase agreement for the aircraft was announced at the end of last year and will be contracted through Al-Safwa Security and Defence Systems Company, with an expected delivery time of April 2015.

The Ministry currently operates two Bell 430s to complete their helicopter emergency medical services requirements. [BHT]

## MALAYSIA

At the recent LIMA 2015 show it was announced that two Airbus Helicopter H135 are to equip a new air ambulance venture. They will be the first helicopters in Malaysia fully outfitted for emergency medical missions.

*Dato' Seri Mahmud Abu Bekir Taib, Chairman of Sarawak Cable (left) receiving an H135 helicopter model from Fabrice Rochereau, Airbus Helicopters Vice President - Head of Sales for South East Asia & Pacific region.*



## UNITED KINGDOM

**NATIONAL:** Last month PAN made a brief mention that some in the UK air ambulance community were not totally happy about the 'VAT refunds' offered by the UK government over the last year. Since my return I have been able to look into this in more detail.

There are two parallel stories on VAT [Value Added Tax] refunds to the niche industry and indeed one of them affects only a small part of the industry and in the opinion of some returns a fairly small sum of money for a great deal of effort.

A year ago, after a campaign started in Yorkshire, it was announced in a high profile manner that the Government were to give back air ambulances VAT paid on fuel. It was always known that this only affected a few operators with their own aircraft and fuel supplies as the VAT on fuel for leased aircraft was simply lost in the detail of the contract. For those involved it meant the completion of a two page claim form and provision of receipts and other proofs of entitlement after which each individual operator might see the return of a few thousand pounds. The issue there is whether the costs involved in the paperwork actually proved worthwhile. Some think not.

A year ago the VAT Regulations included a statement that the treasury was undertaking a review of the overall amount of VAT incurred by air ambulance charities on fuel, and as a result, the government stated that it will introduce a 5-year grant of £65,000 per year for air ambulance charities across the UK. After consultation, the government has also stated that it would introduce a further 5-year grant of £1M per year for inland safety boat charities across the UK.

Where the lines got blurred a bit relates to the later announcement in November last year. The second announcement was far wider reaching in that it included all aspects of VAT relating to the air ambulance community.



Building on the earlier announcement the AAA had continued dialogue with the Government and reached an agreement that affected most of the charities involved. It was announced at the same time as the Libor payments and that somewhat clouded the impact of what was in fact a new measure.

The new agreement allowed all of the VAT Registered the charities to reclaim the majority of the 20% tax on all of their activities and rather than amounting to a few tens of thousands in reclaimed aviation fuel tax this amounted to refunds counted in millions of pounds.

Again this currently does not affect every air ambulance operation because not all of them have operating companies and therefore have not yet chosen to be registered. That aspect may well be on a few agendas now. Nonetheless most of the charities are registered and from this month will be able to claim back a substantial element of their costs. [S33 Amendment to the VAT Act]

In addition to the tax refunds the Chancellor of The Exchequer George Osborne announced In a highly political budget just weeks before UK voters go to the polls, that many of the Charity Air Ambulances in the UK would receive significant cash injections from fines imposed on the banking sector "This money comes from Libor fines on banks - we've taken about £450m from those who broke the rules and demonstrated terrible values, and used the funds to support good causes across the UK, from disabled veterans to air ambulances."

Most individual air ambulances are able to mention the receipt of significant sums that have resulted a number of them, including Scotland, upgrading from their current BO105 helicopter to something more modern.

At the moment it appears that the AAA is going to channel this funding into the sector—but again not everyone is happy about that.



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DEVON: Devon Air Ambulance Trust (DAAT) has just passed its first annual audit by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) for its Air Operator's Certificate (AOC).

The AOC means the Charity, under its operating arm Devon Air Ambulance Trading Company Limited, has clearly demonstrated it meets all of the stringent operating and safety competencies required by the CAA. This includes airworthiness management, training, quality systems, ground infrastructure and finances.

It also requires the appointment of key accountable staff that are responsible for specific safety critical functions such as training, maintenance and operations. DAAT's Chief Executive Heléna Holt is the AOC's Accountable Manager. She said: "We are delighted to have passed our first annual audit, especially as the feedback we had from the CAA's inspectors was so positive. I think they were impressed with the standards we have achieved in our first year.

"The AOC is very important to us because it means DAAT is truly independent and self-sufficient and able to manage our resources to continually improve the service on our own terms.

"I'd like to thank everyone involved in the process of maintaining our AOC: our externally appointed quality manager and continuing airworthiness managers as well as our own Operations Director Nigel Hare, Flight Operations Director Ian Payne and our Safety Manager, Rob Mackie."

DAAT has now flown almost 22,000 missions since it started flying in 1992.

EAST ANGLIA: The Norwich-based charity's bid for cash to provide a spacious and longer range aircraft has been successful, and the £70,000 a month needed for the lease will be provided for two years from the money collected from Libor rigging penalties.

The East Anglian Air Ambulance announced earlier this year that it will use £250,000, already awarded from the fines imposed on banks that had rigged interest rates, to train more 40 more paramedics.

The life-saving charity, which has bases in Norwich and Cambridge, ordered the new model four years ago, and it will come into service in Cambridge on April 1, and will in due course be flown by Prince William.

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The newly announced bid will help fund a second airframe upgrade to be based in Norwich from early next year.

The money will only cover the extra costs associated with the upgraded lease for two years, but will give the charity a chance to build up a further fundraising ability.

**ESSEX & HERTS:** The Essex & Herts Air Ambulance Trust is in line to get a Libor funded grant of £1.5M towards the lease of new aircraft from May 2017, when the current aircraft leasing contract for MD902 Explorer helicopters from Medical Aviation Services expires.

**WALES:** It was the Government of Wales rather than the air ambulance itself that announced some changes to the provision of doctors on the three air ambulances that serve the Principality.

A team of airborne doctors and critical care practitioners finished their training last month and demonstrated their skills at a major industrial incident that attracted the attention of the Deputy Health Minister Vaughan Gething in promoting the expansion in capabilities they offer.

Wales Air Ambulance has worked with NHS Wales to recruit and select 12 Critical Care Practitioners (CCPs) and 19 Critical Care Consultants at its Welshpool and Swansea airbases. The group includes some military staff and seven of the air ambulance's current paramedics. The latter successfully underwent the selection process to complete the CCP training. A similar recruitment drive at the charity's Caernarfon airbase is also being planned.

Critical care shifts on the aircraft means Wales Air Ambulance will be able to provide even more advanced treatments to seriously ill and injured people across Wales.

The recruitment process was run in partnership with the Emergency Medical Retrieval and Transfer Service (EMRTS) Cymru. EMRTS is an NHS Wales programme in which consultants will routinely work with pre-hospital services, including the charity's helicopters, for the first time.

**YORKSHIRE:** HRH The Duke of York, KG, has continued to show his support for Yorkshire Air Ambulance and was on-hand last month to officially open the rapid response charity's state-of-the-art Air Support Unit on the Nostell Priory estate, near Wakefield.

The YAA relocated from its previous base at Leeds Bradford International Airport in November 2013 to improve coverage and response times to patients in the West and South of the county.



HRH The Duke of York talking with members of the air ambulance © YAA



## UNITED STATES

**WYOMING:** In late February Air Methods Corporation announced that a new Wyoming LifeFlight base is set to open in Sheridan this month. The air ambulance will be located at Sheridan Memorial Hospital to help reduce the time it takes to transport a patient to a tertiary care facility.

The Wyoming LifeFlight base will be staffed with 14 personnel, including flight nurses, flight paramedics, pilots and mechanics, and is in service 24 hours per day and seven days a week serving Montana and Wyoming. [Sheridan Press]

## FIRE

### SPAIN

The Ministry of Agriculture, Food and the Environment (Magrama) awarded contracts to IN-AER for four of the five helicopters providing firefighting, surveillance and forest fire coordination services for the 2015 winter-spring season. This service will remain active during the months of March, April and part of May.

The aircraft resources for this new contract include four Bell 412 transport helicopters that can carry six people and a cargo load of 900-1,000 litres each. These four helicopters will be stationed at air bases in Pino Franqueado, Riente, Tabuyo del Monte, and Tineo.

In 2014, INAER aircraft conducted over 3,700 firefighting operations, a total of 6,216 flight hours.

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# SEARCH AND RESCUE

## INDONESIA

AgustaWestland announced has signed a contract with Badan SAR Nasional (Basarnas), the national search and rescue agency of the Republic of Indonesia, for an AW139 helicopter equipped for SAR operations. The contract also includes training for aircrew and technicians as well as an initial support package. The aircraft will be delivered by the end of this year equipped with rescue hoist, radar, cabin console and other SAR equipment.

Over 900 AW139 helicopters have been sold to more than 220 customers in over 70 countries worldwide to date. The AW139 has been selected by and is now performing search and rescue missions with a large number of operators in Asia and elsewhere around the globe. The AW139, as the market leader in its class, is also widely used for offshore transport, passenger transport, law enforcement, emergency medical transport, passenger transport and firefighting services.

## JAPAN

**COAST GUARD:** The Sikorsky S-76D™ helicopter entered service into search and rescue (SAR) operations with the Japan Coast Guard last month.

The aircraft was delivered to Mitsubishi in July 2014 and became the first S-76D helicopter configured for SAR to be delivered as well as the first S-76D aircraft to enter service in Japan. Sikorsky and Mitsubishi have thus far contracted for 11 S-76D helicopters to be used for SAR missions by the Japan Coast Guard.

The Japan Coast Guard has flown several variants of the type, the S-76C™, S-76C+™ and S-76C++™ on operations. The S-76D helicopter's baseline equipment includes powerful and efficient Pratt & Whitney Canada PW210S engines; an advanced THALES TopDeck® integrated avionics system and four-axis autopilot; Health and Usage Monitoring System (HUMS) incorporated into fleet monitoring and analysis; active vibration control; and all-composite, flaw-tolerant main rotor blades.

Meanwhile Airbus Helicopters Japan has delivered an EC225 LP to the same operator. The airframe was acquired as replacement for an aircraft that was destroyed during the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake. This is the last of three EC225s ordered by JCG in July 2011; the earlier two having been delivered last year.

With the three additional helicopters, JCG now operates a Super Puma fleet that includes five EC225s and three AS332 L1s. The new EC225s are equipped with an advanced SAR mission system, and will be additionally utilised for security enforcement, territorial sea guard duties and anti-disaster operations. [UTC/AH]

## UNITED KINGDOM

**SCOTLAND:** Finmeccanica-AgustaWestland opened its new Regional Supply Centre in Aberdeen, Scotland on March 13<sup>th</sup>. The opening ceremony was held in the presence of local dignitaries and representatives from major operators and industry.

Located close to Aberdeen Airport, the new facility has been operational 24/7 since January this year delivering spare parts to operators. The Supply Centre supports a range of customers using the AW139 and AW189 helicopters for offshore transportation in the North Sea and will support UK SAR operations.

Customers can access approximately 2,000 different lines of spares already stored at the warehouse, AgustaWestland expects this figure to be tripled by the fourth quarter this year. The Supply Centre is currently supporting almost 80 aircraft in Northern Europe and this number will increase as more AW139s and AW189s will enter into service.

A CAE 3000 Series AW189 Level D Full Flight simulator, designed specifically to support training for search and rescue operations, will also be ready-for-training with Rotorsim, an AgustaWestland and CAE joint venture, in Aberdeen this year.





# INDUSTRY

Incumbent Airwave and mobile network operator Vodafone have both been dropped from the tender process for the new Emergency Services Network (ESN) in the face of intense competition.

The **Home Office** has released further details of the highly competitive tender process, naming eight suppliers that will advance to further negotiations on Lots 1, 2 and 3 of the ESN contract to produce 4G LTE [Long Term Evolution].

These are, on Lot 1, Delivery Partner, Atkins, KBR, Lockheed Martin and Mott MacDonald; on Lot 2, User Services, HP and Motorola; and on Lot 3, Mobile Services, EE and Telefónica.

Lot 4, for extension services to Lot 3, was dropped at the start of 2015 after it became apparent there was no need to move ahead with it.

As a result, Airwave, UK Broadband Networks and Vodafone will play no further part in the contract process.

It also means Airwave's preferred solution of Tetra networking, which has been the backbone of emergency services communications for a number of years, is unlikely to form a component of ESN, and police radios in their current form will cease to exist.

ESN will provide mobile voice and data communications services to 250,000 staff at 44 police and crime commissioner services, 50 fire and rescue authorities and services, 13 ambulance trusts, the National Crime Agency, the British Transport Police, Ministry of Defence Police, Civil Nuclear Constabulary, National Police Air Service and other government and local public safety bodies.

ESN will begin to go live in 2017 as the current contracts, all of which are held by Airwave, begin to expire and there are hopes that the system will be fully operational in the early 2020s. [Computer Weekly/PAR]

The Government of Oman has deployed border management systems from air transport and government IT specialist, SITA, to facilitate visitor movement and streamline the Sultanate's visa and residence permit processes. The agreement establishes a layered approach to border control, providing the **Royal Oman Police** with an effective, efficient and flexible visa processing and security clearance process, covering eVisas, Advanced Passenger Processing and Entry Exit Visitor Information systems.

Under the agreement, SITA is deploying an extensive iBorders® solution that encompasses risk assessment of traveller data from air and cruise lines, a comprehensive border control system used at immigration checkpoints across Oman, a complete e-Visa solution and a centralized Visitor Information System. The entire system, which will be fully integrated into the country's existing border management systems, provides officers with complete information about each individual, such as biometrics and historical information to allow them to focus on high-risk travellers.



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iBorders will be deployed at 28 airports, seaports and land border crossings across Oman, as well as more than 15 regional offices and more than 50 Omani embassies and consulates located across the world. All this is supported by four data centres, providing scalable capacity and redundancy. In addition, SITA delivers a comprehensive training program to ensure all government users and technical staff have the capability to operate the system.

Austrian company **Airborne Technologies** will actively take part in the international NATO exercise in June 2015, with the duty to deliver live ISR information to the ground centre via the S.C.A.R. Pod mounted on a Pilatus PC9 of Slovenia the host country. The Adriatic Strike is one of the most important Close Air Support (CAS) exercises in the region. The exercise will include some 400 participants, 200 of them from foreign armed forces. The training will be supported by more than 20 aircraft. The S.C.A.R.-Pod will be equipped with an L3 Wescam MX10 and a ROVER 6 downlink, the ground command centre as well as mobile forces will be provided with live ISR data. There-with the S.C.A.R.Pod enhances the performance portfolio of a military trainer, originally not designed to fulfil surveillance missions.

Marcus Gurtner, CSO of Airborne Technologies, said, "We are extremely proud to be one of only two industrial partners supporting the exercise. We believe that the invitation to participate is a proof of the high market acceptance that our S.C.A.R.-Pod has reached within one year after its launch. As part of the Adriatic Strike we have the possibility to present the S.C.A.R.-Pod in operation to a broad expert audience and to demonstrate its ad-hoc surveillance capability."



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**Boustead Heavy Industries Corporation Berhad (BHIC)** signed an agreement to acquire a 30% share in the Airbus Helicopters Simulation facility in Malaysia.

The simulation facility – operated by Airbus Helicopters Malaysia since January 2013, and located at the Malaysia International Aerospace Centre – houses a full-flight simulator for the H225 and H225M helicopter types.

The Airbus Helicopters Simulation Centre trained some 200 pilots and logged 1,940 hours with the full-flight simulator during its first year of operation. This activity increased by over 40% in 2014 to deliver 2,782 simulator hours, training approximately 300 pilots.

**Turbomeca (Safran)** and **DRF Luftrettung** have signed a 10-year Support By the Hour (SBH) contract for their 40 Arriel 2E engines. With the Turbomeca-powered EC145T2 fleet DRF Luftrettung perform HEMS (Helicopter Emergency Medical Service) missions in Germany.

Richard Musil, CEO of Turbomeca Germany GmbH mentioned, *“After signing a five year SBH contract for 26 Arriel 1E2 engines in February 2012, DRF Luftrettung has again chosen the SBH contract to cover the engines of their newest fleet. This is a further step that strengthens our relationship with DRF Luftrettung, an important collaboration that has been developed over the last five years.”* The Turbomeca SBH contract allows customers to tailor agreements based on their operational needs.

Hamburg-based Turbomeca Germany GmbH will provide support and maintenance to DRF Luftrettung engines. *“As the first operator worldwide DRF Luftrettung put the first helicopter of type EC 145 T2 officially into service at its HEMS base in Munich on February 11th, 2015. This represents a milestone in modernizing the DRF Luftrettung fleet since this type of helicopter will be delivered to further HEMS bases in 2015 as well. We are very glad to have a reliable partner on our side regarding support and maintenance”*, explains Steffen Lutz, CEO of DRF Luftrettung.

**Specialist Aviation Services (SAS)** of the UK will be appointed as an Authorised Service Centre for the new generation AW169 light intermediate helicopter in UK.



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The company will ensure a range of support and maintenance services are supplied for the new model, following the selection of SAS by prime HEMS customers of the type in UK who will start introducing the new helicopter into service at the end of 2015.

SAS, who signed a contract for a total of six AW169 helicopters in 2012, has already been selected by two UK HEMS customers to operate their emergency medical service-configured AW169s with more allocations pending.

Group Managing Director, Henk Schaeken has stated: "We are very proud to be selected for this appointment and are already fully engaged in preparing for the introduction of the aircraft into the SAS fleet later this year. We are busy training our engineers and pilots as well as making changes at our bases to manage the new inventory and tooling required for us to provide the same high level of aircraft availability and support which our customers have come to expect from us."

SAS chose the AW169 as it offers the best capabilities and performance in its class with potential to greatly enhance the operations of SAS' customers. Initial orders logged in this market so far will be used for EMS and executive/private transport missions.

A versatile, new generation twin engine light intermediate category helicopter, the 4.5 tonne AW169 has been designed in response to the growing market demand for an aircraft that delivers high performance, meets all the latest safety standards and has multi-role capabilities. The AW169 incorporates several new technology features in the rotor system, engines, avionics, transmission and electric power generation and distribution systems.

Almost 150 AW169 helicopters have now been ordered by customers around the world for a wide range of applications including air ambulance, law enforcement, corporate & VIP transport, offshore transport and utility roles.

*EDITORIAL COMMENT: The changes in the market.*

*Specialist Aviation Services, comprising Police Aviation Services and Medical Aviation Services, has long been associated with the MD 900 Explorer series of helicopters and successfully introduced the type to 20 years of police and air ambulance work in the UK.*

*In recent years however the company increasingly found itself without a product as the MD product line stalled. SAS has therefore transferred its allegiance to AgustaWestland as the manufacturer most likely to suit its customers. Whether SAS will return to representing the MD900 again remains to be seen.*

*The news on the MD902 Explorer coming out of last month's HAI Heli-Expo was not exactly promising. The MDHI CEO Lynn Tilton again went through a lot of jingoistic rhetoric on production but that was almost wholly related to the MD 500/530/540 series of airframes based upon the Vietnam War OH-6 Loach.*

*The only product making money for MD at the moment is that greatly updated but nonetheless 1960s technology and understandably she is concentrating on it.*

*It was only towards the end of her presentation and in a subsequent interview that she made mention of the modern company product the 1990s MD902.*

*New examples of that product will not to be seen coming to a sales room near anyone soon. What is happening is very much on the back burner. For the last couple of years I have reported that they are bringing the production of the product in-house and that it will be fitted with a new avionics suite. Well ditto to that and there is nothing significant happening there.*

*The world fleet concentration remains in Europe and in the UK in particular and it is fair to say that most if not all of the current players are looking for new aircraft soon and that what is nominally still the best overall fit airframe will not be on offer to them. They may have to consider a refurbished airframe drawn from a diminishing fleet of 902s or go elsewhere. Enter the battle between Airbus Helicopters, AgustaWestland and Bell for a new generation of air ambulances.*





*Increasingly it looks as if the future air ambulance product line will relate to larger more capable airframes. The likes of the Airbus H145/AW169 and Bell 429 now favoured are in a weight class above the current crop of AW109/H135 and MD900 now in service.*

In the background there are stories suggesting that the most precious commodity in the market at the moment is the 900 gearbox. European customer comment is that they are wearing out but not being repaired, replaced or refurbished at a sufficient rate to meet demand and that will inevitably lead to some operators being faced with grounding. But that has not happened yet.

The allegation is that over two dozen boxes are awaiting work and the gearboxes from Kawasaki [KHI] in Japan face future intransigence from the European certification authorities. The situation is complicated by products coming out of the factory not being directly certified in Europe and elsewhere.

On its behalf MD say they are aware of delays in the gearbox refurbishment cycle but that has now been resolved and KHI is working to a recovery plan, which should be completed by mid-May. Initial transmission shipments to the UK out of this recovery effort were already started with KHI intending to turn out 2-3 transmission per month against a demand level of 1 unit per month. The stock of unserviceable units that were mentioned are nearly all MDHI assets used in seeding the exchange pool rather than customer assets waiting in queue for repair or overhaul.

The remaining cause for alarm relates to whether the working agreement with the certification authorities allowing the KHI gearboxes into Europe by acquiescence is being ended or not. Certainly some operators fear that recent negative comments from the UK CAA and German DGA make them think that MD has a problem ahead but the manufacturer still believes it is still in place.

**ESG's Aerosystems Division** was due to be presenting their comprehensive service portfolio and customer-specific deployment & mission systems at the Army Aviation Mission Solutions Summit from 29 to 31 March in Nashville, USA.

The focus of their presentation at the Secure Communication Systems Inc. is on ESG's new Airborne Operator Console including various software solutions, Sensor Based Landing Aid (SeLa) for brownout / whiteout landing of helicopters, ESG's SeLa Radar Altimeter (High Precision Brown Out W-Band Radar Altimeter) and Components of their Mobile Airstrip.

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## FEATURE

PAN last visited the Airbus Helicopter South East Asia [AHSEA] facility at Seletar, Singapore late in 2011 when it had been officially opened less than one year. At the time it was still a Eurocopter facility and quickly developing the skills it was offering to the customers in the region.

The facility was new and the air the scars with vegetation area around it was scarred by construction works. While these have receded from the immediate vicinity allowing nature to repair the manmade damage. Building continues apace with a building for Airbus owned Vector Aerospace sitting close by separated by an area of scrubland said to be available for future expansion.

The plot of land appears too small to fit in with recently announced Airbus Group

It brought to the market, sales, maintenance and training but the latter was still incomplete in that although the static EC120 Colibri training simulator was erected on site the newer AS365N3 full motion simulator was far from complete.

That Full Flight Simulator (FFS) for the Dauphin AS365N3 brought on line in 2012 was developed and built in partnership with Thales. The simulator fully met all the identified training needs of the time and remains in full use to date. As reported in last month's edition of PAN the simulator 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 demanding life-saving missions. The upgrade of the original technologies (MFD255 and APM2010) specification by the incorporation of 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 simulator sees regular use by such as the Western Australia Police – and their new Chief Pilot was at the facility on the day of the PAN visit getting his type rating – despite there being a nearer one at the Victoria State Police facility Essendon.

The EC120 Colibri training device is primarily used for the instruction and currency of the local Singaporean military pilots in training. The pilots are screened and trained on the CT4 and PC21 fixed wing types in Australia and then stream to fast jet, transport or helicopter. The small EC120 fleet and



*In the background are examples of the colonial houses. Largely deserted for many years these are now being refurbished and brought into use.*



*Since my last visit the former military BO105 has been refurbished.*

*Unlike many simulators access to the cabin is via steps from below rather than a typical high level gantry.*







the training device move potential rotary wing pilots forward with the Seletar unit additionally offering a bad weather inflight on those few days that flying might not be possible. Singapore is mostly a balmy spot but when the weather kicks in it can be pretty dramatic.

Customer choice continues to drive all aspects of the Singapore business. The customer base remains mainly with the core of fifteen territories include Bangladesh, Bhutan, Brunei, Cambodia, Laos, Maldives, Myanmar, Nepal, Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, Thailand Timor-Leste and Vietnam with such as Nepal and Vietnam regularly having their aircraft at the facility but they have retained a number of Malaysian customers despite the availability of the more appropriate facility at Kuala Lumpur.

Business continues to be brisk for AHSEA; there have been times when its stated capacity of 24 airframes has been strained. Last time PAN was there nine helicopters were present in various states of preparedness for customers, on this occasion the count was a few higher. The primary types evident were derivatives of the AS350 and the AS365. The current tendency is for the supply and support of smaller types but there is an expectation AHSEA that deliveries of such as the EC175 will begin to move the business of the facility towards larger airframes.

At the time of the last visit the paint booth was pristine and awaiting use, now the signs of heavy use are happily very evident.

The most popular helicopter currently is the EC130T2 and there is an expectation that before long the EC145T2 will be making its mark. For the moment though there are simply not enough of the new model 145s available and no expectation that one will appear at Seletar until later this year.

Dr. Bernhard Brenner, the President of the facility last time I was there has now moved on to be replaced earlier this year by Derek Sharples – now termed as the Managing Director.

The old and battered military BO105 encountered on the last visit being worked on for a future role as gate guardian is now resplendent in the Singaporean National colours of red and white and greets visitors by the entrance to the facility.

*FOOTNOTE: The plot of land between AHSEA and Vector appears too small for the recently confirmed Airbus Asia Training Centre (AATC), 55%-owned by Airbus and 45%-owned by Singapore Airlines.*

*The Singapore centre will initially operate from the SIA Training Centre near Changi Airport before moving to Seletar Aerospace Park when a dedicated facility is completed. It will provide type rating and recurrent training on full-flight simulators for Airbus A320, A330, A340, A350 and A380 aircraft types. So we can expect to see another massive Airbus presence springing up at Seletar in the near future.*

*To the near future the marketing team at Seletar are looking forward to next year's 16-21 February 2016 Singapore Air Show to be held at Changi Exhibition Centre. In the past [2012] the dates of this important event in the local calendar clashed with the Heli-Expo in the USA and halted both the presence of important executives and media coverage. Happily in 2016 this has again been avoided and there is a week between the events.*



# ACCIDENTS & INCIDENTS

**7 September 2014 Eurocopter EC135P2 G-SUFK v Microlight.** A police helicopter and a gyrocopter narrowly avoided a mid-air collision, when the microlight and helicopter both had 'late sightings' of the other while using different radio frequencies over Beccles, Suffolk. Avoiding action was taken when they were 328ft apart. The black and yellow helicopter had navigation lights selected on, as was the SSR transponder with Modes A and C 1, fitted with a TAS and operating under VFR in VMC in straight and level cruise. [AB]

**8 January 2015 Eurocopter AS365N2 N611LL.** Air ambulance of Life Lion Critical Care Transport, Hershey, PA. Upon conducting walk-around inspection on the pad the pilot noticed number 1 hydraulic fluid level was low and barely visible in reservoir sight gauge. Aircraft was taken out of service and investigated. When inside an illuminated warm hangar it was found that the entire lower portion of tail boom had light coating of hydraulic oil. One of the three flex hydraulic hoses attached to the right main landing gear actuator strut had developed a rupture in the line. [Concern]

**26 February 2015 AgustaWestland A109 HB-\*\*\*** Air ambulance of REGA Switzerland suffered a hard landing for unknown reasons near a helicopter base at Erstfeld, Uri canton, Switzerland. The aircraft was carrying four employees, three of whom were seriously injured and taken to hospital. Reports state that the helicopter was returning from a rescue mission when it crashed on landing. [20Minuten/TheLocal]

**26 February 2015 Airbus Helicopters EC135P2 N834CS.** Air ambulance of CALSTAR. A helicopter transporting a patient to San Francisco had to make an emergency landing in Vacaville in Solano County in Northern California shortly after taking off with a patient from Vaca Valley Hospital. The pilot thought a bird might have hit the aircraft and touched down safely in a grass field by Lucky's on Peabody Road near Alamo Drive. [Reporter]

**27 February 2015 AgustaWestland AW119 Koala N356LL.** Air ambulance of Life Link III Minneapolis, USA, operated by Air Methods. Life Link 3 departed the Rochester International Airport destined for the Willmar Municipal Airport returning to base from a patient transport. The pilot noted a Caution Light illuminating for Low Fuel Pressure, followed by several additional Warning Lights and elected to divert to the closest airport, Faribault Municipal Airport 10 miles behind them. The pilot then noted that the fuel pressure was falling and elected to land immediately. During the descent into a field the aircraft lost all electrical power and subsequently all communications but landed safely. After extensive electrical testing it was decided that the issue was a faulty earth wire in the aircraft. [Concern]

**5 March 2015 Eurocopter BK117 D-HDDD,** a DRF helicopter acting as "Christoph 51", an intensive care helicopter based in Stuttgart operating from rooftop helipad at Stuttgart Hospital, Germany. A 53 year old man, a hospital employee, died in an accident involving the rescue helicopter at the helipad. The employee, who had been waiting at the edge of the rooftop helipad, approached the helicopter shortly after it touched down and made contact with the still spinning tail rotor. [Media]

**7 March 2015 Eurocopter EC130 N356AM** Air ambulance of ARCH Medical services operated by Air Methods struck a building and crashed shortly after leaving its base en-route to pick up the crew at St Louis University Hospital, Missouri. The pilot, the only person aboard, died in the crash and subsequent fire. [Media]

**8 March 2015 Bell Huey** South African helicopter assisting in efforts to extinguish a blaze in Cape Point in the Western Cape crashed, killing the pilot. [EWN]

**12 March 2015 Eurocopter AS350B2 N919EM.** Air ambulance of Eagle Med crashed in *Eufaula* a rural area of McIntosh County, Oklahoma, USA killing the pilot Matt Matthews and injuring two other crew. The flight was from Tulsa to McAlester, about 90 miles to the south,



when it crashed west of Lake Eufaula, near the Canadian River and about 25 miles north-east of the intended destination. The helicopter crashed into trees near the summit of a hill in bad weather, broke into two and the cabin landed on its left side. Ryan Stezkorn one of the survivors from this accident was able to walk away with minor cuts and assist the other colleague Kim Ramsey. Ryan reportedly also survived a fatal Eagle Med crash in Talahina in 2013. [Fox]

**13 March 2015 Mil Mi-17 serial 12551** (c/n 341M15) Air ambulance of the Serbian Military. The helicopter had picked up a five day old baby in the southern Serbian region of Raska after an ambulance taking the child to hospital for treatment for respiratory problems was halted by a landslide road block near Raska. The helicopter flew 200km from Raska to Belgrade but crashed near the capital's main airport in thick fog after making aborted attempts to land. Seven people - four crew members, two medical workers and the baby - were killed in the crash. [Media/VJereb]

**13 March 2015 Eurocopter AS365 B511** Korea Coast Guard helicopter manoeuvring near a sea wall to pick up an ambulance patient near Gageodo Island, Korea crashed into the sea killing four people. [Helihub]

*The Police In Dallas had a bad week with waterfowl collisions in March. In the first instance one of their Bell's took out two ducks without damage but in the second instance the pilot was pretty badly hurt as a single bird entered the cabin.*

**16 March 2015 Bell 206B3 N1510L** Dallas Police Dept. On patrol at 600' AGL flying south along Interstate 45 over the Trinity River struck two ducks. Landed safely with minor damage. [DPD]



**18 March 2015 Bell 206L N282AE.** Air ambulance of Air Evac Lifeteam. Helicopter made a precautionary landing into a field behind the University Kentucky Arboretum, 500 Alumni Drive. The flight had just departed UK Chandler Medical Center when the pilot noticed a gauge was not reading correctly and thought he smelled smoke in the cockpit. [WKYT]

**23 March 2015 Bell 206B3 N1511L** Dallas Police Dept. Crew was searching Lake Ray Hubbard for an overturned boat with two people in the water. In a turn at about 50 knots between 400 to 500 feet AGL impacted a Coot [wildfowl] which came through the pilot's windshield. Sgt Todd Limerick was flying and sustained a sizable cut over the left eye, a broken nose and the blow caused the lens in his left eye to shift. Senior Corporal Laurent Lespagnol a pilot acting as TFO was able to take the controls and land at the Dallas Fire Rescue staging area at the Bass Pro Shop parking lot near Interstate 30, Robertson Park. The bird came to rest between the seats on the collective. [Media/MC]



## FLIGHT SAFETY

Air ambulances continue to crash with monotonous regularity and it is clear that the same company names and perils are being linked to result in damage and death.

Top of the list appears to be Eagle Med, a company with far too many accidents to its name, where a brave working crew met with a hilltop in bad weather and instantly raised the interest and historical research of local media. It was the media that have already pointed fingers and asked questions why it is Eagle Med again and noted that one of the survivors of this latest crash had already survived an earlier company accident where a helicopter hit an aerial mast also firmly attached to the ground. This latest incident was 25 miles short of the destination so there was no clear reason why they were near the ground in the face of Federal Aviation Administration regulatory rules that require helicopter operators, including air ambulances, "to have stricter flight rules and procedures, improved communications and training and additional on-board safety equipment."

The FAA in a statement on its new rule said in 2008 five accidents claimed 21 lives.

"The FAA examined helicopter air ambulance accidents from 1991 through 2010 and determined 62 accidents that claimed 125 lives could have been mitigated by (the new rule," the agency said. "While developing the rule, the FAA considered 20 commercial helicopter accidents from 1991 through 2010 (excluding air ambulances) that resulted in 39 fatalities. From 2011 through 2013, there were seven air ambulance accidents resulting in 19 fatalities and seven commercial helicopter accidents that claimed 20 lives."



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## PEOPLE

**Matt Wilcock** has taken up his first posting as a Helicopter Emergency Medical Service (HEMS) pilot at Wiltshire Air Ambulance (WAA). Matt has made the switch to HEMS work after 17 years in the military where he flew a range of helicopters.

After graduating with an honours degree in aeronautical engineering from the University of London, Matt did his officer training at Sandhurst in 1998. He was commissioned into the Army Air Corps in 1999 and served across the world, including in Kenya where he flew Gazelle helicopters to pick up injured British troops serving at an Army training unit.

For the last six years he worked as a test pilot and instructor at Boscombe Down, near Amesbury, Wiltshire. The other pilots are Steven Judd, Group Chief Pilot, George Lawrence, Unit Chief Pilot and Nicky Smith. The pilots are employed by Heli Charter and WAA leases the Bell 429 from Heli Charter under a 10 year contract.



A more familiar face at WAA is trauma doctor Ed Valentine who has been newly appointed as the base doctor. In his role, which is part-time, Ed will be carrying out a minimum of two days flying a month with WAA, provide on-going support to the air ambulance paramedics in developing their Critical Care skills and assist and deliver presentations on Clinical Governance.

As a member of SWIFT Medics, Ed, 35, has worked with WAA providing pre-hospital care to sick and injured people for the last four years.

Ed's full time job is as a Consultant in Emergency Medicine at the Royal Gwent Hospital, Wales. He has been a doctor since 2002.



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**ExCeL London**

[www.helitechevents.com](http://www.helitechevents.com)



Chris Bond a long time employee of Bristow Helicopter's and a former winch man with the company has been promoted. Chris, a familiar face at many Search and Rescue Conferences and events, is now Manager Emergency Response & Search and Rescue Standards Support at Bristow Group.

He is pictured on the Sikorsky Booth at the recent Heli-Expo in Orlando, Florida representing Bristow on their S-92 exhibit.



## LETTER

*This letter first appeared in the Darlington and Stockton Times 9 March 2015 and subsequently in the Durham Times.*

Sir, – The withdrawal of the police helicopter from Durham Tees Valley Airport is to be regretted as was the disbandment of the former North East Air Support Unit which had two aircraft, a fixed-wing BN Islander and an EC-135 helicopter. These two aircraft based 30 miles apart at the North-East's two regional airports provided an excellent service with both aircraft capable of performing 90 per cent of routine police missions. However, when required each aircraft could perform special operations such as tactical transport with the helicopter and long range, long endurance "all weather" missions with the aeroplane. Nevertheless, as was pointed out by a former chief constable, police aircraft, particularly helicopters are very expensive to purchase and to operate and, on average, spend 85 per cent of time sitting on the ground at standby.

The dilemma, for the police, is that if a "Rolls Royce" service with two aircraft 30 miles apart is unaffordable, will a second rate service with one helicopter at Newcastle and the next at Wakefield, near Leeds prove to be a waste of finite resources?

For the police in Newcastle and in Leeds there will probably be little change but for others, transit times will increase and on many occasions the aircraft will arrive at an incident too late to be of any value. For incidents on the East Coast there will, in fact, be only two police air support bases, from the top of Scotland to the South East tip of England; one at Newcastle and the other in Essex.

However, there are, for humanitarian search and rescue (SAR) missions, some viable alternatives. Although the North-East will lose its RAF Sea King helicopter base at Boulmer, as well as the Sea King base at Leconfield near Beverley in East Yorkshire, the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) will have three SAR helicopter bases, on the East Coast, at Inverness in Scotland, at Humberside Airport and at Manston in Kent.

In addition, the Civil Air Patrol has a fleet of some 70 aircraft, aeroplanes, light helicopters and autogyros that can be called upon to assist ground search parties, mountain rescue teams and HM Coastguard Auxiliary Rescue Teams, with the proverbial "eye in the sky".

In the US, the US Civil Air Patrol is responsible for 80 per cent of overland SAR missions on behalf of the US Air Force.

JAMES A COWAN MBE

Chairman, UK Civil Air Patrol

Belmont, Durham.

*Ed: This is just a sample of the inflamed rhetoric that has filled the pages of local news media from Lands End to Berwick. Time alone will show whether any part of this external pressure will deflect the latest NPAS plan from its stated aims.*

*Media reports that the Home Secretary Theresa May PC MP is 'supporting' this activity may be discounted on the grounds that it is she that is driving massive cuts that led to the creation of NPAS and there is an election looming!*

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

We all know that UAVs are coming and the conference industry is making hay while the sun apparently shines – there are unmanned events popping up everywhere. Unfortunately there are really too many out there and some are therefore throwing in the towel.

Lodestar has decided to reschedule their 23-24 June 2015 Commercial UAS conference and expo at Olympia, London in partnership with UAS News. They cite the number of events happening this year and that they decided to bow out and come back when the smaller events had “shaken out.”

*Ed: I guess from their own statement that are just such a smaller event that has just been shaken out then!*

### 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](http://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 Zaglowa str., 80-850 Gdańsk, Poland] Operated by MTG SA Gdańsk International Fair Co. in partnership with the General Headquarters of the Polish Police. [www.europoltech.pl](http://www.europoltech.pl) The last event was attended by more than 6,300 trade visitors and over 180 international companies.



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. [www.searchandrescueeurope.com](http://www.searchandrescueeurope.com)

24 April 2015 SkyTech UAV event at the Business Design Centre, London. Skytech 2015 UAV Conference and Exhibition is a one-day event serving as a platform to define, understand and ultimately integrate UAVs into the commercial sector. [www.skytechevent.com](http://www.skytechevent.com)

26-27 May 2015 PAvCon Police Aviation Conference. Breda International Airport, Netherlands. Central to this year will be a multi-national SMS presentation and discussion moving on from last years event supported by a small number of stand alone presentations on IIMC, a Flight Risk Assessment Tool Design and how to keep out of trouble when making that once in a life-time purchase of high tech equipment. Flight Safety is central to the programme and lots more besides!

Add thirty exhibitors [and counting] it will be a great little event for all attendees.

[admin@pavcon.org](mailto:admin@pavcon.org) [www.pavcon.org](http://www.pavcon.org) [www.policeaviationconference.com](http://www.policeaviationconference.com)





# Police Aviation News

The Monthly On Line News Source for the Emergency Services [www.policeaviationnews.com](http://www.policeaviationnews.com)



Officer/Pilot Bryan Smith [left] flies with the Seminole County Sheriff's Office out of Sanford Airport north of Orlando, Florida and he is also the lead on Flight Safety with the ALEA.

At this years PAvCon he will again be leading a multi-national Safety Management Systems workshop.



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