

# Police Aviation News

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Issue 301

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## New home at Cambridge

# LAW ENFORCEMENT

## EUROPE

**PAvCon Europe:** Due to the cancellation of a conventional face-to-face PAVCon Europe this year, Police Aviation Research is teaming up with the Airborne Public Safety Association (APSA) to conduct a PAVCon branded virtual training event. PAVCon Europe 2021 will be conducted on Monday, June 7th, 10:00 am - 4:00 pm Central European Time (CET), as a live, interactive webinar consisting of five distinct 1-hour sessions instructed by notable leaders in police aviation including Harald, Brink, Luc Stremersch, Haiko Kroeze, David Howell, Joseba Mendizabal and Bryan Smith.



You do not need to be a member of APSA, this event will open to all, but registration is required to receive the log-in information. The agenda, registration link, and additional information [can be found here](#) on the APSA website. Please join us for this truly international event focused on European public safety aviation. Access to these links can also be found at [www.pavconeurope.eu](http://www.pavconeurope.eu)

## GERMANY

**FEDERAL POLICE:** Safran Helicopter Engines has signed a Support-By-Hour (SBH®) contract with the German federal police (Bundespolizei), covering their Eurocopter EC120 fleet. This contract formalizes a long-term MRO (Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul) and service agreement supporting a total of 11 Arrius 2F engines. The Bundespolizei currently operates 10 EC120 helicopters for training missions.

This is the second SBH® contract signed with Bundespolizei. First one was signed in July 2012, covering 36 Arrius 2B2 engines powering H135 operated by German police for emergency medical services (EMS) and owned by the federal office of civil protection and disaster assistance (BBK). Bundespolizei operates from 12 bases around Germany.

This new contract will be managed by Safran Helicopter Engines Germany, which supports more than 300 operators flying in Germany, Scandinavia, Central and Eastern Europe, Russia and Central Asia, with almost 2,000 engines.



Bell Textron Inc., announced in the middle of April it has signed teaming agreements with German suppliers to support Bell's industrial participation efforts in Germany. As part of the collaboration, Bell will compete for the upcoming tender for the renewal of the helicopter fleet for the Bundespolizei and will offer the Bell 525.

The industrial collaboration includes:

- Liebherr
- GKN Aerospace
- Solid Aerospace
- PFW
- CEROBEAR GmbH
- Aircraft Philipp, a member of AMAG Group
- Kautex Textron GmbH

These companies represent the German states of Baden Wurttemberg, Bavaria, North-Rhine Westphalia and Rhineland Palatinate. Additionally, Textron's established presence in Germany via its Kautex business offers Bell extended reach into the German market.

**COVER:** The Cambridge Airport base for the air ambulance has had a new hangar built to house their H145 helicopter. The new helicopter hangar for the Anglia Two aircraft is next to the charity's operational base and will mean that the aircraft no longer needs to be towed across the airport at the start and end of each shift, a process which has been taking 15 minutes each way. [EAAA]

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The Bell 525 is the world's first fly-by-wire commercial helicopter and, although designed for oil and gas rather than law enforcement is being put forward as the replacement for the Bundespolizei. The modern day message is that the aircraft was designed with law enforcement and parapublic users in mind and offers the latest enhancements in safety, reliability and operational efficiency making it the most modern aircraft in its class.

Bell has had a long-standing relationship with the German Armed Forces and German Federal Police. In 1956, the German Armed Forces bought the Bell 47 and in 1963 purchased its first UH-1. Variants of the Bell Huey were in service with the Bundesgrenzschutz/Border Guard [the predecessor to Federal Police] during the traumatic 1972 Olympics but all recent purchases have been European. <sup>[Bell/PAR]</sup>

*Editor: When, in the January 2021 edition, PAN first revealed that the Bell 525 had been photographed in an exhibition area Station-Berlin just a stones throw away from police headquarters it is clear that the Bundespolizei hierarchy were wholly unaware of its brief presence. The storyline focussed on a German politician Burkhard Dregger seeing the 525 mockup in Berlin. When Bell issued this press release, they again used images from that photo-shoot although the link appears tenuous.*

## ITALY

**CARABINIERI:** The military based law enforcement agency has signed a contract for the provision of repair and maintenance services of helicopters. The Comando Generale dell'Arma dei Carabinieri in Rome has negotiated the supply of Spare parts and the Service for the in-service fleet of AB412 and A109 helicopters for a 24-month period at a cost of €1.97M.

The contract was arrived at through a negotiated procedure as the company Leonardo S.P.A. of Rome owner of industrial property rights (designer and manufacturer of the helicopters concerned) and is therefore deemed to be exclusively in possession of the necessary technical knowledge to undertake the supply of parts, modifications, improvements, checks etc. on its products; <sup>(TED)</sup>

## NETHERLANDS

POLITIE: The last Dutch Police Leonardo AW139helicopter for upgrade by Babcock arrived at Staver-ton on April 12, 2021 . The aircraft is AW139 PH-PXZ. It continues to be worked on by Babcock to bring it up to the same equipment standard as the rest of the fleet. [MJ]

## SOUTH AFRICA

SAPS: The South African Police Service (SAPS) was left with no aviation support in the Eastern Cape in early March, as all four of its law enforcement helicopters in the province were out of service. One of the aircraft had been out of operation for more than 2.5 years; another had been down for nearly two years.

SAPS officials said one helicopter had been booked for its 12-year inspection in September 2018 and was expected to return to service before the end of March. A second aircraft was involved in a forced landing that damaged its engine in November 2020. And while seven pilots typically operate the police helicopters in the province, only five were available at the time of the grounding events. [TimesLive]

## UNITED KINGDOM

The editor finally got to read through the missing NPAS Strategic Board minutes after putting together the latest edition. By the time West Yorkshire Police FOI Department got them to me time was simply not on my side.

There seems to have been a flurry of meetings, rather than the customary 3 monthly gaps usually put in place for face-to-face meetings. It is all virtual 'Teams' at the moment.

The October meeting discussed the fixed wing. They brought in an independent voice from Cranfield to tell them that he thought that the fixed wing programme had its merits but that he was doubtful there had been enough sharing and publicising of the what the capability is for and whether people were being told what they are getting for a third of the cost in terms of operating costs. The independent voice felt that the fixed wing was being seen as an additional cost. As NPAS had taken the MD 902's out of service this had led to savings and fixed wing is a much smaller cost than the rotary hours it replaced.

Clearly the NPAS desire to keep all things secret has hampered the marketing of fixed wing. I am sure that during all the criticism of NPAS and the fixed wing in PAN mention was made that it replaced the cost-ly to operate 902 fleet. It was unfortunate that the late delivery of the P68R again robbed NPAS of their senses. The inordinate gap between the departure of the 902 fleet in 2017 and the availability of the P68 in 2020 was so substantial that all the positive facts were completely lost on everyone. That added to the woeful performance of the PR team that were either not doing their job or, more likely, were stopped from

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doing it to the best of their ability let everyone lose sight of the good elements. Even though the PR Department has now been culled the secrecy remains. The fixed wing team publicise their activities on social media but there has been little evidence of the aircraft being promoted to any of the aviation media by 'Head Office' in Wakefield.

As for the activity during the period 2017-20, if they had simply leased in a plane, anything, to fly the mission for a year or so they might have made that work a whole lot better. They had a pilot or pilots and had to lease in aircraft occasionally to maintain their licences, but they were not seen to be operating, each instance was seemingly focussed on pilot currency. Flying the mission will always highlight the problems likely to be encountered when operations commence, and it would have been a significant promotional tool for fixed wing.

In the wake of the articles in British newspapers in mid-March [see last month] NPAS were cajoled into defensive action and posted a statement from T/ACC Scott Bisset, Chief Operating Officer of NPAS on their website.

"The aeroplanes are providing support to operational policing as part of a blended fleet which predominantly includes helicopters. They have, and do, operate across both urban and rural areas and whilst based at Doncaster Airport do use other airfields. The aircraft have some limitations which means they cannot operate without restriction at all airfields which was always anticipated. They can however operate in weather conditions which helicopters cannot. Since January 2020 they have been effectively deployed to 1300 incidents supporting police forces across England and Wales.



©Times

"Recently, the NPAS National Board commissioned an independent review of the aeroplanes which identified that the aircraft have excellent endurance which make them particularly suitable for policing large public events, conducting missing people searches and prolonged vehicle pursuits. The costs of operating the aeroplanes are approximately a third of that of a helicopter in comparison.

"NPAS is currently restructuring to meet the revised air support requirements of the Police Service which were recently agreed by the National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC) in Autumn of 2020. NPAS remain fully committed to providing a value for money Service to support Forces in keeping the public safe with the support of PCCs, Chiefs and the Home Office. Future collaboration and partnering options will also be explored.

"The original cost of police aviation prior to the formation of NPAS was in the region of £55m (£65m at today's prices) and NPAS have reduced those costs significantly from the 2012 baseline. NPAS ran an efficiency programme during 2020/21 that has identified further savings. The recent budget set in February 2021 was agreed at £42.5m for England and Wales."

*Editor: I take it that the 'independ3nt review' was the person from Cranfield. No mention there of a failure to promote the product.*

*Critics have pointed out that where the P68R can fly in weather conditions which helicopters cannot the sensors attached to the airframe have to be able to see the ground or there is no point in flying. That knowledge is as old as police aviation. The original plan was that even with localised bad weather the fixed wing could transit [from Doncaster] over the bad weather to areas of clear weather to undertake the police role. With the demonstrated limit in airfield availability at night the aircraft is in danger of being grounded by weather at Doncaster if no viable alternative operating airfield can be identified.*

*The original £55M cost of police aviation prior to the formation of NPAS was for 33 helicopters and two fixed wings flying around 23,000 hours. The operation is now down to half the aircraft, half the number of flying hours costing 50% more for each flying hour and overall costs only 30% less than they might have been. The organisation that once was effectively operated regionally by a sergeant and a handful of constables with part-time oversight by a multi-tasking superintendent now has a rather expensive Assistant Chief Constable in charge. In support he has a string of other senior staff.*

*Of those on the flight line, a constable might cost around £30,000, sergeants £45,000 but when you start adding up the senior ranks at £80,000 for a superintendent and £90,000 for a chief superintendent and well over £100,000 for an ACC that starts to make a significant dent in the finances. Let us not even add the cost of the NPAS National Control Room, a dozen people who are dedicated to aviation incidents.*

*They are another layer of cost upon the 43 police forces control rooms that used to multi-task all types of calls and still have to filter out the aviation calls to send to Wakefield for further consideration even as the life-or-death incident plays out.*

*There are over 30 people involved in the Strategic Board meetings, the majority are managers on high remuneration and generally they are nothing much to do with flying the mission, many have never flown the mission. When gathered together their joint salaries are a million pounds worth. Running any sort of meeting with 30 attendees must be a nightmare. Clearly all decisions, good and bad, lie with them and their forebears.*

In mid-April there was notice of alterations in the registration data for each of the NPAS aircraft fleet on the CAA website. All the aircraft are currently registered to the Police and Crime Commissioner for West Yorkshire [PCC] in Wakefield. Most of the individual aircraft entries were showing 'Potential change of registered ownership in progress' in the 'Registered Owner Details' section. The entries suggest that it may simply be a change from the Police and Crime Commissioner to the Chief Constable for West Yorkshire from May 10.

At the core of the short-lived mystery is an upcoming local election. On May 6 the Office of the PCC is to be disbanded in West Yorkshire, to be replaced by the Mayoral West Yorkshire Combined Authority. The Mayor of West Yorkshire will have a similar role to the Mayors of Greater Manchester, Liverpool City Region, and other regions in England with devolution deals.

The election of the Mayor will change the way police and crime matters are overseen in West Yorkshire, with the Mayor taking on the functions of the Police and Crime Commissioner, supported by an appointed Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime. Mark Burns-Williamson was elected to the post of PCC when the unelected Police Authority was abolished late in 2012. That is the same year as NPAS was formed so Burns-Williamson has been the major political figure throughout. He was re-elected in 2016 but the 2020 election has been held over for a year.

In the local elections of May 6, the current system will change and the office of the £100,000pa West Yorkshire Police and Crime Commissioner will now be redesignated as the office of the new Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime from May 7. It is unclear whether Mark Burns-Williamson will remain in charge. As an elected official he should not but the new authority may select him as an unelected official for the purposes of continuity.

For the record the aircraft fleet of NPAS affected by the ownership change, twenty helicopters and four fixed wings, is currently: -

G-CPAO	EC135P2+ (0843)	Build date	2009
G-CPAS	EC135P2+ (0920)		2010
G-DCPB	EC145 (9265)		2010
G-EMID	EC135P2+ (0524)		2006
G-HEOI	EC135P2+ (0825)		2009
G-MPSA	EC145 (9065)		2006
G-MPSB	EC145 (9068)		2006
G-MPSC	EC145 (9075)		2006
G-NWOI	EC135P2+ (0887)		2010
G-POLA	EC135P2+ (0877)		2010
G-POLB	EC135T2+ (0283)		2004
G-POLC	EC135T2+ (0209)		2002
G-POLD	EC135T2+ (0300)		2003
G-POLF	EC135T2+ (0267)		2003
G-POLG	EC135T2+ (0228)		2002
G-POLH	EC135T2+ (0204)		2002
G-POLJ	EC135T2+ (0333)		2005
G-POLU	EC135T2+ (0215)		2002**
G-SUFK	EC135P2+ (0730)		2008
G-TVHB	EC135P2+ (0874)		2010
G-POLV	P68R (498/R)		2016
G-POLW	P68R (497/R)		2016
G-POLX	P68R (496/R)		2016
G-POLZ	P68R (487/R)		2016



Not all G-POL are operated by NPAS. Several privately owned typed use the sequence. In addition, G-POLS EC135T3 (1220) 2016 owned by Babcock Mission Critical Services is operated for Police Scotland.

\*\*The EC135 G-POLU is registered to NPAS but apparently remains in its post Norwegian Police configuration and therefore unlikely to play any active part in day-to-day police operations.

## UNITED STATES

**NATIONAL:** APSA's second Safety Seminar of 2021, due to be held in Hunt Valley, Maryland, May 11-13, was cancelled last month. It has now transitioned to an on-line event.

The USA is a big country, and the effect of the Pandemic is very different from state to state. In some states, like Florida, they treated it as a purge and barely locked down, at least compared to elsewhere. Restrictions put in place were not widely followed or reinforced, although Miami was fining people. The North East states, California and Minnesota, were different again. The seminar in Maryland had to be cancelled because insufficient people could get there. In contrast the one in Florida during February was well attended.

For now, the annual APSCON event goes ahead in New Orleans in July and planning meetings reflect that. There is an expectation the event will be muted but if the major manufacturers back out in significant numbers the show will have to be cancelled again. This is affected as much by non-US forces as those in-country. Other nations are currently existing behind closed doors, but things may improve in the coming weeks. With a significant sector of the emergency services industry centred in Europe, which is behind with giving vaccine to its population and Australasia which has declared it intends to stay shut for the rest of the year things will be tough. Nonetheless, registration for APSCON has opened via the website.

**NATIONAL:** An Army investigation into why low-flying D.C. National Guard helicopters hovered above Black Lives Matter protesters last June determined that while the use of the helicopters was "reasonable," there were performance shortcomings that day.

Those performance issues have resulted in disciplinary actions against certain individuals, according to Army officials. The investigation has also led the Army to implement changes in procedures for when Guard helicopters can be used for crowd control.



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The D.C. National Guard's investigation was triggered by the outcry that followed the use of medical evacuation helicopters that hovered above Black Lives Matter protesters on the night of June 1, 2020.

Although the National Guard had not been directly involved on the ground in clashes, they were on scene providing support across the various hot spots in the USA. The Secret Service granted a waiver for National Guard medevac helicopters to fly in what is normally restricted airspace above the Mall, and later the streets around the Capital One sports arena in the city's Chinatown district where protesters had gathered.

It was where at least one helicopter hovered above the protesters at a low altitude in an apparent attempt to disperse the crowd.

The report notes that regulations state that medevac helicopters should only be used "within the confines of the medevac mission set," but use of the helicopters was not prohibited by law or policy.

While the actions of those involved were not determined to be misconduct "they were considered to be performance issues" which resulted in the vice chief of staff of the Army taking unspecified administrative "disciplinary actions" against a number of soldiers involved.

Subsequent political sensitivities have resulted a reduction in the wish for the National Guard aircraft to be deployed in future. The matter is not closed and the outcome of further investigations into the incident can be expected in the coming months.

CALIFORNIA: On March 29, Modesto Police Department began a 6-month air support pilot programme. The basis of the trial was to demonstrate evidence that agencies with air support units have enhanced officer and public safety, reduction in crime and higher arrest rates when air support is present. Modesto is located some 80 miles due east of San Francisco and has 240 sworn officers involved in police work, with 92 professional staff to help them look after a population estimated as approximately 201,165 at the 2010 census.

Affordability is the biggest challenge agencies face when determining the ability to support an air unit. Traditional law enforcement aircraft, such as helicopters, can cost millions to purchase, equip and operate. The Dept. of Justice released a study identifying gyroplanes as a cost-effective alternative to helicopters and fix-winged aircraft. In flight, the gyroplane closely mimics a helicopter's flying characteristics making it a good platform for public safety use. Operators reported it can complete approximately 90% of what a helicopter can accomplish for about one tenth of the cost.



MPD has begun leasing the FLIR equipped RAF gyroplane "Owl 5" for a 6-month period to evaluate the effectiveness and operational cost of this resource in support of public safety. Early data shows the gyroplane will cost about \$65.00 an hour to operate versus the cost of operating a helicopter, which can run



over \$750.00 an hour. The Modesto Police Department is located in the Central Valley of Northern California. MPD is claiming to be the first police agency in the USA to operate a gyroplane that is equipped with modern law enforcement equipment, such as a thermal camera, spotlight, police radios and a moving map system. [Facebook/CBS]

*Editor: The City of Modesto, is the county seat and largest city of Stanislaus County, California, and forms part of the San Jose-San Francisco-Oakland Combined area.*

*This autogyro trial is not their first foray into police air support. In 1998 they were flying two OH58's for normal patrol support on an as budget allows basis, having been doing some marijuana flying with drug agents. At that time there was no serious interest in new equipment, but they were talking to local police and sheriff's departments on joint use. Ultimately the helicopter operation was beyond their financial capabilities and they relied on other resources when air support was needed.*

*In December 2015 they were looking at the purchase of a fixed-wing aircraft to bring its air support in-house. The Police Chief was looking at a two-seat light sport aircraft that was equipped with a spotlight and camera to be flown by volunteer pilots and police officers five to six hours a day, five days a week. At the time Modesto received some air support through the Stanislaus County Sheriff's Department [also based in Modesto] without charge.*

*Despite their claims Modesto is not the first 'fully equipped police autogyro' operator in the USA.*

FLORIDA: On April 2, Robinson Helicopter Company delivered R66 Police Helicopter serial number 1025 to Florida's Polk County Sheriff's Office (PCSO).

PCSO's R66 Police helicopter is the first R66 Police helicopter configured with a Wescam MX-10 EO/IR imaging system and an HD infrared sensor, a system widely used by homeland security and law enforcement agencies. In addition to a standard Spectrolab SX-7 Starsun searchlight system, PCSO's R66 includes an optional Aerocomputers UC-6000 digital mapping system, auxiliary fuel tank, impact resistant windshield, Garmin's G500H TXi 1060 flight display with synthetic vision, and NVG-rated instruments for a future NVG certification.

PCSO has other aviation resources and flies on average 1,100 hours each year using several helicopters. Centrally located between Orlando and Tampa, PCSO provides air support for every law enforcement agency in its 2,000 square mile county as well as surrounding counties. It may be that the Robinson has been acquired to replace one of the OH-58 Kiowa's.



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# AIR AMBULANCE

## AUSTRALIA

**WESTERN:** Royal Flying Doctor Service (Western Operations) Board Chair, Mr Sam Walsh AO has announced that two helicopters will join its fleet in an Australian first for the RFDS.

The expansion of service will give RFDS crews greater flexibility and capability to respond quickly to each patient's inter-hospital transfer needs with the most appropriate aircraft and medical care working with the WA Government, WA Country Health Service, the business community and service partners to integrate the helicopters into its operations by the end of the year.

This innovation delivers on the commitments made in our 2020 Strategic Direction: The Next Century to be the State's premier patient retrieval service and keep improving health equity for all Western Australians, regardless of where they live or work. This is viewed as an essential step forward if the RFDS is to meet the increasingly complex health needs of regional, remote and very remote communities.

*Editor: Another source has stated that the helicopters will be variants of the BK117/EC145. The Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS) is made up of seven legal entities operating around Australia, under a federated structure, and working together under a joint venture agreement.*

*Each of the entities are independent, both financially and operationally, with their own Board and management. Each entity is a charity, registered with and regulated by the Australian Charities and Not-for-profit Commission.*

*The entities are: RFDS Central Operations, RFDS Queensland Section, RFDS South Eastern Section, RFDS Victorian Section, RFDS Tasmania, RFDS Western Operations, and the last is RFDS of Australia (located in Canberra).*



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## ICELAND

A prior information notice has been published for the provision of a new helipad in conjunction with the provision of a new elevated helipad the New National University Hospital., the leading hospital in Iceland and the largest workplace for employees in health care. It is funded by the Ministry of Welfare, supervised by the Directorate of Health.

The helipad will be designed for the use of an Agusta Westland AW101 or comparable, and any helicopter lighter and smaller. [TED]

## IRELAND

CORK: The airport and base for emergency services helicopters, has announced the dates of its 10-week closure this autumn to facilitate a complete upgrade of its main runway.

In March, Cork Airport announced an extended closure to all fixed-wing aircraft operations from early September until November while the runway 16/43 is dug up, rebuilt and upgraded. Management has now confirmed the airport will close on September 10 and reopen on November 22 in time for what it is hoped will be a busy Christmas period.

The runway upgrade works are not expected to affect the operation of search and rescue or air ambulance helicopter missions.

The original plan was to undertake the work next year but the effects of the coronavirus on air traffic have left the airport with little reason not to bring the date forward into this year and bring the project forward.

Consultation began last autumn, and an accelerated tender process began in November to have a contractor appointed in May. The main runway, designated 16/34, has been in operation since the airport opened in October 1961. [Irish Examiner]

*Ed: The UK Civil Aviation Authority has noted that two HEMS configured AW109 helicopters owned by Sloane Helicopters and associated with the Cork air ambulance operation in the past, G-HEMZ A109S (22156) and G-SHLS A109E (11789), are expected to move to the Irish register.*

## NEW ZEALAND

WHANGAREI: Despite being embedded in the local population for in excess of thirty years, the Northland Emergency Services Trust (NEST) emergency helicopter is finding it is no longer welcome in the Kensington residential area.

There have been increasing noise complaints about the helicopter operation and there is an expectation that the lease will not be renewed in July 2023.

NEST responded to 1115 callouts last year - its busiest ever. There have been over 300 flights this year. The operation has outgrown the existing base and outstayed the welcome from the locals. An increasing burden of non-emergency work has raised the number of flights to an unacceptable level on the edge of the Denby and Okara areas each with about 13,000 people.

Any move will mean raising something like \$8M to set up the operation on a new location for the only rescue helicopter base north of Auckland on New Zealand's North Island. There is a shortage of suitable sites and an increasingly vocal public is demanding the set-up of any new facility goes through a public consultation process before any new site is selected.

The trust runs three helicopters, at Kensington Park, Western Hills alongside State Highway 1 on land leased from St John and co-located with their ambulance service. [1 News]

*Ed: The idea for NEST was conceived at a public meeting called at the request of the Auckland Surf Club in 1988. It was originally a pure rescue helicopter service for three summer months. It transported its first patient on Tuesday 15 November 1988 and has since carried more than 16,000 in 25 years. The service started with a Bell Jet Ranger, was replaced with a Eurocopter Squirrel in 1991 and in 1994 moved up to operating a twin-engine Eurocopter BK117. In 1997, the first Sikorsky S-76 emergency helicopter joined the fleet and there are currently three in service meeting the needs of Northland.*



## TURKMENISTAN

The Kazan Helicopter Plant of Russian Helicopters delivered the first Ansat helicopter to the Republic of Turkmenistan, as well as the heavy multipurpose Mi-17-1V. Both machines will be used in the new International Burn Centre for medical evacuation of injured and critically ill patients.

The contract for the supply of Ansat and Mi-17-1V helicopters was signed between the Kazan Helicopter Plant and the Turkmenhowayollary agency on March 31, 2020. Both helicopters are supplied to Turkmenistan in a universal version with medical modules, equipment and anti-burn kits provided. The cabins are equipped with air conditioners. Additional fuel tanks are installed on the Mi-17-1V to increase the flight range. It is also equipped with a side boom SLG-300, a landing and search light and an external sling for 4 tons for the transportation of bulky cargo.

The framework of the contract with the Turkmenhowayollary agency, included training for up to 30 pilots and specialist engineering and technical staff at the Kazan Helicopters Aviation Training Centre. The training included theoretical and practical, and access to the new Ansat simulator. [RH]

## UNITED KINGDOM

**CAPITAL:** Centreline AV Limited, a Pula Aviation Services Limited (PASL) business, that acquired the trading name and key assets of Capital Air Ambulance from the Rigby Group has achieved two milestones during April. It has been accredited by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) for the practice of health and social care services in England and it has been awarded a controlled drugs license by the Home Office.

The CQC accreditation acknowledges Capital as providing the same care standards as achieved by the NHS in England and covers diagnostic and screening procedures, transport services, triage and medical advice provided remotely, treatment of disease, and disorder or injury.

Granted by the independent regulator of health and social care in England, the accreditation sets Capital's air ambulance and ground ambulance services ahead by ensuring NHS-equivalent medical care standards are delivered. The separate Home Office license granted to Capital approves the storage and handling procedures of controlled drugs that will be used by Capital's medical teams during air and ground ambulance operations.

**EAST ANGLIA:** The Cambridge Airport base for the air ambulance has had a new hangar built to house their H145 helicopter. The new helicopter hangar for the Anglia Two aircraft is next to the charity's operational base and will mean that the aircraft no longer needs to be towed across the airport at the start and end of each shift, a process which has been taking 15 minutes each way.

Designed by an Austrian company called FabSpace, the new hangar provides everything the charity needs while not being a permanent structure. It has a metal frame which has been securely anchored down by 75cm long pegs, then covered with a very strong, durable fabric. It uses highly sophisticated engineering to provide the functionality and safety of an aircraft hangar while essentially being a very large and sophisticated tent. Aesthetically, it also provides a very modern looking design.

EAAA has been operating one of its yellow helicopters from Cambridge Airport since 2007. In 2016, the charity upgraded and relocated its Cambridge operating base further airside at the airport; however, this did not include moving the aircraft hangar as well.





Now, the charity has realised its long-term ambition of building a designated aircraft hangar next to the Cambridge operating base, providing multiple benefits for the life-saving crews and strengthening the life-saving operation at Cambridge to better serve Cambridgeshire and the surrounding counties.

Due to the future changes coming up at the airport, the hangar had to be movable and able to be dismantled and rebuilt in a different location in the future, if required. The owners, Defence contractor Marshall's, announced last year that there are plans to close and redevelop the airport by 2030 but there is still no set timeline for the closure. EAAA has been operating HEMS from Cambridge Airport since 2007. In 2016, the charity upgraded and relocated its Cambridge operating base further airside at the airport; however, this did not include moving the aircraft hangar as well.

As a major local employer in the aviation and automotive industries the once greenfield site has attracted the inevitable urban creep and the newer neighbours are asking who chose to build a 1930s airport in the middle of 21st century housing. Regardless of the rights and wrongs the public pressure is restricting operations future. Marshalls are looking at alternative airport sites having less impact on the surrounding housing, have rejected Duxford but are considering the former RAF Wyton where the Magpas air ambulance is currently based and Cranfield.

Meanwhile the original Norwich base of East Anglia at Helimed House, Hangar 14, Norwich Airport, has finished its own makeover. [EAAA/PAR]

## New helicopter project in the pipeline?

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**GREAT NORTH:** After the announcement of the retirement of Grahame Pickering MBE last month a new chief executive has been appointed at Great North Air Ambulance.

David Stockton, 49, brings decades of experience in the commercial sector to the air ambulance service that operates across the norther area of England. He previously ran his own businesses, focussing primarily on healthcare and retail in the Teesside and Tyneside areas.

Another new change is that the organisation has a new Chief Pilot, Keith Armatage from Newcastle. Keith has been with the charity for six and a half years following a 25-year career in the military. The promotion comes after GNAAS' former chief pilot Jay Steward stepped down for health reasons, after 10 years of service to the charity.



David Stockton [left] ©GNAA

The 49-year-old left school at 16 and joined the army at 18 where he served for 25 years, being awarded the prestigious Military Cross in 2007 before spending a year flying with the North West Air Ambulance.

**LINCS & NOTTS:** German operator HeliService International have won the contract to operate the service for Lincolnshire & Nottinghamshire Air Ambulance (LNAA) using a Leonardo AW169.

The UK air ambulance market has a total of 43 helicopters flown for EMS work, supplemented by a handful of other aircraft for maintenance cover. Apart from two in Scotland, all UK air ambulance helicopters are charity-funded and operated on an own AOC model or using airframes provided by contractors. The latter include Babcock MCS Onshore, and Specialist Air Services based at Staverton with smaller inputs by Gama Aviation, Multiflight and Sloane Helicopters.

The newcomer, German operator HeliService International Ltd based in Emden have worked with the Swiss air ambulance operator REGA and already operate the AW169 on other contracts. The operator is already on the UK CAA's list of approved European operators who can fly commercially in the UK. Up to the point of the announcement Heli-Service had a registered office address in Glossop Road Sheffield but that has now been changed to C/O Lincs & Notts Air Ambulance Hems Way, Off Sleaford Road Bracebridge Heath Lincoln LN5 2GW. They were established in 1987 as Heli-Service-Mitte. Their EMS services department was sold to ADAC Air Rescue in 1998. Since then, they mainly concentrated on missions in Northern Europe, Antarctica and the Arctic

It is worth noting that HeliService Managing Director Henk Schaecken previously held that position with Specialist Aviation Services, the provider and operator of LNAA's helicopter from the charity's inception. He joined HeliService in August 2019.



The old facility on RAF Waddington ©LNAA



New buildings and hangar across from RAF Waddington ©LNAA

New buildings and new aircraft are a way of burning all the embarrassing bank balances the air ambulance charities accrue from being good at fund raising. The surpluses are there to look after them when a 'rainy day' comes along. As the bank balances grow the charities need to buy a bigger or better helicopter and then they need to buy a field for building on and then build a snazzy new base that saves them yet more money. The fundraising slowing coronavirus that might be classified as the ultimate rainy day they plead poverty and yet more money came in. Fortunately, for many charity air ambulance operations the rainy day has so far not turned out as serious as it might have been.

Chief Executive Officer of the Lincs & Notts Air Ambulance, Karen Jobling, has received the keys to the new air base facility from builders Lindum Construction. The new headquarters based on A15 Sleaford Road, just across the road from the secure site of RAF Waddington where the operation has been based since it was set up.

The new purpose-built operational and support base will see staff, crew, helicopter and Critical Care Cars under one roof for the very first time, providing a unique opportunity for the charity to welcome former patients, schools, volunteers, donors and fundraisers to see how their support really makes a difference. Being located within the RAF station had a significant effect on access for many aspects of promoting the air ambulance.

The crew and helicopter were to move into the new headquarters and airbase in late April, with the staff and fundraising elements hoping to join them in their new offices once Government restrictions have been lifted at the end of June. Meanwhile the work of tidying up and landscaping the building site will continue.

A brand-new helipad situated at the site of the new headquarters has been funded from the HELP Appeal, the only charity in the country dedicated to funding helipads at NHS hospitals and also helps with the funding of helipads at AA bases. The HELP Appeal covered the entire £316,152.55 cost of building the new helipad, which features state-of-the-art lighting to enable LNAA to operate around the clock as the charity carries out more missions through the night.

The donation also funded a helicopter manoeuvring area to ensure that the helicopter is ready for take-off before its next mission.

# UNITED STATES

MAINE: Getting emergency care to critically ill patients in Maine. That has been the goal of LifeFlight of Maine since 1998. The recent purchase of two new helicopters will allow the operator to increase what they do by nearly 8%.

The new aircraft based at Bangor are Leonardo AW109 SP helicopters offering a greater weight carrying capacity, more workspace for patient care, and can fly faster than the earlier aircraft in the fleet.



UTAH: Salt Lake City-based Intermountain is acquiring air ambulance company Classic Air Medical in a bid to better coordinate virtual and physical care for rural patients. Classic operates aircraft in eight western states and has a significant overlap with Intermountain's telehealth footprint.

Financial terms of the deal, which Intermountain expects to close by the summer pending regulatory review, were not disclosed. [Healthcare]



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# FIRE

## GREECE

Erickson Incorporated has announced firefighting contracts in the Hellenic Republic of Greece have been renewed for the 2021 fire season.

During Erickson's 21+ years of support to the Hellenic Fire Service, have seen an impressive list of major achievements that include saving lives; supporting the 2004 Olympics; saving the Ancient Olympia Museum and the adjacent archaeological sites; saving the site of Ancient Messini; and the honour of being recognised by the President of the Hellenic Republic. [Helihub]

## UNITED STATES

Erickson Incorporated has announced three new USFS Firefighting contracts for the upcoming 2021 wild-fire season. The USFS cooperates with CAL FIRE, US Department of Interior agencies Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service and Bureau of Indian Affairs, on aerial firefighting contracts. Two S-64F Air Crane® helicopters to be based in Fresno, CA and Kitchen Creek, CA • One Bell 214ST will be based at Lucky Peak, ID — This is the first Bell 214ST firefighting contract for Erickson.

Erickson has been working for the US Forest Service on firefighting contracts since 1995 and is a global leader in aerial firefighting, with current firefighting contracts in USA, Canada, Australia, Greece, Italy, and South Korea. [Helihub]

# SEARCH & RESCUE

## AUSTRALIA

QUEENSLAND: Golf balls have damaged a State Emergency Service [SES] helicopter performing vital flood recovery services during take-off in two "extremely disappointing" incidents. It caused significant damage to the aircraft, which was transporting supplies to residents isolated by flood water.

Police said golf balls were hurtled toward the SES aircraft during take-off from the football fields at Mungindi on the New South Wales and Queensland border around 9.30am on two mornings in early April. The attacks took place as members of the SES were providing a service to flood ravaged communities in New England area.

VH-IYS Helicopter Eurocopter AS365N2 Dauphin 2 Serial 6477 Register VH-IYS JA6740 G-BVUR used by McDermott Aviation, Fire and Disaster Management Agency FDMA Yokohama City Fire Department ,McAlpine Helicopters. Built 1994. Aircraft history and location

Just a story but the airframe involved was one of the McAlpine prepared firefighting DAUPHINS AS365N2 Dauphin 2 Serial 6477 now registered VH-IYS JA6740 was G-BVUR to FDMA Yokohama City Fire Department via McAlpine Helicopters. Built 1994 out of service 2012 and to Australia in 2014.

## GERMANY

NORTH SEA: EnBW Energie Baden-Württemberg AG based in Karlsruhe, awarded a contract renewal for air-rescue services, including aeronautical and medical crew to rescue injured persons offshore in the Offshore Windparks Hohe See and Albatros in the North Sea.

The contract was awarded in January, for continued service from February 1 to Northern HeliCopter GmbH based in Emden, Germany. The follow-up contract covers a term of four years with the option of two extensions of one year. Located around 100 kilometres north of the island of Borkum, the two offshore wind farms form an overall project with 87 wind turbines.

The Helicopter Emergency Medical Services (HEMS) has already been provided by NHC Northern Helicopter for the offshore wind farm Hohe See since February 15, 2018 and for Albatros since February 1, 2019.

For more than ten years, NHC Northern Helicopter has specialized in acute and emergency medical care as well as the transport of injured and sick people from offshore wind farms in both the North Sea and the Baltic Sea. Every offshore rescue helicopter is equipped with the state-of-the art emergency medical equipment to treat and monitor patients. The flying crew consists of two pilots as well as a winch operator, and the medical crew consists of an emergency doctor as well as an emergency paramedic. [TED/Northern]

## IRELAND

With the Irish government in talks with potential contractors about the renewal of the current SAR contract operated by CHC, mainly on the west coast, it appears that the Irish Air Corps are also suggesting that there be a return to military SAR on Ireland's east coast. The Air Corps released details to the Irish Times of a deal they're believed to have agreed with Leonardo, to provide two fully SAR equipped 189's at a cost of 17.5M euro each for the first two and 14M euro for a third.

At the moment this is all speculation based on the one newspaper story. The Air Corps have not undertaken the helicopter SAR mission for many years now and have recently struggled to find crews for the assets they currently operate and that includes air ambulances and piloting the Garda air operation.

## JAPAN

COAST GUARD: Japan Coast Guard (JCG) will expand its fleet with two new H225 helicopters, taking its total Super Puma fleet up to 17, comprising two AS332s and 15 H225s. The largest Super Puma operator in Japan received its tenth H225 in February this year. The new helicopters will join its growing fleet to support territorial coastal activities, security enforcement, as well as disaster relief missions in the country.

## NORWAY

COAST GUARD: Norway's SAR service is operated by the ministry of the interior [the police] but bolstered by military resources. The current Sea King fleet and new EH-101 helicopters are assigned to the ministry of the interior.



In addition to these specialist helicopters the new military NH Industries NH-90 fleet is supposed to assign a number of airframes to perform border protection and other coastguard missions but has been found to have failed to meet availability targets. Progress has been far slower than expected. Norway's original plan called for eight NH90s to be employed on coastguard missions, while a further six examples would be used for anti-submarine warfare (ASW) and naval support missions.

As with a number of other users of the NH-90, Norway's availability requirements have proved a "bigger challenge" to the manufacturer than envisaged. Some of the problems can be placed at the door of the ongoing Pandemic and its effect on the performance of the manufacturers [a consortium of Airbus, Leonardo and Fokker]. Leonardo Helicopters builds the maritime variant of the NH90 at its facility at Tessera near Venice.

After a review of the options Norway is now going to hire other helicopters to make up for the shortfall in Coastguard availability.

In 2018 it was predicted that low availability rates of around 2,100 flight hours per year could be expected from the type, that suggested that there would be a need for all 14 NH-90s to be assigned to the Royal Norwegian Navy's frigate fleet. [Flight]

# INDUSTRY

**Babcock International**, the UK's second largest government defence contractor, is cutting 1,000 jobs and has announced "significant" write-offs that will affect profits. The majority of the jobs will be lost in the UK. Among the areas of retrenchment of the business are thoughts that they would sell off the onshore helicopter business based at Staverton, Gloucestershire. It currently supports a number of air ambulances and the Police Scotland air operations.

The certification flight test phase of the **Cessna SkyCourier** development has begun after the twin-turboprop checked off a number of milestones and continues its progress toward FAA type approval and first deliveries later this year. So far, Textron Aviation's fleet of three SkyCourier flight test vehicles (FTV) have accumulated more than 700 hours since the first flight of the high-wing airplane in May 2020. The tests already undertaken include extreme hot and cold weather testing; bird-strike testing, including eight separate tests over a two-month period; certification of the Pratt & Whitney PT6A-65SC engine through Transport Canada Civil Aviation, with FAA approval expected soon; and natural icing certification. Final assembly of the SkyCourier will start this month at the airframer's east Wichita campus. Launch customer for the airplane—which can be configured for cargo or passenger operations, or a combination of the two—is FedEx. The package carrier has firm orders for 50 SkyCourier's, along with options for another 50.

**Paravion®** offers a complete package of products to outfit the Cessna 208/208B Caravan as a world-class surveillance platform. The Cessna Caravan Mounts & Surveillance Accessories include mounting provisions for external loads, workstations for equipment operators, and a forward monitor mount for cockpit reference. The external load provisions are approved for installation on the Cessna 208B Grand Caravan and can carry two loads of up to 150 lbs. each or a single load of up to 300 lbs. The load can have a maximum height of 26.25 inches when installed forward of station 241 and linearly decreasing to 9.41 inches when installed at station 332. The rails are designed to offer a flexible mounting solution for a variety of equipment, such as cameras, downlink antennas, etc. Typical installation labour time for the fixed provisions is 200 hours and costs \$33,000. Additional costs to take into consideration are such as the load beam and mount block at \$7,425 and a dovetail block at \$2,195.

The workstation installation for the Cessna 208 Caravan and Cessna 208B Grand Caravan costs \$31,895 and provides a means of mounting and storing a wide variety of mission equipment, such as camera controls, monitors, recorders, radios and downlink controllers. It is designed so that the operator can sit in a standard seat. The front of the workstation is constructed of a forward-facing panel for holding visually accessible equipment and a desktop to mount such items as hand controllers. The interior of the workstation contains three shelves for holding remote-mount equipment. Each shelf, including the front panel, can hold up to 35 lbs. of equipment.

The monitor mount installation for the Cessna 208 Caravan and Cessna 208B Grand Caravan provides a means of mounting a pilot/co-pilot monitor in the cockpit so that surveillance operations can be easily monitored, and flight path optimized for the camera operator.



Twin sensor mount on Cessna 208 ©Paravion



©Paravion

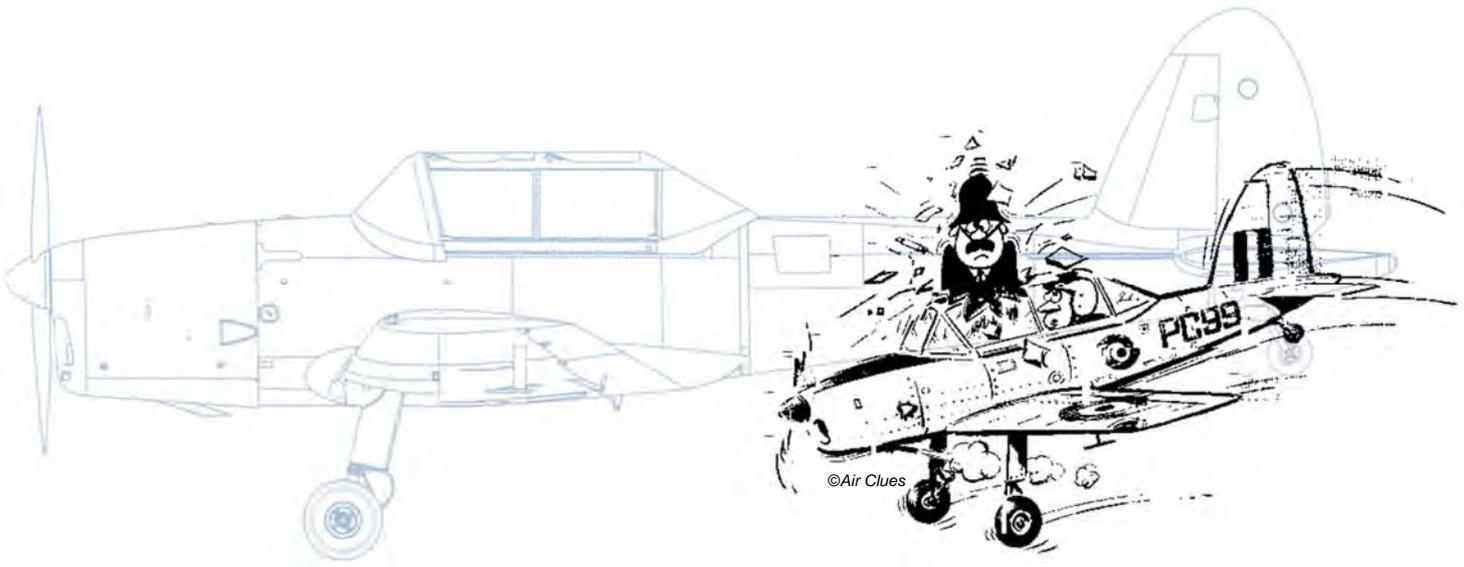
**Columbia Helicopters** has unveiled its Multi-Mission Helicopter Program [MMHP], featuring the proven Columbia Model 234 Chinook heavy-lift helicopter, developed as a single platform solution to support customers' multi-mission requirements. With larger and more intense events taking place with increased frequency around the world, such as fires, floods, hurricanes, and other natural disasters, demand is on the rise for helicopters with increased year-round, interchangeable capabilities.

The MMHP includes the Chinook and Columbia's turnkey operational, training and lifecycle sustainment support. Certified to civilian transport category standards, the base configuration of the Columbia Model 234 is not subject to military surplus aircraft restrictions or the International Traffic in Arms Regulations (ITAR). It features the largest and most versatile internal cabin of any helicopter, capable of lifting external loads up to 25,000lbs (11,339kg), and a suite of Columbia customizations designed to rapidly reconfigure the aircraft between mission requirements. The helicopter can transport 19 passengers with Columbia's side facing crash resistant seat configuration, and up to 44 passengers in an airline seat configuration. The aircraft is equipped with an efficient internal roller floor cargo loading system that supports loading and unloading. The Chinook provides the ability to rapidly respond to mass casualty events with multiple stackable stretchers, side and rear rescue hoists, and advanced life support patient loading utility systems. Additionally, the aircraft can be configured for extended range operations giving it up to seven hours of endurance.

The first **Diamond DA62 Survey Star** aircraft has accomplished well over 100 mission hours with GeoFly and has already proven its efficiency and versatility, it is outperforming all expectations. Equipped in the multi-sensor setup including the Riegl VQ-780i and the Vexcel Ultracam Eagle M3, an endurance of 7:17 hours were achieved with fuel remaining for almost two more hours, resulting in a max total endurance of 8:20 hours + 0:45 hours of reserve.

The aircraft is able to fly survey missions almost fully autonomously; even ultra-long missions become less exhausting for the crew.

Due to the extremely low fuel burn of the jet-fuel engines, the aircraft can even compete with turbine powered aircraft in high and fast missions, assuming the weather conditions are favourable.



This month (May) marks 75 years [1946-2021] since the first flight the DHC-1 Chipmunk. Although not immediately identifiable as a police aircraft the Chipmunk played an important part in the development of police aviation in the United Kingdom.



University Air Squadron Chipmunk in Scotland  
©File

From the 1950s to the 1960s virtually all police observers (or Tactical Flight Officers today) were trained on military aircraft and mainly in the Chipmunk. Their role was as War Duties Observers for Civil Defence and the training was primarily aimed at giving them adequate skills to assist the military in a police role after a nuclear strike on Britain. It was one of the barmy decisions that passed for planning in those days but in the end it served the purpose of producing a core of aviation trained police in the early days of what eventually became an independent police aviation service.

War Duties Observers primarily flew with the University Air Squadron's in Chipmunks and then, in the 1990s, Bulldog's but when the scheme started there were instances of them flying with

the Army Air Corps in Auster AOP aircraft and in Skeeters helicopters.

The **G7 Summit** for 2021 is being held in the UK at a hotel by the beach in the picturesque Carbis Bay in Cornwall. With necessarily tight security, all the VVIPs will need to be transported from Newquay Cornwall Airport to Carbis Bay – about 35 miles straight line. It is believed that Castle Air, the only AOC holder headquartered in the county of Cornwall, has won the contract to support the event using 11 helicopters and 22 pilots for all the air transport requirements related to the summit scheduled for June 11-13. <sup>[Hellhub]</sup>



**Airborne Technologies GmbH** based at Wiener Neustadt, Austria has received EASA certification for special mission fixed and rotor wing aircraft.

Airborne Technologies (ABT) had already been an approved Design and Production Organisation, but last month ABT announced it now holds an EASA Maintenance Organisation approval. This certification authorises the company to maintain and repair aviation components which are already in service.

As a certified design organisation, ABT can produce client required or own design modifications. In case of minor change classification, ABT can certify these modifications themselves.

As a production organisation the company can produce aircraft components and issue quality certificates for them. It covers all relevant areas such as carbon fibre composite parts, wiring looms, electronic assemblies, electromechanical components and metal works and assemblies.

As a maintenance organisation it can service, repair, modify, maintain and upgrade components already in service.

The in-house flight-testing department with EASA licenced test pilots completes the performance spectrum of ABT.

It is a common misconception that only aircraft manufacturers are allowed to make radical changes to their designs.

ABT is now certified to modify airframes from nose-to-tail

without any dependency on manufacturers. The benefits to customers are immense when it comes to meeting budgets and schedules, and not having to depend on OEM interest, which can be considerable when dealing with large organisations. Those customers include private companies as well as public authorities, police and military from all over the world.

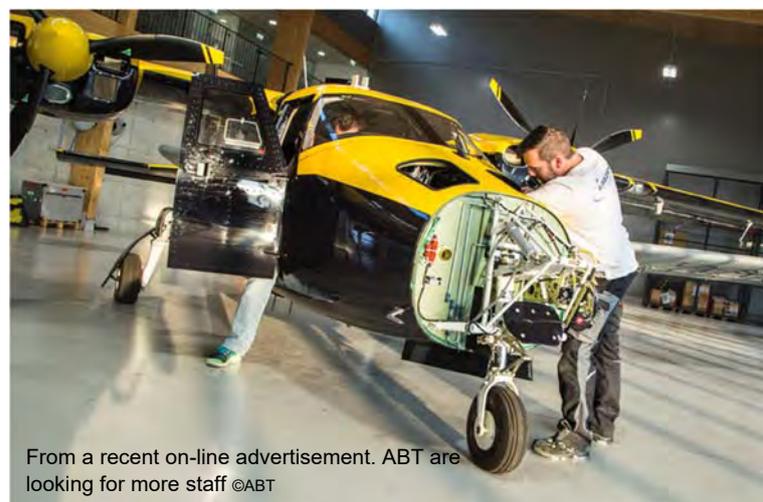
Governmental and military aircraft and helicopters are generally not subject to civilian aviation certification but increasingly consider civil certification as a seal of quality. This applies especially to platforms with basic certification to EASA standards and labelled with original EASA type certification.

Wolfgang Grumeth, CEO of Airborne Technologies, says: "The demand for extensive and far-reaching modifications to fixed-wing aircraft and helicopters in the so-called "special mission" and government sector is continuously increasing. Several platforms of both categories and from various users have already gone through a sensor upgrade in our halls in Wiener Neustadt, which were expanded to 7,000 square metres in 2016. In addition, Aircraft manufacturers are increasingly relying on cooperation with smaller, highly specialised companies such as ABT, whose core competencies and agility fill an important niche." ABT's SCAR pod illustrates its niche capabilities as no airframe modifications are required to carry these pods. Aircraft only require underwing hard points, which many aircraft have. If required, hard points can be installed, where aircraft basic design allows. Complete sensor suites can be accommodated in SCAR pods, ranging from electro-optical cameras, radar, ViDAR, to electronic warfare equipment, ELINT/SIGINT/COMINT sensors etc. The pod system additionally brings modularity and flexibility to deployment and utilising assets, as aircraft role changes can be facilitated within an hour. In this manner aircraft operators are not stuck with committed modified airframes - intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) equipment can quickly be moved to another platform, or a platform can be redeployed/sold.

"With the comprehensive certifications and the in-house capabilities starting with the production of carbon fibre components via electrical and electromechanical components up to flight testing, there is practically no special need in the field of modification for special mission aircraft that the engineers and designers of Airborne Technologies cannot fulfil. The client receives competent solutions adapted to current market developments from a single source", summarises Grumeth. <sup>[ABT]</sup>



The SCAR pod has been flown extensively on a variety of platforms ©ABT



From a recent on-line advertisement. ABT are looking for more staff ©ABT

One year after completing the acquisition of the Swiss Company **Kopter Group AG (Kopter)**, Leonardo welcomes the single-engine SH09 helicopter as a full member of its product range by rebranding it as the AW09.

The AW09 complements the existing product range of Leonardo, allowing the Company to increase its share in the strategic single-engine market, which is one of the largest and most dynamic segments worldwide. Furthermore, the AW09, brings next generation performance, demonstrates Leonardo's innovation leadership within industry as the helicopter features the latest safety standards and most advanced technologies and this will pave the path for further advancements in vertical flight.

The AW09 will continue to be developed by Kopter in Switzerland with input from Leonardo teams. The third prototype (P3) has now logged in excess of 40 flight hours in Switzerland since mid-January in its new configuration. This includes enhancements in the main rotor head, gearbox, an extended rotor mast and a new design of the flight controls, combined with the modern Garmin G3000H cockpit. All of this brings even better flight characteristics, performance and ease of maintenance. The AW09 next prototype, PS4, is expected to fly this year, followed by the PS5. [Leonardo]

## ACCIDENTS AND INCIDENTS

**4 April 2021 Airbus Helicopters EC145/BK117C2 N145SD.** Air ambulance of Avera Careflight, Sioux Falls, South Dakota. While returning to base after dropping of a patient transfer and flying 4 miles NW of Sioux Falls Regional Airport a loud bang occurred and a sliding window departed the aircraft. The door window was being closed and broke at approximately the halfway point. The pilot turned and landed at the airport. The aircraft was inspected for damage; the only damage was the missing window. [Concern]

**8 April 2021 Bell OH-58A Kiowa N258LE** Collier County Sheriff's Office. The helicopter landed at the Naples High School football field in Naples, Collier County, Florida, following a possible governor failure. No damage and no injuries reported. [Twitter]



**17 April 2021 Mil Mi-171sh-P EP-685.** Ejército del Perú. Peru air force helicopter with 12 occupants engaged in anti-drug patrol crashed into the water of the Urubamba river near Miaria, Megantoni District, Peru. The wreck was submerged. Seven members of the crew were killed. [La Republica]



**21 April 2021 Sikorsky S-76C HL9285.** Firefighting helicopter of HeliKorea with two occupants entered the waters of Daecheong Lake, Oak Cheon Goon, Cheongju, North Chungcheong Province, South Korea while firefighting. The co-pilot was killed. No details but the airframe was subsequently recovered from the waters of the lake substantially intact but with rotors smashed. [Media]



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**21 April 2021 Boeing/Bell CV-22B Osprey 10-0053** US Air Force. A temporary helipad at Addenbrooke's Hospital, Cambridge, was destroyed on take-off. The crew were conducting medical transfer training operations at the site on Cambridge Biomedical Campus. Although it landed without incident, when the Osprey took off, the rubber matting was blown apart by the force of the rotor wash.



**22 April 2021 Leonardo AW109SP Grand New G-TAAS.** Air ambulance operated by The Air Ambulance Service as Derbyshire, Leicestershire and Rutland AA by Sloane Helicopters. A bird strike smashed most of an air ambulance helicopter's port windscreen out while it was returning to its base at East Midlands Airport after carrying out a mission. It made a precautionary landing in Derbyshire's Peak District, near Carsington Water. [Mercury/TAAS]

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# UNMANNED

Schiebel has won another significant contract with the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA). Schiebel, with its CAMCOPTER® S-100, is yet again one of the service providers for EMSA's Remotely Piloted Aircraft System (RPAS) operations carrying out ship emission monitoring and general maritime surveillance for EU member states. The scope of this EUR 16.5 million framework contract includes monitoring the sulphur content of ships' emissions to ensure compliance with the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) sulphur emission limits from sea going vessels, as well as maritime situational awareness for coastal authorities. This contract comes in addition to the one awarded in 2018 under which Schiebel provided EMSA and local authorities in Croatia and Finland with maritime surveillance services and which is still ongoing. The CAMCOPTER® S-100 operates day and night and can carry multiple payloads with a combined weight of up to 50 kg.

The Romanian Border Police now operates the S-100 for maritime surveillance purposes. The Remotely Piloted Aircraft System (RPAS) service is delivered by the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA) and is also extended to Bulgaria.

Stationed in Mangalia, the type undertakes general Coast Guard functions, conducting day-to-day monitoring and surveillance of all shipping including port security, as well as responding to any search and rescue, accident and disaster needs. The S-100 is equipped with an L3 Wescam Electro-Optical / Infra-Red (EO/IR) camera gimbal, an Overwatch Imaging PT-8 Oceanwatch, a Becker Avionics BD406 Emergency Beacon Locator and an Automatic Identification System (AIS) receiver.

Most recently, the CAMCOPTER® S-100 was operational in France, Denmark, Finland and Croatia.

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# PEOPLE

East Anglian Air Ambulance (EAAA) has announced today (6 April) that its CEO, **Patrick Peal**, will be retiring from the charity in June after seven years in the role. EAAA's Director of Operations Matthew Jones has been appointed as Patrick's successor and will take the reins at the end of June.



Patrick played an integral part in setting up the life-saving charity just over 20 years ago, led the charity as a former Trustee for some eleven years and has been the charity's CEO since 2014. In that time, the charity has undergone a huge transformation and growth period in terms of fundraising income, operational achievements and becoming a top-rated local employer. During Patrick Peal's tenure, the service has expanded to cover 24 hours a day every day of the year. To date, this has involved flying by day and by night, with the middle of the night covered by rapid response vehicles. His final act at EAAA in the summer will be extending the flying service 24/7.

Patrick has lived and worked in Norfolk most of his life and has long been passionate about the need for an air ambulance service in the county. In 1996 he was part of initial conversations about setting up an air ambulance service in Norfolk and was instrumental in the charity's official creation in September 2000. Patrick has held various board positions within the charity over

the years and took up the CEO role in 2014. Prior to that he was Deputy Chairman of the Board of Trustees at EAAA and owner and Director of Tribe PR. In 2019, Patrick won Third Sector Director of the Year at the Institute of Directors East of England awards for his accomplishments at EAAA.

Sergeant **Bill Proberts** is to retire from front line air support service in California after 32 years in law enforcement on June 1. The Englishman served with the police in Surrey, United Kingdom prior to deciding he wished to fly. With the police in the UK not allowing serving police officers to fly for them he was obliged to choose a new career path after eight years' service in 1990 and that led him to move to California.

For the next three years with Helicopter Adventures Inc, he was a flight instructor in Concord, for a flight school conducting helicopter and fixed wing pilot training from ab-initio through ATP(H).

He moved on to flying for Bajan Helicopters in Barbados for one year followed by similar periods with Petroleum Helicopters and Era Helicopters in the Gulf of Mexico.

In 1997 he opted out of flying for the oil industry and signed up to flying for the East Bay Regional Parks Police operating over the north side of San Francisco Bay near Oakland conducting rural, inner city urban, over water and mountainous area, law enforcement, initial attack fire suppression (CalFire Carded) and on-scene HEMS operations, day and night (using NVG). He was there for over 23 years and gained the rank of sergeant and was eventually the Unit Manager/Chief Pilot.

In this role, enhanced by both European and US aviation industry experience, he presented at numerous international aviation safety conferences on behalf of Police Aviation Conferences (PAVCon) focusing on aviation safety, night emergency procedures and components of an effective Safety Management System. He was one of the first active assessors in the original Airborne Law Enforcement Accreditation Commission (ALEAC) Accreditation program in 2009, later becoming the Lead Accreditation Assessor in 2012 as it evolved into the Public Safety Aviation Accreditation Commission (PSAAC). So far, he has been a flyer for 34 years, although his time as an active police pilot have finished he will remain in aviation.

**Grahame Pickering MBE**, who started the Great North Air Ambulance Service (GNAAS), has departed the organisation due to ongoing health issues after more than 20 years of dedicated service.

Mr Pickering built GNAAS from the ground up and introduced a series of initiatives in the region that have gone on to become commonplace throughout the UK, including carrying doctors on board air ambulance missions.





Brian Jobling, chairman at GNAAS, said the charity simply would not exist if not for Grahame's tenacity in getting it off the ground.

He added: "Without any meaningful resources, working entirely on his own and from home, Grahame set off on this journey, and look now – he has achieved his vision of providing the people of the region with a world class pre-hospital care service previously unavailable.

"In spite of significant obstructions and difficulties in the early days, Grahame's determination and fight for independence finally won through.

"Last year alone over 1200 incidents were responded to, totalling 20,000 overall. With the generous support of the public, the charity has prevented many unnecessary deaths and relieved serious suffering throughout our region."

In 2011, in recognition of his humanity, dedication and success, Mr Pickering was awarded an MBE for emergency health care – an award recognising not just his contribution but the support of many within the industry and the wider community.

Some aspects of police aviation appear to act like a stuck needle in a vinyl disc. NPAS itself may be one of them but yet again it appears that the architect of NPAS Bernard Hogan-Howe is once again front and centre in the national newspapers when trouble was brewing.

In April the former UK Prime Minister David Cameron was embroiled in some negative political point scoring over his links to Greensill Capital. The owner and founder Lex Greensill an Australian melon farmer turned City banker founded Greensill in 2011 and was introduced to a number of figures around Whitehall, where he was reportedly free to pitch his financial projects during David Cameron's premiership. He bolstered his reputation by hiring political heavyweights and Westminster officials to help lead and advise the business. It seems that no laws were broken but there was plenty of 'mudslinging' going on.

Into the messy situation came Lord Hogan-Howe, he became a paid consultant, advising Greensill's wage advance app, Earnd, in May 2020. That was the same month that he joined the Cabinet Office as a non-executive director. At the time, the government's business contracts division, the Crown Commercial Service, was welcoming bids for contracts related to supply chain finance – Greensill's speciality.

He said in a statement that he "advised on product and organisational development but not on opportunities in the Cabinet Office or government" and "played no part at all in the procurement process for the contracts".



# BOOK REVIEW

## ABOVE THE LAW by Adrian Bleese

Over the years I have reviewed many books that mention police aviation in part but the ultimate police aviation book I wanted to review was always somewhere over the horizon, yet to be written. Finally, a review copy of what might be that elusive definitive book has arrived on my desk.

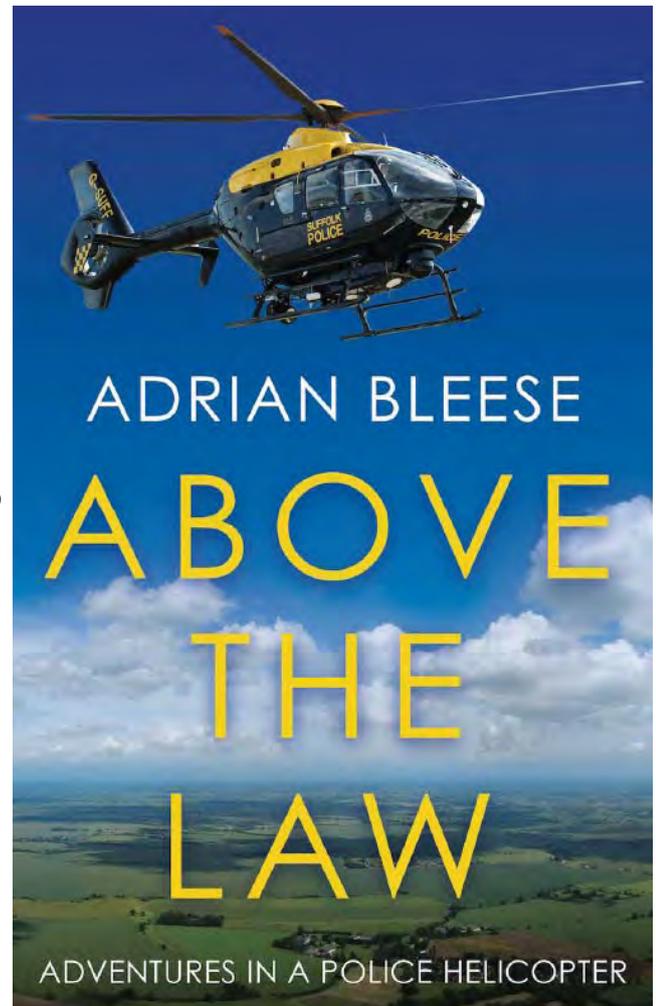
And what a delight it is.

We meet Adrian Bleese and know where he came from and how he thinks, but this is no life story, the focus of the book is about police aviation. He explains why he sought to join this exclusive band of aviators, his training, techniques, missions and, ultimately, why he left as his unit was enveloped in NPAS.

He was relatively unique in that he joined police aviation as a civilian working for the Suffolk Constabulary when they set up their helicopter unit and stayed with them as an observer and Tactical Flight Officer until he was transferred to working for West Yorkshire Police.

For any aspiring police aviator wanting to know what training entails and how day-to-day operations work in practice or for air operations staff of many nations wishing to learn how different working practices are from their own this is the first book I have encountered that really spells the task out. The tale is informative and full of pertinent humour, light but without losing the focus of a serious subject.

Adrian Bleese spent twelve years flying on police helicopters, and attended almost 3,000 incidents including rescuing lost walkers, chasing cars down narrow country lanes, searching for a rural cannabis factory and disrupting an illegal forest rave... all in a day's work.



My review was based on a pre-publication text. *Above the Law* will shortly be published by Eye Books Ltd (312 Uxbridge Road, Rickmansworth, Hertfordshire, WD3 8YL) [www.eye-books.com](http://www.eye-books.com) ISBN: 978178563262 £9.99

For the International market it is suggested that it may be more economic to order through [Waterstones Books](#) or [Amazon](#)

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## THE DOVER PATROL – *continued.*

Following on from an earlier article in the November edition of *Police Aviation News* Tony Cowan – an avid observer of fixed wing aviation and the comings and goings of migrants and coast guard aircraft in the English Channel gives us an update:

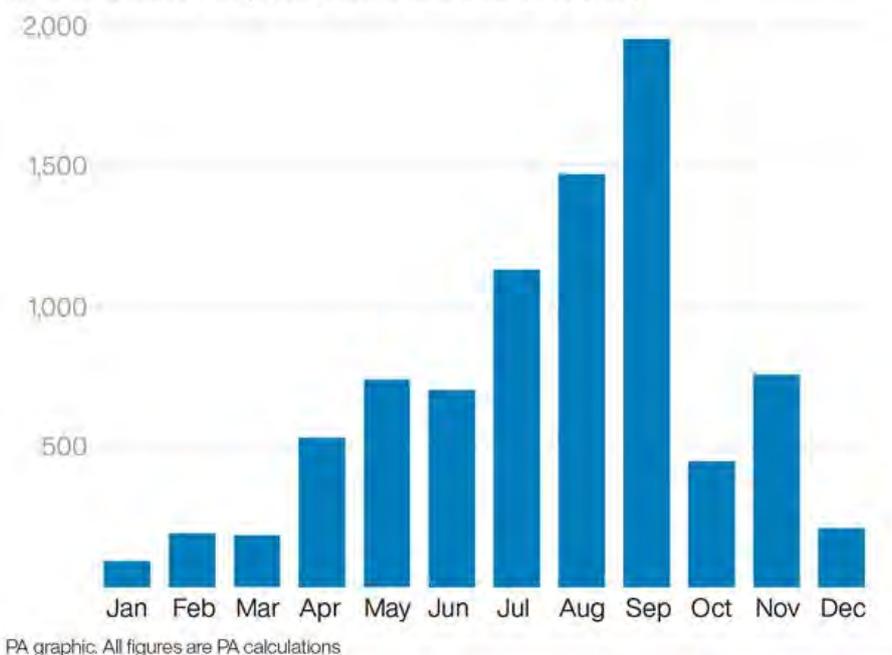
### INTRODUCTION

In the first quarter of 2021 the number of migrants entering the UK illegally, using small boats to cross the English Channel from the beaches of northern France, has increased exponentially. These sea passages are organised by criminal gangs in exchange for a large fee, some thousands of pounds for each migrant. In the first three months of 2020 473 migrants completed the Channel crossing. In the same period, in the first quarter of this year, in 2021, the numbers increased by almost three times to 1,363.

The grand total for 2020, after a relatively slow start at the beginning of the year was 8,428. This is a new annual record following the first arrival of migrants in small, inflatable boats in the autumn of 2018. This prompted the former Home Secretary (Minister for the Interior), The Rt Hon Sajid Javid MP to declare that the number of migrants entering the UK illegally, after crossing the English Channel in small boats, had become a 'major incident'.

### Migrants crossing the English Channel to the UK in 2020

(low-end estimates; actual totals likely to be higher)



The grand total of migrants entering the UK illegally in small boats in 2020, after a slow start in the first quarter, was 8,428.

With such a large increase in the numbers of migrants arriving illegally in the UK in the first 3 months of the current year, it would not be surprising if the number arriving in 2021 becomes 10,000, or more, if the current trajectory is maintained! This would be over 5 times the total of 1,840 migrants who arrived in small boats in 2019. Year on year the numbers continue to increase, 299 in 2018; 1,840 in 2019 and 8,428 in 2020. This is despite the large sums of money paid by the UK government, to France, to improve security in the Channel ports and on the beaches of northern France. Most recently an additional £28M was paid in November 2020, to improve security on the French coast between Dunkirk and Boulogne-sur-Mer. This funding is in addition to the range of air assets including fixed-wing aircraft, helicopters and drones, deployed by HM Coastguard and the Border Force to support their large offshore cutters and smaller coastal patrol boats.

### A NEW POLICY

Until very recently, the French policy was to detain only those migrants travelling in small, often overloaded, boats, who were obviously in distress. Boats that were not in distress were escorted into UK waters to be 'rescued' by the UK Border Force, or by the lifeboats of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution. This

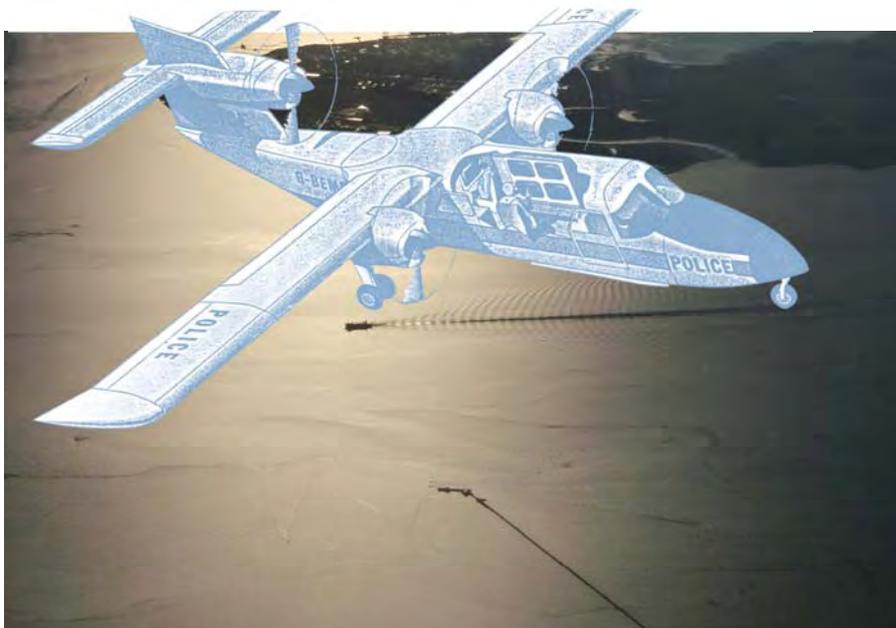
policy would appear to have changed in recent months. Nevertheless, the number of those migrants who have, sadly perished is believed to be 4 in 2019 and 10 in 2020. In one incident a family of 5, plus 2 others, lost their lives near Dunkirk in October 2020. There were up to three other deaths, the result of hypothermia and drowning, recorded earlier in the same year. There are no figures for those migrants who may have simply disappeared at sea, in mid-Channel. A new UK immigration policy is now being promoted by the UK Government, by the current Home Secretary, The Rt Hon Priti Patel MP, who, in a recent speech, stated that, "Enough is enough" and that the new system will be, "Faster and fairer". Also, it was pointed out, not for first time, that, "Serious organised criminal gangs are exploiting people trying to get to the UK. The same gangs who are also involved in serious violent crimes in the UK." The new immigration plan was published on the 24 March 2021. In the future, immigration into the UK will use a points-based system. At the same time, the UK Government will discourage all those asylum claims that originate via illegal routes.

After spending an additional £28M to improve border security on the beaches of northern France, without any significant reduction in numbers of illegal migrants arriving in the UK, we may agree that, in addition to patrol boats and lifeboats, there's a clear need to have patrol aircraft on permanent standby to engage in targeted patrols on both the English and the French sides of the English Channel. In a new twist to the ongoing criminal activity the people smugglers recently moved their operation further south into Normandy. At the beginning of April, a large inflatable with 30 migrants on board was driven ashore at Quend-Plage, south of Berck. Some readers may recall that, in the recent past, HM Coastguard used to patrol the English Channel, reported to be one of the world's busiest shipping lanes, with a BN Islander aeroplane which was based at Manston and then at Lydd in Kent.

Rather than flying a Piper Navajo, or a Beechcraft King Air, on contract to HM Coastguard, from Doncaster, some hundreds of miles away, to complete a 2- or 3-hour Channel patrol, before returning to Doncaster, it would make more sense, we may also agree, if a small number of patrol aircraft were based closer to England's south coast, at Lydd in Kent, or Southend in Essex. These aircraft would be available, 24/7 to complete regular, targeted patrols on both sides of the Channel, including those beaches in northern France that are known to be used by the people smugglers. Ships passing through the Dover Strait would also be monitored. All reports would be forwarded, immediately, to the UK Joint Operations Centre at Dover and to the Anglo-French Joint Intelligence Centre at Calais for further action.

## A STRATEGIC SHIPPING ROUTE

The Dover Strait, also called the Pas-de-Calais, between the UK and France is a strategic shipping route, an entry point into Europe for ships sailing between the North Atlantic and the North Sea. The volume of traffic is such that, with the ever-present danger of a collision, there is a permanent marine traffic separation scheme, the Channel Navigation Information Service (CNIS). The CNIS uses radar to monitor shipping from operation centres at Dover in the UK and at Cap Gris Nez in France, although small, inflatable boats are unlikely to show up on radar. Some 500 vessels of all sizes pass through the Dover Strait every 24 hours. This narrow channel, some 20 miles across, is described as having numerous hazards including strong tides, sandbanks and shoals. Weather conditions can change quickly, visibility is often poor, and it can be difficult to navigate. The UK Maritime and Coastguard Agency reports that, "Many ships carry dangerous cargoes which, if released accidentally could have disastrous effects on the environment, marine life and the coastlines of England, France and the North Sea states."



The Dover Strait is, at best, a strategic shipping route with the ever-present danger of ships colliding, the precursor to an environmental disaster. This danger is now compounded by a new danger to life, the result of criminal gangs charging migrants exorbitant fees to cross the English Channel in small inflatable boats. This new danger demands an agreement, a joint response by the governments of the United Kingdom and France. A response, with joint funding, that will promote airborne policing, the proverbial 'eye in the sky', on both sides of the English Channel with an aircraft that is the most suited to the role. In this respect the ideal candidate could be the Vulcanair P68R with the highly capable L3 Harris/Wescam MX-10 electro-optical camera turret. Four of

these aircraft were recently purchased by the UK's National Police Air Service (NPAS) following a botched procurement process. This P68R, whilst not suited for the role of police air support, could yet prove to be the ideal short-range coastal patrol aircraft for patrolling one of the world's busiest and most dangerous shipping lanes.

## CONCLUSION

If the proposed patrol of the English Channel, and, in particular, the Dover Strait, with the Vulcanair P68R proved to be a success, with individual flights lasting 2 to 4 hours, the police forces in England and Wales could then move forward with a new programme to purchase a fleet of aeroplanes that are more suitable for police duties. Duties which are often reactive in nature and of short duration (1). One fixed-wing aircraft that has proved to be particularly suitable for the police role is the tried and tested, ubiquitous, British built, BN2B-20 Islander. Other aircraft that would be worth testing are the turbine BN2T Islander, together with Diamond Aircraft's DA42 and DA62 multi-mission aeroplanes; all three of these aircraft are jet-fuelled, running on kerosene rather than aviation gasoline, with the former fuel being more easily sourced at both commercial and military airfields, day and night.

*James A Cowan MBE BA CF FRIN*

*The author is a former RAF maritime patrol pilot who flew all three operational variants of the BAe Nimrod with No 201 Sqn. and No 51 Sqn. He has flown three variants of the BN Islander, the BNT2, the BN2B-20 and the BN2B-26 with the RAF, with the former police North East Air Support Unit and with the Scottish Air Ambulance Service. Whilst serving in Italy, with the RAF, he was given the opportunity to fly the then Partenavia version of the P68 Observer with the Italian State Police. He has also flown the Diamond DA42 on a number of occasions! In July 1997 Tony Cowan successfully led a team of three that flew two single engine RAF Chipmunk aircraft over sea and ice in a 'Round the World' mission so that before he is dismissed outright for his opinions and suggestions might therefore be accorded due deference.*



## MOVE ALONG THERE

From the archives of *European Business Aviation News* [EBAN] comes a 20-year-old storyline centred on the long defunct Hampshire Air Operations unit. Hampshire was set up by a fixed wing police aviation stalwart Bob Ruprecht forty years ago and after he retired it was the Hampshire operation that was offered up as the first closure in the path to NPAS. The Chief Constable at the time was Alex Marshall CBE, QPM, the same Mr Marshall that launched NPAS and left in 2013 to immediately close down the prestigious Bramshill Police College, whilst taking a little time off to go and get one Brian Allinson relieved of his job with Airbus.

If anyone should have been consulted on fixed wing policing it was probably Ruprecht. Several sections from the piece are notable in that they point out what was suitable and what was not.

Dateline April 6, 2001: The Hampshire units had just swapped its piston engine BN-2B for a new turbine powered B-N Defender 4000.

Ruprecht was adamant that "The only thing you can do in a helicopter that you can't do in the Defender is rescuing people from a crevice, and that's not really a police role, it's an air ambulance role.

"Helicopters haven't got the endurance, especially out in the Channel. The police cram everything they can on a helicopter – an observer, a stretcher, etc – then you go out on a hot day in July, and they can only fly for six minutes." He was exaggerating but there have been several instances of helicopters struggling with hot weather in the past so the comment was based on fact.

Cost was the main driver, but Hampshire is very rural and has little need for helicopters. Before arriving at the selection of the Defender Hampshire had looked at several alternatives including the Australian Nomad, "not a very good aeroplane," the Canadian Twin Otter, and the Partenavia Observer, which was "too small". The Observer was an earlier version of the now dismissed Vulcanair P68R. He thought it was too small in 2001, it is half the size of a BN-2, had been saying the same thing for 20-years before that - and twenty years since.

Ruprecht pointed out that there were few options then and that he felt he was forced down the Defender route. The type carried an EO/IR camera installed in its belly, as well as equipment "for spotting drugs smugglers." That special equipment was secret then and little has changed. He was not at liberty to talk about it despite EBAN's best cajoling. The same equipment had been on the Dutch Islander's.

That's not to suggest that the Defender turned out to be the perfect aircraft. After many happy years with the smaller piston engine BN-2, Hampshire had trouble with the Defender from the start. It was late in arrival and they regularly had problems with one of the two Rolls-Royce 250 turboprops.

Ruprecht was from the school of hard knocks, having learned fixed wing from some of his errors. Hampshire air support started with a Cessna single, resisted temptation when offered the Thrupton Gadfly gyro

but then took up with the promising Optica single only to find how badly engineered the interesting 'bug eye' single was. The BN-2 Islander worked well for them.

*Ed: This again raises the question of how the P68R got past the finishing post to be selected for use by NPAS. Time and time again the type was tested, albeit in fixed wheel and Observer form. We know it was tested and rejected in 1982. The Home Office and ACPO report of 1988 featured only the Optica and the BN-2, and when the Home Office undertook a multi-type fixed wing test embracing a variant of the P68 in 1995, it was rejected, Hampshire rejected it in 2001 and yet a dozen years later practically the same airframe – with retractable undercarriage – was bumped through a highly questionable 'selection process' where the P68R was the only type even being considered to finally enter service in 2020 only to be then lambasted by the very people who had selected it.*

*Oversight and rectification are the task of the 30 or so members of the NPAS Nation Strategic Board not that of a journalist.*

## HAPPY 50th BIRTHDAY

The Partenavia P. 68, now Vulcanair P68, a light aircraft designed by Luigi Pascale and initially built by Italian Partenavia. It made its first flight on 25 May 1970; its type certification was granted on 17 November 1971 and was transferred to Vulcanair in 1998. The P.68R was certified on 31 July 1978 [Wikipedia] This makes the P68 the oldest design in the NPAS fleet. The origins of the eldest of the helicopters [the BK117/EC145] dates from 1979. But before we get too high and mighty about the age of the P.68 it should be pointed out that the most likely high-wing alternate, the BN-2 is an even older design dating from 1965!

## ALL SEEING APPS

In Ohio flight tracking apps have again caused concern in emergency services aviation. The latest operation to fall foul of the all-seeing flight tracker was the Columbus Police aviation operation. One of their helicopters flew and circled over the city last month and was observed to create a pattern that spelled out "CPD" in the air.

To some, the discovery was "kind of cool." To others, not so much. Those that already have their daggers out for police misuse of aviation tax dollars grasped at the story as it broke on social media and described it as a "joyride." Other social media carried on the attacks. One campaigner wrote that she was "beyond frustrated" with the flight path in light of a bill she proposed last summer to decrease the size of the city's helicopter fleet by one. The measure was set aside after CPD argued the helicopters were essential.

In June 2020, the Dispatch reported the city's annual maintenance costs for the CPD helicopter fleet at \$452,000 and fuel costs at \$249,000. What made the situation worse in many eyes was that the flight in question was being undertaken over a predominantly black neighbourhood.

The city is currently in the throes of renegotiating its contract with 28 law enforcement agencies in central Ohio, including CPD, and pressure on officials to adopt some kind of police reform has increased amid the ongoing Black Lives Matter protests.

Officially the CPD helicopters typically fly at an altitude of 700 to 900 feet but fly down to around 600 feet during priority calls. All very noisy for those trying to sleep and mainly driven by their low specification sensors. Apparently, the helicopters try to avoid residential areas as much as possible while between calls in case they need to make an emergency landing. From 600 feet in the dark that is tight for decision making!



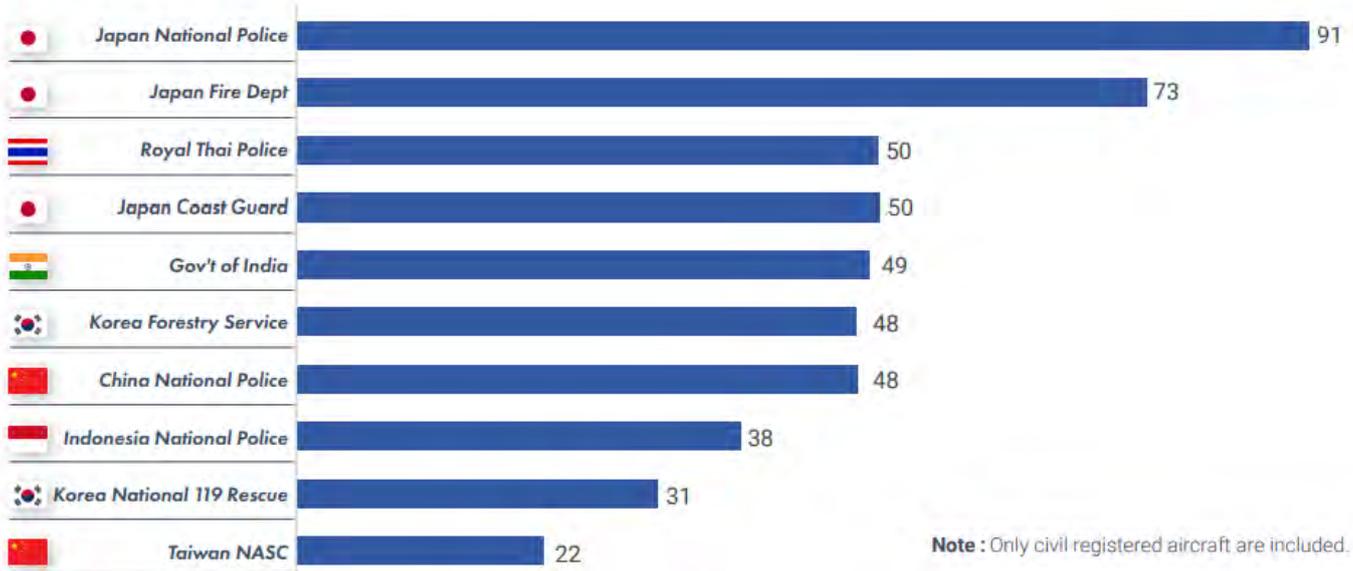
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Last months book review on “A Long and Winding Beat” by Brian Allinson was brought back to mind when another correspondent sent me a chart he had found. The chart listed the number of police and emergency services aircraft operated by a number of Asian nations .

## TOP GOVERNMENT OPERATORS

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The point was made that the Japan as a nation is very similar to the United Kingdom in most demographics but glaringly the National Police are currently operating 91 aircraft. Worse still even the fire department have 73 aircraft. Britain has none.

The connection with Brian Allinson’s book is that he writes about going to China to observe their slow progress towards operations at a time when the UK had a reasonable, but arguably too small law enforcement air fleet size. I believe he would be too embarrassed to undertake a similar trip today. Suffice to say that the police in China have more aircraft than the UK police have today.

Similar observations could be made about the fleet sizes nearer to home, the Bundespolizei in Germany, the State Police in Italy all have around 100 aircraft to call on, and yet neither includes ‘other agencies’ with even more aircraft on call.

## FUTURE EVENTS

Whether there will be in-person events later this summer remains unknown. A recent big-league casualty was AERO at Friedrichshafen, Germany and it will not be the last. The Paris Air show – due in June - was not cancelled last year on a whim but plenty of organisers have been busy trying to organise events that do not have any real hope in running in exactly the same timescale.

You only have to look to India to see what carrying on regardless can do to a country. They had their air show and masses of major political rallies where social distancing was forgotten, and the bodies are literally piling up in the streets. And this is a major country with enough spare cash for a space programme. September looks to be the next realistic window of opportunity, but it is doubtful that the world at large will be back into safe travel by then. Some shows need international travellers and even those countries that seem to have beaten the scourge of COVID can easily take their eyes off the ball and follow India. Meanwhile Africa and parts of the Third World are in a queue for vaccine, a solution for the First World will not get international travel back for all when the rest of the planet remains in backlog. Either we are all clear or we are not clear.

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## LATE NEWS

Babcock Norway has been awarded a new contract to provide a round the clock fast jet air ambulance service to the rescEU scheme.

The new contract will see Babcock provide a fast jet air ambulance capability across the EU including aircraft maintenance, the provision of personnel and their training. The contract will use a new Cessna C680A Latitude aircraft, the same model that is already in use for Babcock's existing fixed-wing air ambulance contract in Norway.

The new jet will be stationed at Babcock's base in Tromsø so that when the aircraft is not being used for missions across the EU, it can be deployed as part of the regular air ambulance fleet for Babcock Norway, further strengthening preparedness in northern Norway and on Svalbard. [Babcock International]



## PAvCon EUROPE 2021

As mentioned earlier PAvCon Europe is working in association with the Airborne Public Safety Association Inc., to hold a virtual event aimed at education in early June. The 6-hour programme includes contributions from The Netherlands, Belgium, United Kingdom and USA and is additionally backed by the publishers of **Air Med & Rescue**.

PAvCon 2021 Virtual has been posted to the APSA website [www.publicservicesaviation.org](http://www.publicservicesaviation.org) and registration is now open and access free.

There is a button on the APSA home page that takes you to the PAvCon 2021 landing page, here is a direct link to the landing page: <https://publicsafetyaviation.org/2021-pavcon-virtual>.



From there, there are links to the agenda ([https://publicsafetyaviation.org/images/PDFs/2021\\_PAVCon\\_Virtual - Educational Agenda 040121.pdf](https://publicsafetyaviation.org/images/PDFs/2021_PAVCon_Virtual_-_Educational_Agenda_040121.pdf)) and the registration page. Registration is open and free to all, but they will need to provide some basic information to register if they are not an APSA member.

The first notification of the event from APSA was included in its in-house monthly E-Newsletter, which was distributed to members of APSA. The information is designed for a wider audience beyond membership, and they will use targeted email blasts about the event which will contain the registration and agenda links and information through PAN and the PAVCon Europe website.

## SINGAPORE

The organisers had already moved the event from 30 March – 1 April 2021 event to 27-29 July 2021 but last week they made it clear that **Rotorcraft Asia and Unmanned Systems Asia (RCA-UMSA)** will not be an in person event held at the Changi Exhibition Centre, Singapore. Even without the distortion caused by the pandemic, as a recent start up this event was tiny last time out and it remains to be seen what virtual elements are run.

While the world celebrated with optimism when the first vaccinations were rolled-out, reality still proves to be challenging as resurgences and variants emerge amidst ongoing travel restrictions around the world. Singapore is locked down and unlikely to change in the foreseeable future. Even with its borders almost sealed the virus is still flaring up occasionally. The safety of all exhibitors and visitors is of utmost priority, and given this current landscape, RCA-UMSA will focus primarily on strategic conversations via a fully digital format.



## LONDON

In the UK it remains to be seen whether events scheduled for September will be able to overcome the closed borders. The UK should be fully open from June but recent events in India suggest caution. The month is the normal slot for the **Emergency Services Show**—a fairly domestic gathering but a large one that still needs international visitors as does the Clarion Events Defence and Security plan to run a rescheduled **Counter Terror Expo (CTX)** and **Forensics Expo Europe (FEE)** alongside the military orientated **DSEI** at ExCel London a week later on 14 – 16th September 2021.

DSEI is on track to deliver the event based on both returning key exhibitors and first-time exhibitor numbers reflecting the industry's commitment to a return to live events. As the UK's leading networking event for security professionals from industry, infrastructure, government and policing, CTX attracts attendees and exhibitors from across Europe, all of whom will have the opportunity to seek counter-terror business synergies with a wider pool of stakeholders attending DSEI across the Land, Naval, Aerospace, Joint, and Security domains.

Clarion Events, one of the largest exhibition organisers in the world, are still faced with holding hold the safety and well-being of all event attendees as the highest priority. Closed borders will certainly hamper that intention and Europe remains in turmoil over the implementation of its vaccine roll out.



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