

Police Aviation News

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PAR



TROUBLE AT SEA S.A.R. CONFERENCE BRING DOWN THE UAS

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EDITORIAL

As the recent UK General Election drew to a climax one of the political parties – the Liberal Democrats – publicly offered £50M more Libor fines money for the air ambulance community.

The unrealised Lib Dem largesse highlighted the fact that air ambulances save hundreds of lives each year but rely almost solely on donations from the local community. They also highlighted the case of London's Air Ambulance current campaign to secure a second helicopter to provide substantially improved coverage to the capital's ten million residents. In March this year the charity was still £2.35M short of the total funding required and they were suggesting that a central government donation might secure the helicopter.

The question is whether or not the air ambulances are damaging their cause in not immediately and loudly rejecting a new offer of Libor money?

I remember the air ambulance old guard saying they would never take government money because it might mislead their fundraisers into believing they were already well funded by central government and maybe their charity giving should be redirected towards other deserving causes. The thinking in the past was that air ambulances funded by central government would lose their independence of direction. The worry was if the government of the day decided that it wanted the private charity aircraft to undertake other roles – perhaps those plans plainly laid out in the 2012 RUSI Blue Light Air Assets report – it would be far easier if there was clearly significant government money in the system.

There is a new order in place now and it is being led by the Association of Air Ambulances – which has in Libor money found a way to fund its own financial needs. But this need has clearly led the air ambulance community down a road that it said it would not go.

Is this the fault of the politicians offering and posturing or the AAA in accepting?

Are the air ambulances treading a dangerous path in not only accepting the first tranche of Libor money but not immediately rejecting offers of more?

The charities have largely done very well in raising money and are best keeping a distance between themselves and Government on the basis that an NPAS type scenario would become a higher risk. London has always been poorly funded thanks to successive leaders, infighting and people in it for the wrong reasons, but the current management seem to have it right and the funds are coming in again. In the past fundraising in London was depressed by the receipt of easy local NHS [Government] money and it is taking them time to get independent charity fundraising to an acceptable level. They were poor fundraisers and now they have to be less impatient.

The AAA tactics seem to court the "in it for the wrong reason" brigade, which is concerning. The AAA is doing a great job but why isn't it – like its charges, an independent charity wholly funded by the air ambulances, rather than a profit-making company sailing the industry in uncertain waters.

Bryn Elliott
Editor

FRONT COVER: It is perhaps unfortunate that the front cover of Police Aviation News has featured Agusta-Westland airframes for two previous months but last month's photo opportunity at the SAR Conference in Brighton was simply too good to pass over! A flight demonstration was undertaken by AW139 G-SARD in cooperation with this Brighton based RNLI Atlantic 85 Rigid Inflatable Boat [RIB] B-852, Random Harvest and other vessels. Still the Special Edition for this year's PAVCon should balance the books slightly with an EC135P2 taking centre stage.

CHILE

Last month's front page story was about the delivery of new AW139 helicopters to Chile and since then it has been announced that the UK based subsidiary of Honeywell—Skyforce has their Observer mapping system on board with Skyforce doing all the downtown mapping. [H]

MEXICO

Trouble is erupting in western Mexico and last month it was reported that gunmen forced down a Cougar military helicopter acting against drug cartels. In the latest incident three soldiers were known to have died immediately but more bodies were subsequently found. The Cougar military helicopter, carrying 18 security forces, was hit on its tail rotor and forced to make an emergency landing in which ten soldiers and two federal police officers were injured.

In the major upheaval banks and fuel stations were torched and numerous people were detained as violence flared in an apparent violent reaction to the launch of a military and federal police crackdown on cartels. Operation Jalisco was to crack down on the Jalisco New Generation Drug Cartel. More vehicles were burned in the states of Colima, Michoacan and Guanajuatong. [Media]

SOUTH AFRICA

CAPE TOWN: A quad rotor UAV was tested in support of a drug bust in the Cape Flats. When arriving at the suspect's house, the UAV with an infrared camera was launched nearby and watched from above and recorded the activity of the suspects.

The craft used was a WASP Mark 4 a product of Dronetec, which was contracted by the city for the test.

The design features a "x8 design" with four arms and eight motors, and designed to operate at altitude between 50 – 150 metres in police operations, has a 2km range (weather dependent), and can stay in the air for up to 30 mins using its Sony TV camera and LED spotlight.

In the test run during the police operation, the craft tracked suspects from above using its thermal imaging.

Cape Town also plans to use a fixed-wing push prop drone for anti-metal theft operations in Philippi. The fixed wing craft is capable of staying airborne for three hours and can check the contents of scrap yards before a raid. It can also be used to check disaster scenes during and after an emergency, check land invasions, and monitor informal structure creep. [Dronetec]

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UNITED KINGDOM

DYFED POWYS: The local campaigns to protect some of the threatened air support units continue. Late last month the weekly Carmarthen Journal newspaper was urging its readers to sign its petition to safeguard the helicopter's future, after its base was earmarked for closure from 1 January 2016.

The newspaper joined forces with Carmarthen East MP Jonathan Edwards, who is urging Home Secretary Theresa May to reverse the decision after she ordered an external review into a similar decision to remove a police helicopter from Durham Tees Valley Airport, in the North-East of England.

After a few days the campaign had attracted over four hundred on-line signatures and continues. <http://www.carmarthenshiresvoice.org.uk/petition>

Ed: This is the type of problem NPAS is facing as it progresses towards gaining control of the whole of England and Wales and it has few acceptable answers to any of the campaigns simply because they are mainly based on local issues rather than factual ones. The Dyfed-Powys helicopter has long been little used, noisy and starved of funds but as soon as an outside agency comes onto the scene to undertake the shut down that was in any case inevitable all those elements promptly evaporate and hearts rule.

EAST MIDLANDS: According to the rumour network Rotorheads the proposed move of the new fixed wing aircraft and the Ripley based helicopter in to East Midlands Airport has not gone to plan. The airport does not want the base there.

This has been confirmed by NPAS who are currently looking for another suitable site in middle England. There is no particular rush, the current helicopter site at Derbyshire Police HQ can continue and the fixed wing deliveries are far enough ahead to ease any pressure. The difficulties of finding another 24/7 location in the region should not be underestimated though.

NPAS are not yet releasing details of the identity of their fixed wing contractor. [pprune/NPAS/ PAR]

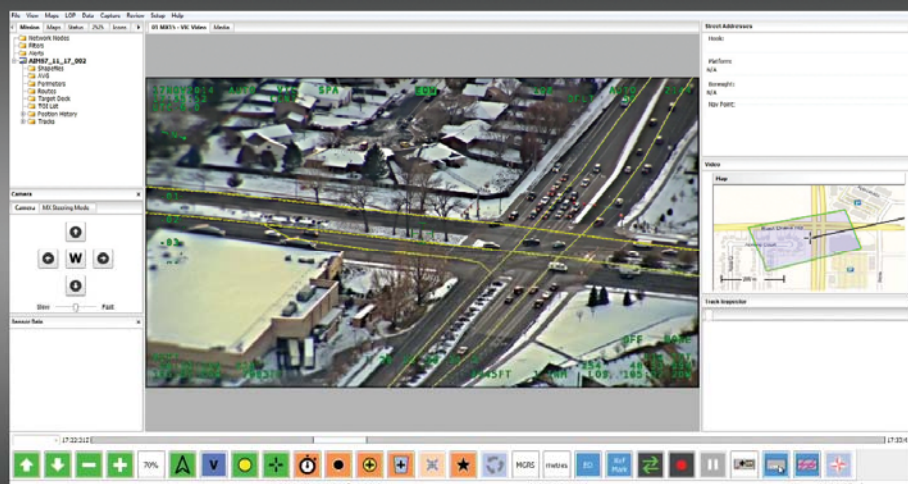
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UNITED STATES

NEVADA: MD Helicopters have a new contract to deliver a MD 530F helicopter for the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department Aviation Unit. Acquisition of the MD 530F was approved by Metro's Fiscal Affairs Committee on April 27.

Configured to mirror the capabilities of the rest of Las Vegas Metropolitan's MD 530F fleet, the new helicopter will feature a 650shp Rolls-Royce 250-C30 engine, extended tail boom and longer main-rotor blades, and will be equipped with a complete Garmin suite, including the latest G500H glass cockpit, GTS800 Traffic Avoidance System and GTN 650 to support navigation, communications and safe flight operations.

The new MD 530F will join the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department in October 2015. [MD]



Las Vegas have flown MD products for some years

OHIO: A state budgetary panel approved the Ohio State Highway Patrol's request to buy a new, \$4.1M helicopter after the agency cited increasing demand and maintenance on the two helicopters that it operates.

The state's Controlling Board agreed to the patrol's request to waive competitive selection in the purchase of a 2014 AS350 helicopter from Airbus Helicopters Inc. The patrol already operates 1994 and 1998 models of the same helicopter.

The aircraft are equipped with an infrared camera, digital video recorder, moving map system, high-powered search light and other safety equipment. The two can be anywhere in the state from their hanger in Columbus in about an hour.

The patrol has flown close to 130 missions this year and more than 500 last year. Most missions in the past 12 months have been in support of other agencies.

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A photograph of three yellow GPU units. In the foreground is a large unit labeled 'Coolspool 260' mounted on a four-wheeled ramp cart. In the background is a hand truck carrying two smaller units, labeled 'Coolspool 29' and 'Coolspool 17'. All units feature the 'powervamp' logo.

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AIR AMBULANCE AUSTRIA

OAMTC AIR AMBULANCE: Last September at the small BGAD General Aviation show at Cambridge Airport RocketRoute based in Surrey were exhibiting and received some modest coverage in PAN.

At the time they were reticent to talk in detail about an important contract that was pending in Austria but now they have officially started working with the Austrian Air Ambulance service the story is out.

RocketRoute have worked with them to develop a bespoke application for their requirements and they are already in talks with a number of other helicopter operators in similar roles.

The RocketRoute system offers Integrated Tracking directly from a 3G device, works from a standard Android Tablet or Phone (shortly coming on iOS), can support IFR, VFR, Yankee and Zulu plans, is integrated so multiple bases can be supported with a single subscription that is supported 24 / 7 by a RocketRoute Operations Team. www.rocketroute.com

Ed: Another new company at this year's PAvCon and from early feedback from visitors they have clearly raised interest among some of the European police community.



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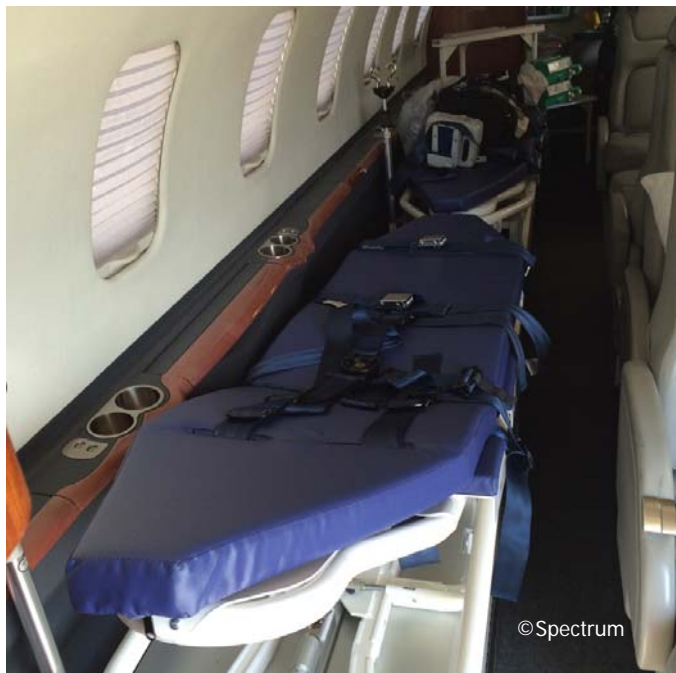
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TURKEY

RED STAR: Late last month Spectrum Aeromed announced the completion of a customised Lear 45 dual patient system medical interior for Red Star, a long-term customer in Turkey. The Lear 45 was also granted an aircraft operator certificate.

Red Star Accountable Manager, Emre Dursun, commented on why they continue to use Spectrum Aeromed, "Spectrum Aeromed provides great looking equipment and we are proud to have it in our aircraft. With the introduction of the Lear 45 into service, we will be in a position to respond to inquiries coming from not only Turkey but also the Middle East, North Africa, India and the Caucasus."

This is the second medical interior completion for Red Star with the first installation being in a Jetstream 32. Another accomplishment as a result of this install is the STC validation from EASA for the Lear 45. Spectrum Aeromed also received STC validation this month from EASA on an unrelated Cessna XL.



UNITED KINGDOM

ESSEX & HERTS: Essex & Herts Air Ambulance Trust (EHAAT) hosted a VIP reception sponsored by Medical Aviation Services to officially open the new Trust Head Office on Earls Colne Business Park.

Special guest, 3 year old Maisie Moon who is a former patient of the Essex Air Ambulance following a serious road traffic collision in September 2012 joined CEO Jane Gurney to cut the ribbon at the official opening ceremony.

Originally the Charity worked out of a very small office at Broomfield Hospital, Chelmsford, but in 2004 the ever growing team moved to bigger premises on the Earls Colne Business Park. New landlord Eric Hobbs and his family made the Charity extremely welcome and E Hobbs (Farms) Ltd continue to be supportive of the Charity. Since then EHAAT has continued to expand leaving no option but to relocate to new premises, still on the Earls Colne Business Park.



*Maisie Moon and Jane Gurney cutting the ribbon
EHAAT image*

Later this month EHAAT will be hosting their annual Aeromedical Conference. In the past these have been held near their base at Earl's Colne and with Ford Motors at the Dunton Technical Centre but this year they are hosted by the Anglia Ruskin University in Chelmsford on June 10.

EHAAT is hosting this national event, sponsored by Medical Aviation Services and Anglian Ruskin University, in pre-hospital care which brings together delegates from all over the UK and Europe giving a unique insight into the Aeromedical world.

The aim is to bring together the specialists and emergency services involved in the care of patients in the pre-hospital and critical care industry to create an atmosphere in which leads to mutual learning and greater patient care and safety.

UNITED STATES

NATIONAL:

For three years between 2011 and 2014, the unmanned Kaman K-Max 1200 helicopter delivered supplies to the more dangerous and distant US Forward Operating Bases throughout Afghanistan. It followed that feat up in 2014 by demonstrating an ability to work with other unmanned craft in forest fire suppression operations. And in March of this year, the semi-autonomous helicopter once again proved that it can integrate operations with land-based drones to locate, identify and evacuate people stranded in desolate areas.

March's demonstration started with an injured party sending out a distress signal to first responders. But rather than climbing through rough terrain, they sent in a remote-controlled ground vehicle to assess the situation as well as the patient. Once the patient has been positively identified, operators on the ground employ a tablet to instruct the K-Max as where to land. After the K-Max has set down, the injured party is belted into a bench on the aircraft's exterior bench seat and flown to safety.

This scenario is being investigated as a potential means of extracting military personnel out of combat areas but might see potential use in similar extreme civilian scenarios. The main resistance to the project is whether it will ever become acceptable to simply send an injured party off in an unmanned aircraft. Historically there have been several 'difficult to accept' retrieval schemes put forward including strapping injured soldiers in underwing pods on fighters and they have never seen fruition; manned helicopters being found more acceptable. Soldiers are one thing but civilians will take a long time in accepting any variation on this latest idea.



If you lived in the United Kingdom and were taken to hospital by an ambulance you would not need to worry about having to pay for the service even if the first responders chose to use a more expensive air ambulance. In fact you would not normally have to pay for the treatment either. As a citizen the National Health Service would pick up the medical bill and a charity would look after the air transport aspect. As a foreigner you may get a bill for the medical treatment [if they remembered to bill you]. The National Health Service picks up the cost of the medical treatment and ground transportation and charity picks up all or most of the air transportation cost regardless of the patients race, creed or colour.

Not so in most nations of the world and in particularly the USA. It is nothing new but there is currently a great deal of discussion in the USA about the cost of transportation in an air ambulance. Some patients have been getting some sky high invoices for journeys that the insurance companies have been rejecting.

Non payment for the service provided has obliged the air ambulance companies to sue the former patient and that has hit the headlines.

Air Methods is trying to get payment from Clarence W. Kendall, a rancher in Arizona who fell eight feet and struck his head. His health insurance covered most of the cost of treating the head trauma caused by the accident but they refused to pay the \$47,182 invoice for use of an air ambulance.

It has been calculated that Air Methods' average bill in 2014 was \$40,766, compared with roughly \$17,262 five years earlier and it seems that the rate of the inflation in prices is what led to the insurance rejections.

There is no dispute that Clarence was taken by helicopter to Tucson on the day of the fall, nearly two years ago. It is simply that with the insurance rejecting the air ambulance invoice Kendall has not paid the outstanding charge, equivalent to a year's income.

This case, and many others like it, highlight a boom in air ambulance use, consistently rising prices, service expansion and many expensive new helicopters.

This was all funded by a willingness of insurance companies to pay all or a significant part of the resultant bills. Recently the private insurance companies that offer ambulance coverage have been restricting reimbursements for air ambulances. Medicare has typically covered a smaller portion of the bills than private insurance, and Medicaid even less.

The result is that there are dozens of lawsuits in courts across the country and have seen former customers driven into bankruptcy.

Now it seems that the US air ambulances are under threat from within. Strong revenue over the last decade fed explosive growth in their numbers, and brought about an inefficient system in which too many helicopters were chasing too few patients. Smaller air ambulance operators are finding it harder to survive and there has been a significant move to cut costs elsewhere – the

number of single engine air ambulances on back order is significant in a time when the market elsewhere in the world is moving up to more sophisticated and expensive twin engine machines.

Concern about future revenue recently prompted the air ambulance companies to seek help from Washington. The Association of Air Medical Services, an industry trade group, is promoting legislation that was introduced in the House of Representatives in February. Among other things, the bill would increase Medicare payments to air ambulance companies.

As many as 400,000 people are transported by air annually, and the industry has certainly brought quicker emergency care to rural areas, but air ambulance safety remains an issue and now costs are again an added issue. [hcpolicy/media].



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SEARCH AND RESCUE INTERNATIONAL

BRIGHTON: The recent SAR Conference in Brighton attracted an international audience and line up of speakers.

One of the elements of the programme was a presentation by NASA on the performance of the current crop of emergency beacons – it was not good listening. The operational performance of the *PLB* (*Personal Locator Beacon*) and *ELT* (*Emergency Locator Transmitter*) is mostly about failure. The NASA report is of damning failure rate figures of 50%.

The causes of this dismal performance are primarily associated with the loss of the antenna in the accident they are supposed to be alerting authorities to. The equipment works well under test but real world performance has been found wanting and largely beyond immediate remedy.

An *ELT* needs an aerial to work but often poor installation, fire and vibration separate the aerial from the device either through wear and tear or the impact of the accident.

The working profile of the current equipment assumes a short transmission at the start of the incident and then further transmissions at spaced intervals to further alert the rescue services. Meanwhile all too often the *ELT* is destroyed by fire or sinking and actually sends no further transmissions.

Although the effect of some of these problems can be improved it may take a new generation of equipment to turn the situation around. Current thoughts are that a new generation of both *PLB* and *ELT* equipment should send several longer transmissions at the start of the emergency before settling into regular spacing. That at least will improve the chances of signals reaching the authorities.



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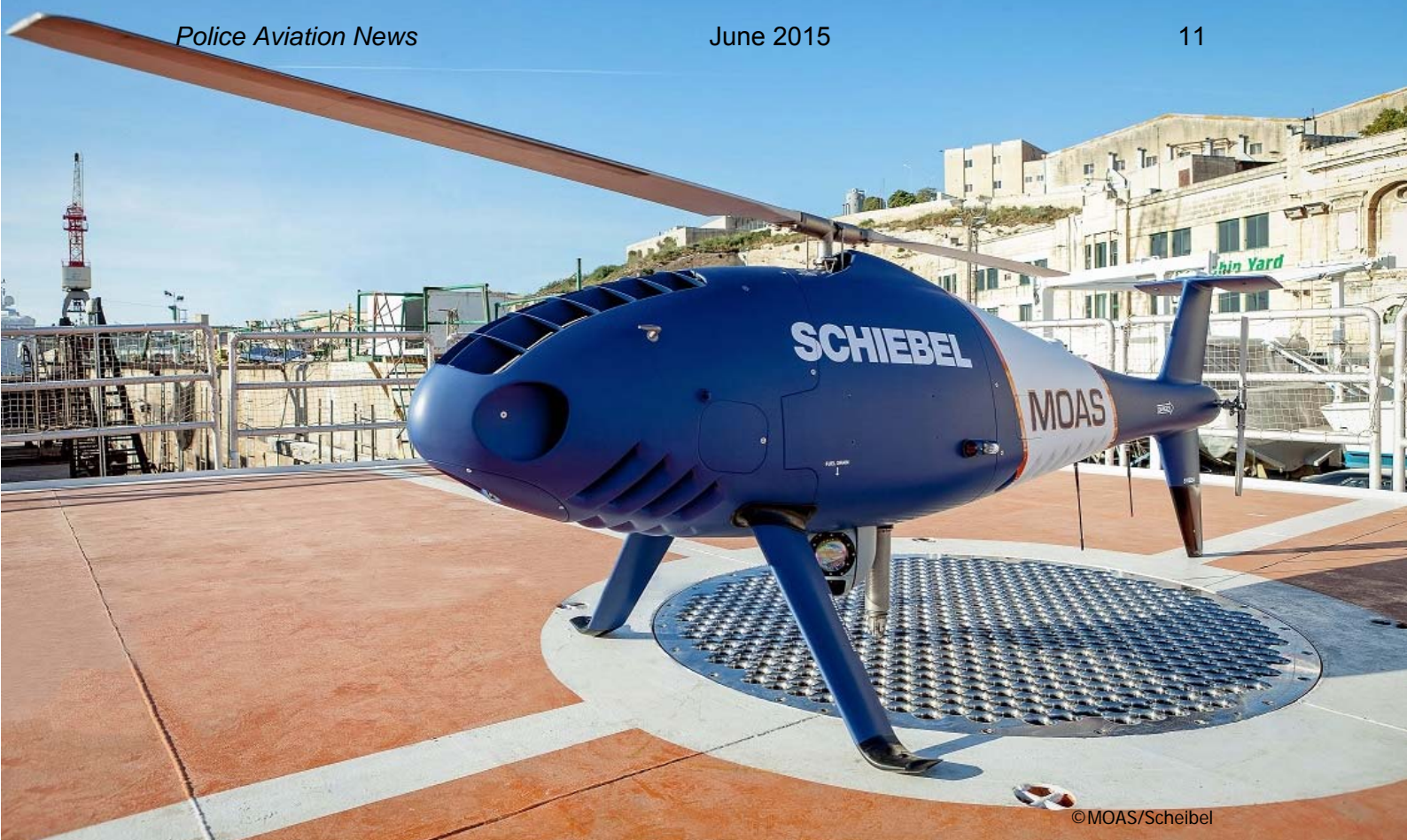
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MEDITERRANEAN: The significant loss of life off north Africa reported last month has caused a stir in high places and all sorts of plans are being hatched to try and stem the flow of migrants. The first moves have involved improving the previously scaled back rescue efforts – although that is now universally popular with those that think the number of migrants will increase in proportion with their chances of being rescued from their often unseaworthy craft.

Another move is to seek out and destroy the traffickers who are charging for the journeys in the first place and then abandoning their human charges to their fate. So that is I guess a nice old Empire style 'Gunboat' policy so it will suit a few of the nations involved!

Meanwhile there is news that Schiebel has succeeded in placing two of their unmanned CAMCOPTER® S-100's in a good high profile spot on the back of a charity financed ship undertaking rescues.

MOAS (Migrant Offshore Aid Station), a registered non-profit organization based in Malta, owns a 40-metre-long vessel named Phoenix that's used for the rescue of refugees at sea. Stationed aboard this ship, the CAMCOPTER® S-100 will serve to considerably extend the reach of the Phoenix beyond horizon. With the aid of this helicopter drone, refugee boats can be located by day and night, even in rough sea conditions and at a long distance away. The L3 Wescam MX-10 camera of the S-100 delivers daylight and infrared video in real time to the MOAS team, enabling them to immediately assess the situation and provide the help necessary as well as to coordinate all actions in cooperation with other rescue and aid authorities throughout the Mediterranean area.

During the entire mission the CAMCOPTER® S-100 will be operated and maintained by Schiebel staff.

MOAS was able to rescue 2,800 people in only 60 days last year, but over 3,400 refugees lost their lives in their attempts to reach Europe in 2014. This year already more than 1,800 people are believed to have died trying to cross the Mediterranean – a sharp increase on last year. Hans Georg Schiebel, Chairman and Owner of Schiebel, "With our combined efforts and the experience gained from the last mission, we will save even more lives this year. We all at Schiebel are very proud and excited to support MOAS and its important rescue mission."



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Last month the Phoenix sailed on its life saving missions from the Grand Harbour of Valetta in Malta equipped for the first time with the S-100s and with the medical support of "Medecins Sans Frontieres - Doctors without Borders." [Schiebel]

Ed: The tone of the Schiebel press release suggests that the S-100s might be gifts to the cause but the company simply could not afford such largesse. At this year's SAR Conference in Brighton [UK] a former commander of the Armed Forces of Malta, ex-Brigadier Martin Xuereb, now a Director of MOAS stated that their operational costs for having the two Schiebel S100 was 50% of their monthly costs of €600,000. Whatever the cost MOAS believe that they are important to them and Xuereb stated categorically "I personally feel their role in SAR in the future will be critical"

Meanwhile, under some pressure to take part in the new rescue efforts, the British sent a helicopter carrier into the waters off Libya.

Images from the activities of H.M.S. Bulwark a helicopter and landing craft carrier show 369 would be migrants crammed into a heavily overcrowded wooden hulled boat which was located in the waters just north of Libya. They were led to safety



©[MoD ©Crown Copyright]



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from their stricken boat to Landing craft from the Bulwark, which can be seen here in the background.

All eight of the specialist landing craft have been converted into rescue boats, loaded with lifejackets, medical facilities and emergency supplies for this search and rescue mission – codenamed ‘Operation WEALD’.

On this day [May 28] a total of five ‘Safety of Life at Sea’ or SOLAS incidents was conducted concurrently by UK, Italian, German and Irish naval units operating together in the area.

[MoD ©Crown Copyright]

Ed: The UK was one of the nations set against rescues on the grounds that the ready availability of the safety vessels encouraged attempts to cross the far from placid waters of the Mediterranean. They lost that round of opinion but are now nominally seeking out the human traffickers as a reason for their reengagement.

UNITED KINGDOM

COASTGUARD: The Bristow UK SAR fleet of Sikorsky S92s reached the expected complement of eleven last month. This meets the plan for two airframes allocated to each of five bases, and a further aircraft as a maintenance spare. The current ten year contract was announced in March 2013 and the bases are coming on stream gradually, with the planned roll-out as follows.



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Humberside went live April 1, 2015 replacing Westland Sea Kings of the Royal Air Force 202 Squadron C Flight at RAF Leconfield

Caernarfon [Wales] will follow in July, replacing Westland Sea Kings of the Royal Air Force 22 Squadron at RAF Valley

Newquay Cornwall Airport in the South West is scheduled for the start of 2016 replacing Westland Sea Kings of the Royal Navy 771 Squadron at Culdrose

A traditional topping off ceremony took place on May 19 to mark the ongoing construction of the new search and rescue (SAR) helicopter base at Newquay. The base is one of a number of new build facilities being developed by Bristow, with its infrastructure delivery partner Balfour Beatty, at commercial airports around the UK. As the main contractor, Balfour Beatty is outsourcing various aspects of the building works to local contractors in the communities in which the bases are being established. At the forefront of sustainability, the bases will include a raft of environmental technologies, including rainwater harvesting systems.

The topping out ceremony was attended by representatives of Newquay Cornwall Airport, Balfour Beatty and Bristow Helicopters Ltd.

Sumburgh, currently operating under the Gap SAR contract, will move over to the new contract in April 2017 and similarly Stornoway will move over to the new "UK SAR" contract in July of the same year.

Bristow will ultimately operate eleven Sikorsky S92s and eleven AgustaWestland AW189s on the UK SAR contract. Meanwhile Bristow has to contend with delays the with the introduction of the AW189 has resulted in the need for a contingency plan that involves the temporary use of alternative aircraft at AW189 bases. That contingency plan takes the form of AW139s provided by AgustaWestland and additional Sikorsky S92s as required.

The first two AW189 aircraft have been delivered and the third is currently undergoing acceptance. Five more aircraft are in various stages of final assembly at Yeovil. [HeliHub]

NORTHERN IRELAND: Northern Ireland Civil Air Patrol (NICAP) has celebrated its 100th mission with a life saving international rescue operation.

Following a request from the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) on April 29, NICAP deployed one of its unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV) together with a team of three search specialists to Newtownards airfield, south east of Belfast, to search for a missing female aged 51 years.

The PSNI requested the NICAP team to search the perimeter of the airfield in an area containing gorse bushes, gullies and mud banks in challenging weather conditions - wind gusting to 30 knots and heavy showers. With the NICAP UAV airborne in the search area the operation was joined by 'recue 116' a Sikorsky S92 SAR helicopter belonging to the Irish Coast Guard.

On the advice of the HM Coastguard Operations Centre at Belfast the NICAP team used a marine band radio to communicate with the SAR helicopter, to establish search areas and to guarantee de-confliction between the two aircraft. After a search lasting for over four hours there was no sign of the missing person and both the SAR helicopter and the NICAP team were stood down. Throughout the search HM Coastguard, Rescue 116 and the team from NICAP communicated by VHF radio and by mobile telephone.

Later information led to the search area being moved 20 miles south after it was learned that the missing female had boarded a ferry which runs between Portaferry and Strangford at the seaward entrance to Strangford Lough. While the NICAP team was preparing the aircraft for a new search Coastguards' located the missing female in a wooded area.

Throughout this protracted and successful search there was excellent cooperation between the PSNI, HM Coastguard, Rescue 116, NICAP, an Association of Lowland Search and Rescue (ALSAR) rescue team and a team from the Search and Rescue Dog Association (SARDA). [NICAP]

Ed: Details of this milestone mission formed part of a presentation by Paul Trimble to last month's PAVCon Police Aviation Conference in Breda, Netherlands. It might seem a rela-

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tively unimportant subject but suffice to say that even though Paul was talking on UAVs again as the last presentation on Day 2 of the event – The Graveyard Spot – he had a full and attentive audience. These little aircraft are finally being taken seriously.

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INDUSTRY

CarteNav Solutions Inc. Based in Canada has announced the graduation of their 100th student from their specialised training courses.

Founded in 2002, CarteNav quickly established itself as an industry leader in the development of sensor and mission management software solutions for government, military, and commercial clients around the world.

To help get the best use out of the software, CarteNav created a range of training courses to suit the varying needs and the diverse missions of their customers.

"With over 150 software installations in 17 countries on more than 25 different platforms, from aircraft and ships to land vehicles, we needed to come up with a way of helping each customer get the most from their investment" said Will Taylor, CarteNav's chief instructor.

CarteNav began offering formal training courses in 2012 to coincide with the release of their COTS product, AIMS-HD.

The **TEKEVER group** is building up an unmanned aerial system program in the Azores islands (Portugal) to perform multiple types of near shore and maritime missions, including

search and rescue, surveillance, illegal fishing, maritime patrol and pollution detection, among others. The Azores islands, because of their geography and location, are a strategic area to test and improve the usage of this type of technology to support missions that are otherwise extremely costly and complex to perform.

A six-month-long trial using a variety of TEKEVER platforms and sensor combinations is evaluating the effectiveness of the different systems for the extreme scenarios that can be found in the islands. The program is a result from the close cooperation between TEKEVER and the Azorean Government.

The trials began in April and the company is currently studying the possibility of a permanent presence in the archipelago.

The AR3 Net Ray is one of the systems being trialled. Because of its endurance of up to 10h, this UAS is a good fit to support many of the maritime missions being carried out.

Completion and refurbishment specialist **Flying Colours** is to fit three of the new Bombardier Challenger 650 aircraft into dedicated medevac configuration.

The design engineering is already under way at the Flying Colours facility in St Louis where the specialist in-house team is liaising with all involved parties to match the exact specifications of the complex interior.

"This is a collaborative project as we are working through the Bombardier team to liaise with their customer on the design, whilst at the same time we are coordinating with a specialist medical equipment provider who will supply the medical monuments," said Sean Gillespie, VP Flying Colours.

The first aircraft will enter service in Q4 of 2016 as the customer replaces older aircraft models with the newly equipped models. [FC]

Ed: This statement mentions just the 'European customer' but I guess we can assume that it is REGA as announced earlier.

The **British Airline Pilots Association** [BALPA] has called for tougher drone laws. They claim that a majority of British people think there should be stricter rules on the qualifications needed to fly a drone in urban areas, and half think there should be prison sentences for those flying drones in a way that endangers an aircraft, according to a new survey presented at a Drone Safety Summit.

Vector Aerospace the independent provider of aviation maintenance, repair and overhaul has opened its new MRO facility in Singapore and signed an MOU with Republic Polytechnic.

The new 5,200m2 facility will be a Pratt & Whitney Canada PW150 Designated Overhaul Facility equipped with full engine overhaul and test capability and so primarily aimed at regional operators of the Bombardier Q400 regional turboprop.



©Vector Aerospace

Airbox, the Oxford UK based specialist navigation and mission system developer, has sold its PANDA system to Bristow Helicopters Limited to support its UK SAR operations and Gap SAR bases in Sumburgh and Stornoway. The company will provide its mission visualisation platform to all of Bristow Helicopter's SAR aircraft and bases enabling efficient and safe flight and route planning and execution.

Bristow Helicopters began operation of the UK search and rescue helicopter service on behalf of HM Coastguard on 1 April 2015, at Humberside and Inverness, and will go-live at the remaining eight bases in a phased approach until July 2017. Gap SAR bases at Sumburgh and Stornoway have been live since summer 2013.

The software has been designed to improve a pilot's knowledge of their environment whether at the planning, operational or debrief phase of a mission. Among the innovations available within the PANDA package are power line and obstacle avoidance, advanced fuel planning and calculations to display areas of operation.

The company is based at Grove Technology Park, Oxfordshire, England, on a former World War II USAF base and has an in-house software development and design studio, with manufacturing partnerships with several Far Eastern electronics specialists.

They are barely in service but the apparent threat presented by unmanned craft is already causing disquiet among elements of the security industries and even well informed members of the public. There have been instances of craft making uninvited appearances at high profile locations and events – fortunately these have not been destructive episodes.

Already a number of products have been proposed to disable these craft before they can undertake any real attacks. Some are fairly basic and unsophisticated, simply physical means of disablement.

The latest offering is in another league of sophistication and is the result of three British companies coming together to address the threat.

The three are Blighter Surveillance Systems (developers of electronic-scanning radar target detection), Chess Dynamics (electro-optic tracking and classification experts) and Enterprise Control Systems (who supply radio frequency disruption to the system). They have joined forces to combat growing threat of micro, mini and larger unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV) or drones with an anti-UAV Defence System (AUDS) designed to detect, track, classify and disrupt UAVs at ranges of up to 8km.

The **Anti-UAV Defence System** (AUDS) integrates the Blighter A400 Series Ku band electronic scanning air security radar, Chess Dynamics' stabilised electro-optic director, in-



frared and daylight cameras and target tracking software, and a directional radio frequency (RF) inhibitor/jammer system from ECS to detect, track, classify, disrupt and neutralise UAVs at ranges of up to 8km. The AUDS system is even effective against so-called Group 1 micro UAVs at ranges of up to 2km and Group 1 mini UAVs at ranges of several kms.

The AUDS technology has been extensively tested in South Korea along the 250km demilitarised zone (DMZ), where Blighter radars have been deployed for some years. In March 2015, the AUDS team took part in multi-supplier French Government trials in Captieux, France, where its counter UAV system proved highly successful in detecting and neutralising a variety of fixed and rotary wing micro, compact and standard UAVs. And last month the system performed well in UK Government sponsored counter UAV trials in Scotland.



After years of discussion India has cleared the way for the purchase of almost 200 Russian helicopters, signalling a return of the robust Russia-India defence collaboration.

Last month the Indian defence acquisition committee (DAC) cleared the purchase of a significant number of **Kamov Ka-226T** helicopters by JSC. According to the Russian sourced report the Kamov was found more suitable for purpose than its nearest competitor from Airbus Helicopters. The type will ultimately replace in production and service the Hindustan models based upon the Sud Alouette and join the Mil Mi-17 in local Indian production.

The Ka-226T is a multipurpose helicopter with coaxial rotors and two Arrius 2G1 turboshaft engines by the French Turbomeca. Two versions have been developed: patrol helicopters and those for medical use. This helicopter has the necessary headroom to maneuver even with one engine running.

India issued a tender for supply of 197 helicopters of foreign origin in 2009. The competition narrowed down to two contenders - JSC 'Kamov' with Ka-226T and the Airbus 'Eurocopter' AS550 C3 Fennec. The tender's value was around \$600M. [RIA Novosti]



©Russian Helicopters

Becker Avionics International and Telegenix Inc., have announced a partnership in the field of voice communication systems for Air Traffic Control (ATC) operations. On certain product lines, the two companies will combine their capabilities and expertise in mission critical systems in order to provide the ATC industry with turnkey voice communication solutions.

This cooperative agreement between the two companies is marked by the joint introduction of the PROCOM 1700 Digital Voice Communication Switch. The PROCOM 1700 is designed for easy set-up and installation in combination with Becker's latest digital ground-to-

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<p>surveillance </p>	<p>inhibition </p>	<p>aerospace </p>			

air radios and other legacy ATC products, and is equipped with an intuitive, user-friendly Graphical User Interface (GUI). This unique design with its large, color touch screen and multi-channel record-ability constitutes a cost effective and reliable solution for modern high-speed ATC communications.

RSG Products, Inc., a **Rotorcraft Services Group** company has received approval from Brazil's National Civil Aviation Agency (ANAC), of its high performance air conditioning system for the Airbus AS365 series helicopter. The 38,000 BTU high capacity vapour cycle air-conditioning system is FAA STC/PMA approved for the Airbus Helicopters models SA-365N, SA-365N1, AS-365N2 and AS-365N3 to include the "e" designation.

RSG Products is the holder of an FAA PMA authority that designs, manufactures and distributes air conditioning and video camera systems for various helicopter models, as well as Garmin G500H Installation kits. Specialty kitting and PMA approval on STC kits can be obtained through our facility along with our extensive list of capabilities through in-house processes and our expansive approved vendor network. RSG Products' ability to report on Key Performance Indicators help us control on time deliveries and stock the necessary components for great customer support.



©PAR—Heli-Expo



A strange press release came out of last month's HeliRussia 2015. The release was issued on behalf of Transas Aviation (TASS) a Russian company and stated that 'Leading global manufacturers, including Bell, Airbus Helicopters and Sikorsky, equip their helicopters with searchlights produced by a Russian company, Transas Aviation (TAV).'

Ed: This gives out a mixed message to a potentially lucrative Western market that would prefer to think they are not buying Russian but buying the nearly identical product under the Revue Thommen brand.

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ACCIDENTS & INCIDENTS

28 April 2015 Airbus Helicopters EC135T2 N139AM Air ambulance of Airlift Northwest operated by Air Methods, Corp. Crew were en route from referring hospital to receiving hospital when a low fuel caution light illuminated. The decision was made to divert to an airport where an uneventful precautionary landing took place. It was discovered that the fuel probe was faulty and the parts/systems were repaired.

1 May 2015 Eurocopter AS365 Cougar Mexican Military helicopter surveilling car-loads of gunmen on a road between the towns of Casimiro Castillo and Villa Purificacion came under gunfire from the terrorist/cartel forces during civil unrest which damaged the tail Fenestron and forced the helicopter down. The Cougar was carrying 18 security forces, three soldiers were reported killed, ten soldiers and two federal police officers injured and three soldiers missing in the incident,

5 May 2015 Eurocopter BK117 South African Police. The helicopter was involved in a landing incident at the Grand Central Airport in Midrand. No injuries were reported. The aircraft was undertaking a routine post-maintenance test flight at the time. The pilot and other occupants were unhurt and the aircraft was recovered to the Airbus Helicopters hangar. [Media/AH]

13 May 2015 Eurocopter AS365N2 G-NHAA. Air ambulance of Great North Air Ambulance. Suffered an engine problem at the James Cook University Hospital, Middlesbrough, and grounded awaiting an engine change. [Media]

19 May 2015 MD500E MSP-012. Costa Rica Ministry of Public Security. Reported to have crashed in the mountains of Talamanca, Costa Rica, during bad weather. There were reported to be five persons on board at the time and all survived. [Media]

FLIGHT SAFETY

On September 16, 2013 a Garlick Bell UH-1B, N204UH, experienced a tailboom separation while logging in heavily wooded terrain about 3 miles east of Detroit, Oregon. The pilot, who was the sole occupant on board, was killed. The helicopter sustained substantial damage to the tailboom, main rotor system, and fuselage.

Witnesses reported that when the helicopter was just above the trees, they either observed or heard the load of logs release early and impact the ground hard. After looking up, they observed the helicopter's fuselage separate from the tailboom; both descending through the trees. The fuselage impacted the ground inverted and the tailboom came to rest about 140 feet away.¹

Many UH-1 operators are already aware that the tailboom fittings in UH-1 helicopters can be fractured after years of service and many focused on this as the cause.

A tail boom motion detector was proposed and emerged as the BART system, to initially install into UH-1B helicopters with a tailboom plug. Currently three of the systems have been installed and approved through the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) 337 Major Repair and Alteration.

The system was put to the test on February 14, 2015 when a logging pilot in the Northwest was flying a UH-1B helicopter with the BART tailboom motion detection system installed. While flying a load of logs the pilot heard a loud bang and immediately noticed the master caution light was on and the caution panel was illuminated with the "TAILBOOM" light.

The pilot immediately removed all left pedal input, released the load, and landed with as minimal left pedal as possible – without incident.

The upper LH tailboom fitting was found cracked as well as the sheet metal former on the upper LH tailboom bulkhead. Two pilots who flew this helicopter and checked the fitting closely prior to this flight with flashlights did not see any visible cracking or rivets smoking that would have indicated a problem.

PEOPLE

Russ Woolford the former Deputy Unit Executive Officer with the Essex police air support unit in Chelmsford is now a Regional Manager with the National police Air Service. He is responsible for the South West Region. [L1]

The Billy Deacon SAR Memorial Trophy was presented at the Air League's Annual Awards Ceremony at St James Palace, on Tuesday 05th May 2015 by HRH Prince Philip Duke of Edinburgh.

Sponsored by Bristow Helicopters Ltd and Breitling UK, the Trophy has been established to further the memory of Mr Billy Deacon who was tragically lost while carrying out his duty as winchman with the Maritime and Coastguard Agency Search and Rescue helicopter based at Sumburgh in the Shetland Isles in 1997.

The 2015 award has been made to Sergeant Neil Clements who on November 5 2014 was the winchman on board RESCUE 131, the duty search and rescue helicopter based at RAF Boulmer, which was scrambled to rescue a woman who was in distress in rough seas off Tynemouth Pier. Although three RNLI lifeboats and HM Coastguard staff were already at the scene, the treacherous sea conditions had prevented them from rescuing the woman, who had been torn from the grip of a rescuer by the sheer force of the waves.

Once on scene, the crew located the woman who was helpless amongst powerful waves that were battering heavily against the pier and the force of which had stripped her of her clothing. Sergeant Clements unhesitatingly volunteered to be winched into the heavy seas. Whilst attached to the helicopter's winch cable, he used his full strength to try to fight through the waves to reach the woman, but was beaten back repeatedly and forcibly submerged several times by a succession of massive waves, which were moving unpredictably. Just as he managed to grasp her, a particularly severe, rogue wave wrenched her from his grasp and submerged him yet again. At this point, the woman was lost from view and Sergeant Clements was winched back on board the helicopter to recover from the severe exertions he had undertaken.

Sergeant Clements then checked his rescue equipment while the crew considered their options. Despite the prospect of being dashed against the pier by large waves or succumbing to immersion in the raging torrent, he again willingly volunteered to enter the treacherous water to reach the woman. Assisted by on-shore observers, the crew successfully located the woman and Sergeant Clements was winched down into the crashing waves. He secured a solid grip on the woman, but the heavy seas prevented him from securing her into the rescue stop, this being the normal procedure before winching a casualty on board. The precariousness of their condition left him with only one option, and therefore, using every ounce of strength, he redoubled his grip on the woman and indicated to his crew to lift and move them into calmer water.

During this manoeuvre, he bore her full weight solely using his own strength, until they were lowered into calmer waters where he secured the woman safely before being winched on board the helicopter. Despite his fatigue, Sergeant Clements immediately gave medical directions to his inexperienced radar operator, who was taking part in his very first rescue. En-route to Newcastle's Royal Victoria Infirmary, Clements provided emergency CPR and medical care of the highest calibre and this included the protracted patient transfer between the rooftop helipad and the Infirmary's accident and emergency department.

Sergeant Clements not only placed himself at considerable personal risk during the first rescue attempt, but did so a second time to rescue a helpless woman. His courageous actions and the medical care he delivered undoubtedly saved her life until she was transferred to the Newcastle Royal Infirmary for continued specialist care. It is with deep regret that we must inform that the woman sadly passed away some days later after succumbing to her ordeal that fateful day. Sergeant Clements' actions were in the highest traditions of the Royal Air Force and he displayed exceptional personal bravery, determination and life-saving skills.



MOVE ALONG THERE

I did wonder why it seemed so difficult to get stories from NPAS but now it seems that a little known publication called the Press Gazette may have stumbled on the reason why the West Yorkshire Police, operators of NPAS, are so secretive.

The Gazette claims that an inordinate amount of money is being spent on police Press Departments that seem to do their best to withhold the news rather than proactively promote it. The Metropolitan Police employs more than 100 communications staff and has an annual budget of more than £10M, Press Gazette research found that its series of Freedom of Information [FoI] requests were mostly answered by the 45 forces asked for information. Thirty-eight responded, four did not provide answers, two have declared themselves exempt from answering under the same FoI rules that the others answered under! One did not answer the question properly.

West Yorkshire Police were among those in the unhelpful mode.

I guess I should not be surprised, 20 years ago I recently out of the police when one of the same Public Information department refused to answer basic police history research questions. I called them at the time and spoke to a lady who told me that West Yorkshire Police were withholding the information in case there was a profit in it for me. Oddly that person was clearly being paid at the time but that does not seem to have been judged as the same thing! Nothing changes it seems.

THAT IS GOOD NEWS

Now we know why Bell Helicopters get great reviews for their spares supply efforts. In a report on the air support unit serving Florence County South Carolina it was stated that FCSO had acquired a second Bell OH-58A from the Lake City Police Department, under the 1033 program and in reviewing the air support capability operated on a shoe string budget an official was quoted as saying....

"The beauty of what's happened with us is we have three pilots, one of which can take care of all the maintenance, [and we] have Raptor 2; it's flyable if we need it, but it's for the future for parts. The blades on both are brand new and you don't have to replace blades for 20 years so the biggest expense right now is going to be fuel."

So that's what the other manufacturers have been doing wrong!

Some days after suffering the effects of a number of earthquakes that all but obliterated many buildings in the country, Nepal's government denied entry to three British military helicopters sent to help the earthquake relief effort because of fears they could damage buildings when landing.

A foreign ministry spokesman said the Chinook helicopters, which arrived in New Delhi last week en route to the quake-hit country, were too big to land and were likely to scatter debris from broken windows and roofs with their rotor downwash.

The April 25 earthquake killed more than 8,000 people and left thousands more homeless and in desperate need of food, clean water and shelter. Getting relief to the worst-hit villages is a huge challenge because many are in remote mountainous terrain that is only accessible by helicopter or on foot.

India, China and the United States have sent helicopters and are helping take food, water and tents to affected communities. But there has been criticism of the US decision to send large Osprey helicopters, which experts say are ill-suited to Nepal's mountainous terrain.

Local media reported that the down-draft from an Osprey relief flight blew the roof off a small building in a quake-hit village as it delivered aid.





RECENT EVENTS

SAR CONFERENCE: Last month the SAR Conference was held in the Hilton Metropole on the seafront at Brighton, Sussex.

An event long associated with the Shephard Group, Tangent Link now delivers the conference and attracts a wide range of exhibitors to present upon, discuss and Network rescue for the international SAR community.

This important event, coinciding with major changes in SAR developments in the UK, was organised in co-operation with the MCA - Maritime Coastguard Agency & HM Coastguard and chaired by the familiar figure of Rear Admiral Terry Loughran CB FRAeS Royal Navy. The two day event reflected the ongoing moves from military SAR to civil in the UK but also drew upon operations in Australia, Cyprus, the Mediterranean Sea, Malaysia, Pakistan and the USA.

The event followed the pretty much standard aviation conference format where a team of perhaps ten people bring together threads of the conference in concert. As is common the venue was expensive and that affects the organisers who are obliged to pass on those costs to the exhibitors. For the delegates there are significant costs to attend and for all there are expensive travel, accommodation and parking rates. The sea-front Hilton Metropole Hotel Car Park was posting high room rates but even those that shunned them faced high car parking rates for the day.

The attendee list of 150 was impressive but clearly not all were present and many of those were not permitted to attend the conference unless paying the additional per person charge on top of the exhibitor fee reportedly commencing at about £3,000.



Presentation subject matter is subjective to the individual in the audience and can come as a surprise to even the most experienced of planners of such events. It is all too easy to get the mix wrong with too many commercial speakers and even barely intelligible presenters on key subjects. It is not always easy to hear the speaker first. Even the most stirring video cannot rescue a bad presentation.

On the second day [Wednesday 13 May] there was a demonstration off the beach by an AgustaWestland AW139 helicopter G-SARD in cooperation with this Brighton based RNLI Atlantic 85 Rigid Inflatable Boat [RIB] B-852, Random Harvest and 16-01 a Tamar Class boat Peter & Lesley Jane Nicholson.

The event attracted some two dozen exhibitors and sponsors [not all of whom had a stand] including such as Airborne Systems; Biardo Survival Suits; Cobham; Keela International; AgustaWestland; Vislink; CHC Helicopter; HR Smith; Adams Aviation Supply; Axnes Aviation; Sentient Vision Systems; RDDS; Honeywell; Trakka; Maritime Coastguard Agency and Bristow. <http://tangentlink.com>

Images this and facing page: The flight demonstration on the afternoon of day 2 drew the delegates and exhibitors out into the sunshine bathing Brighton to join the enthralled holiday makers on the crowded shingle beach of Brighton. ©PAR

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POLICE AVIATION CONFERENCE

This event was held at Breda International Airport, Breda, Netherlands on 26-27 May and is the subject of a separate report.

DIARY

2-3 June 2015 The Commercial UAV Show Middle East Dubai International Convention and Exhibition Centre, UAE Operated by Terrapinn Holdings Ltd, Welken House, 10-11 Charterhouse Square, London, EC1M 6EH, UK Tel: +44 20 7608 7030 enquiry@terrapinn.com www.terrapinn.com

10-12 June 2015 Brussels. The EASA-FAA International Aviation Safety Conference will be held in Brussels. It will bring together over 400 senior aviation professionals from regulators, manufacturers, airlines and associations from all world regions. The EASA-FAA conference is probably the most well established event to discuss global aviation safety issues with regulators and industry. From this perspective it is a unique aviation safety conference. **Crowne Plaza Brussels - Le Palace**, Rue Gineste 3, Brussels, 1210, Belgium Cost of attending 550Euro. events@easa.europa.eu. Web: www.crowneplaza.com/hotels/de/de/brussels/brube/hoteldetail

15-21 June 2015 The 51st International Paris Air Show will be held at Le Bourget Exhibition Centre a few kilometres from Paris. The show of the year and attracting all the primary producers and customers. It tends to be too large for the airborne emergency services class of operator – except perhaps SAR but a number are going to be there. Certainly worth a long day trip.

23-25 June 2015 2nd UAS Commercialization Industry Conference, Washington DC, USA. The 2nd UAS Commercialization Industry Conference is posted as the leading cross industry forum, bringing together all the necessary stakeholders such as UAS adopters, government officials, industry partners and expert academia. These experts will discuss their current trials, future requirements, extensive capabilities, and forthcoming plans to leverage Unmanned Aerial Systems in commercial markets. For more information download the agenda here <http://bit.ly/1LRtANg>

30 June 1 July 2015 The Commercial UAV Show Asia, Suntec Singapore Convention & Exhibition Centre, Singapore. More than 50 industry leaders have been lined up to present their successful case studies, provide technical exposure and experiences in applying unmanned technology. Operated by Terrapinn Holdings Ltd, Welken House, 10-11 Charterhouse Square, London, EC1M 6EH, UK Tel: +44 20 7608 7030 enquiry@terrapinn.com www.terrapinn.com

12 July 2015 North Weald Airfield Community Day

15-18 July 2015 ALEA Annual Conference & Exposition. Houston, Texas www.alea.org

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AND FINALLY

A new product launched at the 2015 SAR Conference is the SATcase, a joining together of the functionality of the smartphone and the reach of a satellite phone.

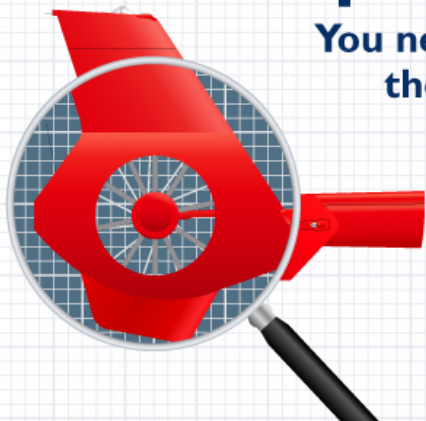
Designed for persons likely to operate out of cell phone coverage the £699 device allows the user to access such as the address book in their cell phone and yet access the capabilities of satellite. The cellphone fits into the SATcase which acts like a cradle and adds the advanced functionality. SATcase also acts as a stand alone rescue device with push button SOS functions, a laser and a strobe light incorporated in the design but offering less functionality.

Ed: It all seems very useful and reasonably priced if you are likely to place yourself in danger and out of reach of cell phone coverage. It, like many smartphone devices, does have hidden costs like the subscription and cost of the satellite access and the ever changing interoperability of phones.

You are likely to find that your model of phone no longer fits the cradle or its plug design and therefore you quickly lose the very functionality that the device adds to your safety. An adapter might resolve that problem but may not be acceptable.



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