

# Police Aviation News

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## SAR Conference Report



# 10

years of publication

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## EDITORIAL—TEN UP

It is now ten years since Police Aviation News [PAN] published its first digest of recent news relating to UK police aviation. In the intervening decade it has not yet missed an issue and has indeed published additional special editions for some years. More than a million words and some 14,000 in each new edition.

The small but vibrant British market originally addressed has expanded and today PAN covers a far wider range of airborne subject matter and an infinitesimally greater World audience all thanks to the support of the industry it serves.

Shortly after it was launched it became one of the few E-newsletters—a tiny file of bland E-text dropping into mailboxes across the World in the days before Broadband—in a marketplace now awash with them.

Thanks to the Airborne Law Enforcement Association the publication transferred to a full colour PDF on [www.alea.org](http://www.alea.org) at the Millennium and eventually evolved to having its own additional dedicated web site.

Police Aviation News provides a service to you the readers to inform and educate, I hope you will continue to make use of it.

Where next? I wish I knew!

*Bryn Elliott*

## LAW ENFORCEMENT

### AUSTRALIA

Bombardier Aerospace has announced that National Air Support (NAS) of Adelaide, Australia has placed a firm \$53M order for three Bombardier Q300 Maritime Patrol Aircraft (MPA) for the Surveillance Australia Coastwatch programme. Surveillance Australia has been operating the Bombardier Dash 8 aircraft since 1996 and currently operates five of the 200 model that have accumulated more than 70,000 hours of aerial surveillance. They are used to detect illegal fishing and immigration, quarantine and environmental hazards, drug smuggling and missing vessels in the largest operation of its type in the world.

NAS announced the new aircraft order after winning a 12-year renewal of its contract with



Australian Customs on March 3. The renewed contract commences in 2008.

In addition to the three new Q300 aircraft acquired from Bombardier, NAS will purchase and convert two Dash 8/Q Series aircraft from the existing fleet of sister company National Jet Systems to the surveillance role, doubling the size of the current fleet.

The large cabin of the Q300 accommodates sensor and communications consoles, aircrew and Customs officers, with room to move about on long flights. The high wing and ideal window positions give the crew uninterrupted vision for surface search. With the aircraft deployed away from their base for extended periods reliability and the availability of its auxiliary power unit to maintain the air-conditioning when deployed on the ground are important aspects.

The additional features and size of the four new Q300 aircraft offer extended range options and will provide NAS with greater flexibility on missions requiring extra range or loiter options as well as the opportunity to upgrade the equipment options in due course.

The Field Aviation company has been awarded a contract to modify all five additional Bombardier de Havilland DASH 8 regional turboprop aircraft into Maritime Surveillance Aircraft (MSA) for Surveillance Australia.

Cooperation between Field Aviation and Surveillance Australia dates back to the early 1990s when the two companies teamed up to create the Dash 8 Maritime Surveillance Aircraft (DASH 8 MSA) to meet upcoming Australian surveillance requirements. The aircraft modifications will start in this month at Field's Toronto facility.

Since that first Australian deal Field have excelled in the provision of patrol aircraft based on

the Dash 8. In addition to ten Australian aircraft there are three 300 series craft upcoming for the Swedish Coast Guard next year and potentially the most important in terms of numbers are those for US Customs and Border Protection. The first of the US 200 series airframes entered service last September at the time of Hurricane Katrina. On arrival the airframe was stripped of its specialist surveillance equipment and served as a transport on relief missions. It has since returned to its intended tasking.

[Bombardier/Field]



## BOTSWANA

Based on some earlier experience using helicopters of the Botswana Defence Force [BDF] the police service will establish a four helicopter air department next year. Commissioner of Police Edwin Batshu has said that they would be based in locations such as Gaborone, Lobatse, Francistown and Maun to enable them to provide traffic, crime, search and patrol coverage to surrounding areas.

Currently the police are consulting and undergoing training with a view to receiving funding in the next financial year 2007-08. This would cover aircraft and infrastructure items including hangars, office space and aprons. [The Reporter, Gaborone]

*Ed: Twenty years ago the organisation that is the BDF encompassed what was known as the Police Mobile Unit, a term that has been defunct many years. This should be considered the return of police aviation rather than a completely new venture.*

*In July 2004 there were calls from a senior industry figure for the government to purchase helicopters for the police service.*

## CANADA

MANITOBA: The police in Winnipeg have entered an arrangement with a local radio station for the use of their helicopter. [WFP]





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## CHINA

A Eurocopter EC135 helicopter starts police patrols for the city of Shenyang this month. The EC135 is being rented by the city for 9.12M yuan (US\$1.13M) a year.

Beside crime patrols it will ensure the security of Shenyang International Horticultural Exposition 2006 starting from April 30.

Daily patrols will cover the main area of the horticultural exposition, a 184-day long world class horticulture event with gardening shows and varieties of activities, in and around its vicinity, inside the third Ring Roads and the city's expressways.

Besides the helicopter, the municipal government will also be spending 160M yuan to build updated police headquarters with a total area of 35,000 square metres to accommodate both police and fire services. [Shanghai Daily]

*Ed: This appears to be an additional police use of the EC135 – albeit probably a term lease of an existing civil aircraft rather than a dedicated police machine.*

## GERMANY

The Bavarian Police helicopter fleet will acquire a state-of-the-art helicopter workstation. The so-called Polizeitaktischer Arbeitsplatz (PTA - a police cockpit operation and control system) will be central to the support of police officers during the FIFA World Cup this summer. Bavaria follows Rheinland-Pfalz in ordering a system developed by the Munich-based company ESG Elektroniksystem- und Logistik-GmbH.

The modular PTA integrates the operation of the FLIR camera, video recorder, downlink and handles all the data processing.

The Bavarian helicopter fleet is renting the PTA as a “complete thermal imaging camera system”. This includes a thermal imaging camera, a digital TV transmitter and the AUTOPOL object recognition system from EADS.

ESG is responsible for the delivery, integration and compatibility of the PTA into the EC135 helicopter and is responsible for maintenance. The delivery deadline for the PTA is May 1, 2006 – less than a month away and six weeks before the FIFA World Cup begins. [ESG]

## INTERNATIONAL

In February Germany's highest court repealed a law that would have allowed the government to shoot down hijacked airliners as a last resort in a terrorist attack.

President Horst Koehler signed the air safety bill last year, but encouraged a legal review by the Federal Constitutional Court amid heated debate over whether the state has a right to kill citizens even to save the lives of others.

In its ruling, the court found the bill "incompatible with the fundamental right to life and with the guarantee of human dignity" for innocent passengers on an aircraft.

It also found that allowing the military to shoot down civilian airliners violates a constitutional ban on the military being deployed for domestic security, except in the case of helping with natural disasters or serious accidents. A similar theme runs through the US constitution although there was always a suggestion that one of the aircraft lost on 9-11 was shot down to stop it being flown into the White House.

In the same week that a court in Germany declared that it would not be acceptable for the military to shoot down a terrorist hi-jacked airliner containing innocent civilians even if it were clear that the intention of the hijackers was to kill thousands by crashing into a public facility the Russians declared that they would indeed shoot down such an aircraft.

Notwithstanding the radically changed political situation in the country since 1991 this was probably never in doubt in the wake of the Korean Air Flight 007, [KAL 007] shot down with all on board off Sakhalin island by Soviet interceptors on September 1, 1983. At that time the Soviet Union stated it did not know the aircraft was civilian, and suggested it had entered their airspace as a deliberate provocation to test their response capabilities.

On hearing news of the German court's decision in the UK a BBC National radio station took a brief poll of its listeners and the number in favour of a 'shoot down' to save further loss of life was high. [Media]

## JAPAN

AgustaWestland has announced that Mitsui Bussan Aerospace of Japan has signed a contract, valued at approximately US\$100M, for 12 AW139 helicopters and an exclusive distributor agreement for the AW139 in Japan. The contract was signed at the Asian Aerospace exhibition in Singapore in February. The first aircraft under this contract will be delivered in 2007.

This latest order is additional to the three AW139 helicopters already ordered by Mitsui Bussan Aerospace, of which the first example has already been delivered to Japan for customisation and will soon be entering service with the Tokyo Metropolitan Police—see the image on page 16 of last months HAI Heli-Expo edition. [AW]

## NEW ZEALAND

Concern is being raised by the media that dangerous prisoners are being flown around the country on commercial flights as the Corrections Department struggles to cope with a record number of inmates.

Recently the department has been spending about \$100,000 a month on private carriers, they spent more last year than in the previous five.

Using figures obtained under a local freedom of information law it is clear the department has spent \$684,128 since last summer in transferring 6854 inmates – equivalent to 90% of the prison population – between prisons by plane or bus. The figures exclude transfers by



department-owned vehicles.

Although some transfers were on scheduled airliners chartered flights were most common, with a 20-seater plane carrying 16 prisoners and four guards. Favoured carriers are Origin Pacific, Airworks and Air National. [Stuff]

## SOUTH AFRICA

Four more Eurocopter AS350B3 helicopters, worth about R80 million, have been acquired for the South African Police Service (SAPS).

Completed by Eurocopter Southern Africa, the new fleet was purchased by the Armaments Corporation of South Africa (Armcor) for the police and are scheduled to be delivered to bases at Gauteng, Mpumalanga and Western Cape provinces.

The air wing flies about 8 000 hours every year, conducting various crime prevention operations.

Eurocopter has almost exclusively supplied helicopters to the SAPS for many years, it also trains SAPS pilots and technicians and provides maintenance to the fleet.

Armcor's General Manager for Acquisitions, Deon Smith, said the process of upgrading the air wing from its previous core fleet of BO105 helicopters started with the acquisition of two AS350B3 helicopters in January 2000. A further five were acquired in February 2005. The recent acquisition raises the number to 11 although one was lost in an accident.

## SPAIN

The Spanish Government has announced that the Spanish Ministry of Interior will acquire 48 EC135 helicopters to modernise the existing helicopter fleets of the Guardia Civil and Cuerpo Nacional de Policía over the next eight years. In all, 51 helicopters including three already in service, will be used for the fleet upgrade

An EC135 assembly line is being set up at the local Eurocopter España site, Albacete. [EC]

*Ed: The Spanish government has not yet announced an engine selection although two EC135s sent to Spain via McAlpine Helicopters in the UK in 2003 were fitted with the PWC engine. That choice was made by virtue of the ex-US pair being the only EC135 readily available at the time of what is supposed an urgent requirement.*

*As the EC135 is one of the few airframes available with choice the engine provider Turbomeca and PWC have been vying for customers more than ever before in some markets.*

*ECD believe that the final mix of deliveries for Guardia Civil and Policia, will see 35 for Guardia Civil (2 already delivered) and 16 for Policia (1 delivered). The two delivered in 2003 [EC135P2 EC-IKV c/n 191 and EC-IKX c/n 222] were despatched from the UK marked as Police aircraft, one has clearly changed users to become 09-301 with Guardia Civil. In 2003 the German aviation press claimed that the Guardia Civil had ordered about twelve EC135T2 helicopters and that the 'first few' were delivered to Torrejon in late 2003. It seems there is only one [EC135P2 HU26-02/09-302 c/n 402 delivered in December 2005] and that is also powered by the PWC engine.*

*Assembly of the further EC135s will take place at Eurocopter España's Albacete plant starting in the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of next year.*



## UNITED KINGDOM

**POLICE MERGERS:** The whole question of the future make-up of police forces in England and Wales has now hardened following a new statement from the Home Secretary.

A statement has already been made that all the police in Wales will be reduced to a single force from Dyfed Powys, Gwent, North Wales and South Wales currently operating one A109E, one EC135T1 and one AS355F2 with a decision on its replacement pending. The latest information talks of a reduction from 43 forces to just 24 in England.

A final decision on the form of mergers, and therefore number, has yet to be made in the South West and in the Yorkshire and Humber region, meanwhile Hampshire, Kent and Thames Valley won a reprieve and will stay as they are or as the official statement has it, they will be 'reconfigured as strategic forces.'

Options proposed at this stage as suitable for progression are the creation of the following groupings.

Up in the North West Cumbria and Lancashire would merge. The former has no air support but the latter has an EC135T2 at BAE Warton – probably a little too far south to be considered a central resource.

Cheshire and Merseyside both have aircraft [EC135T2 and BN2] and have both worked together on air support in the past. This merger does set aside existing plans to place Cheshire with North Wales air support together though.

Cleveland, Durham and Northumbria works out just fine as this is an existing air support arrangement sharing two EC135T helicopters.

Teaming up Staffordshire, Warwickshire, West Mercia and West Midlands affects Warwickshire in that they are currently part of the East Midlands operation. This will place two EC135s together – assuming that the West Midlands EC135 purchase is confirmed this month.

In the East Midlands a single force made up of the merger of Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire and Nottinghamshire will be something of a giant. Currently they operate two EC135Ts in this region – although Lincolnshire has no air support of its own.

Down in the South East corner two groups were envisaged from the merger of Surrey and Sussex, currently flying the EC135T2 and MD900 respectively but the constituent forces of other proposed group Hampshire, Kent and Thames Valley have been given a stay of any merger. Hampshire have a BN2T and Thames Valley an EC135T2 [the western element of the Chiltern group] and Kent continue to wander in the air support wilderness with nothing in spite of their strategic position close to the coast of Europe.

In the East there would again be two groups created by mergers of Cambridgeshire, Norfolk and Suffolk, in air support terms that would be a bit of a 'dog's dinner' as they will operate a new MD Helicopters MD900 Explorer, an old BO105 and a EC135T1 'Classic' respectively. Maintenance and pilotage providers may become an issue here as Sterling provides both for the BO105.

The placing together of Bedfordshire, Essex and Hertfordshire blows two existing consortia apart - Chiltern and East Anglia. It would also move the axis of the group so that Chiltern's current problems with Luton [see below] might now have a different remedy to those immediately apparent.

Home Office proposals for Yorkshire and the Humber and the South West are expected to be announced shortly. [HO/IPAR]

**CAMBRIDGESHIRE:** There has been little news from the latest UK police purchaser of the MD900 Explorer G-CMBS in recent weeks but an article appearing in the local Peterborough newspaper certainly filled an existing void of information. So little has appeared recently that every word of the article flashed around the World on the newswires.

According to the newspaper the £3.9M helicopter is now expected to take to the sky to cover Cambridgeshire from May. The cost will be funded by a £1.95M grant from the Home



Office, £350,000 from the sale of the old force helicopter and £400,000 over the next three years in the police budget. This will average out at a cost of £1 per person for Cambridgeshire taxpayers.

It replaces a second-hand AS355F2 bought by Cambridgeshire police in 1997 and now nearly 15 years old.

*Ed: When I spoke to the completion house for this aircraft PAS [Police Aviation Services] in the form of Henck Shaeken [the CEO] on the floor of HAI in Dallas and he stated that delivery was expected before the May date. It may be that the paper is quoting a fully operational rather than hand-over date.*

CHILTERN: It looks increasingly like the Chiltern Police EC135T2 helicopter currently based at Luton Airport in Bedfordshire [aka 'London [Luton] Airport'] will have to move within the next 12 months.

The unit is currently located off Prince Way not far from the main terminal building in an area once occupied by the Percival Aircraft Company. The location of the existing helicopter's base is now incompatible with the adjacent buildings, aprons and taxiways, and increasingly struggles to meet the required operating standards. As a result the unit was already in the throes of planning the move of its operation to an area across the airport and not far from the current fire training ground.

After consultations between the police and airport authorities everything was set for a move - the lease on the existing building expires in March 2007. Although contracts had not yet been signed on the new site preparatory site work had been undertaken along with selection of the design and construction options. Unofficial sources suggest that the external cladding of the proposed building had been altered to suit an airport authority request.

All this pre-planning went awry when in mid-March and without warning, the police were informed that the airport authority that the new site was no longer available. Future airport expansion plans were now allocating car parks to the site the police had earmarked for their new base.



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Sources have suggested various safety issues relating to the new site and the authorities at Luton Airport indicate they are aware of the problem but have no comment to offer on any of the issues.

With substantially less than a year left until the current lease expires any new build is now probably out of the question and, if the deadline is enforced, the unit will probably have to go to an existing facility. The situation is going to be further distorted by the substantial changes scheduled for police forces ordered by the Home Office. [Luton Airport/media/pprune]

**METROPOLITAN:** Skyquest Aviation, the UK manufacturer of specialist airborne surveillance equipment have announced that the Metropolitan Police have selected their Video Management System for installation in their new fleet of EC145 helicopters.

Under the contract Skyquest will supply a comprehensive surveillance suite for each aircraft giving the police new capabilities in airborne surveillance. Each aircraft will be fitted with 5 multi-function mission displays and multiple digital video recorders. Operators, regardless of their position in the aircraft, can select any sensor image or multiple sensor images to be called to their display and send any selected data to microwave downlink or recording equipment onboard the helicopters.

Touch screen interfaces on the displays enable users to control other equipment such as moving maps, radar & number plate recognition computers on their screens without the need for multiple control panels. The man-machine interface has been developed jointly by Skyquest and the Metropolitan Police to enable each airborne police observer to get maximum use from all the equipment carried onboard the aircraft.

In addition to the surveillance equipment Skyquest have also been chosen to supply a camera system for the Goodrich external hoist to enable the pilot to view firearms hoist operations. The camera images can also be recorded onto one of the onboard video recorders for training and mission briefing purposes.

The aircraft are to have a Skyforce/Honeywell Observer mapping system integrated with the easytask Observer, a PC Base Station for the system.

John Herbert, Managing Director of Skyquest, said that "a number of other UK and international police forces were shortly to sign orders" and that "Skyquest had received considerable interest in their new VMS system from both military and paramilitary customers worldwide". [www.skyquest.co.uk](http://www.skyquest.co.uk)

## UNITED STATES

**FEDERAL:** US Border Patrol officials plan to monitor a larger area of the southwest border with an unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV), which has been in use since September 2005. They plan to add a second one this summer. The UAV surveillance area will increase from 150 miles to 300 miles in Arizona. It also intends to start using a second UAV in Arizona by June.

The technology has helped agents make more than 1,000 apprehensions and many drug seizures. The Border Patrol has been testing various UAVs since June 2004 but started the current one-year, \$14.1M contract with General Atomics Aeronautical Services to deliver,

operate and maintain a Predator B UAV platform and sensor package offering flights from 18 to 24 hours at an altitude of 18,000 feet with high quality imagers. [FCW]

FEDERAL: Lockheed Martin and EADS CASA rolled out the first production airframe of the HC-235A medium-range surveillance maritime patrol aircraft in Spain last month. Produced in Spain with substantial US content, including avionics, propulsion and integrated subsystems, the HC-235A is the first new aircraft developed for the US Coast Guard's Integrated Deepwater System.



The first aircraft was unveiled at the EADS CASA plant in San Pablo (Seville) at a ceremony attended by the US ambassador to Spain, the vice commandant of the Coast Guard, and senior company executives representing EADS CASA, EADS North America, Lockheed Martin and ICGS, as well as various government officials from both countries. This ceremony marked a significant milestone in development and delivery of the new aircraft for the Coast Guard leading to first deliveries next year.

The Coast Guard will use the HC-235A to perform SAR missions, enforce laws and treaties including illegal drug interdiction, marine environmental protection, military readiness, and international ice patrol missions, as well as cargo and personnel transport.

The current Deepwater plan calls for production and system integration of 36 aircraft over ten years to 2017. This first aircraft will be completed and delivered to the Coast Guard's Aviation Training Center in Mobile, AL, in spring 2007. [LMCO/EADS]

ARIZONA: The City of Tucson's online auction of a police helicopter has ended with a \$421,400 sale.

The Bell JetRanger helicopter was up for auction last month with bidding starting at \$200,000. It sold March 8, with an extended bidding time that generated 20 additional offers and \$20,000 more, according to a news release from the city's Department of Procurement. The buyer is Brian Reynolds, CEO of Northwest Helicopters, a helicopter company based in Olympia, Wash.

The aircraft was bought new by the Tucson Police Department in 1994 for \$752,700, and has been used as a police helicopter ever since. [Arizona Daily Star]

CALIFORNIA: Bell Helicopter has announced the order of a Bell 417 helicopter to Aviation Specialties Inc. based in Boise, Idaho. This was one of the 46 new Bell 417s ordered in conjunction with the recent Heli-Expo in Dallas, Texas and represents the first sale into law enforcement. The new 417 will join the company's existing Bell fleet of a 206-B3 and a Bell 407.

Aviation Specialties' Bell 407 is currently contracted to the Sonoma County Sheriff's Department in California. [BHT]

FLORIDA: With \$3.74M of the County Commission's funds to hand, Monroe County Sheriff is ready to buy a new medical emergency helicopter.

It is believed that a Sikorsky is the type chosen to replace the grounded Bell UH-1 Huey that had been used for TraumaStar services. Already configured for medical trauma transport the replacement helicopter was previously in service in Pennsylvania.

The Sheriff's Office purchased the used 1967 Huey for \$325,000 in 2000. Roth said the aircraft was updated and outfitted as an air ambulance and pressed into service two years later. The old craft is being donated to Charlotte County in support of their own Huey.



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The Huey was grounded in August 2005 when it was clear repair costs were more than the craft was worth. Since then private helicopter companies have provided transport services. [Florida Keys Keynoter]

**FLORIDA:** Twelve years after its aviation unit was decommissioned due to a city budget crisis, the Miami Police Department is back in the air with a brand new EC120 helicopter. [AEC]

*Ed: Nominally in 1914 Miami was the first user of police aviation. In 1994 an annual report stated that the aero bureau undertook only 138 missions in that year which appears to sit with the lack of fleet growth in spite of short term acquisitions of surplus types subsequently passed on.*

**MARYLAND:** In a move to substantially upgrade and expand the capacity of its aviation unit, the Baltimore County Police Department (BCPD) is purchasing three Eurocopter AS350B3 helicopters. The B3s will replace three Bell OH-58's currently in service. The Bell's were obtained through the Defense Logistics Agency as military surplus and have been in service in Baltimore County since 1996.

The Baltimore County Police Department is the nation's 23rd largest police department, with an authorized strength of 2,545 sworn and non-sworn employees. Baltimore County has a population of more than 770,000 residents, covering an area of 612 square miles, with 210 miles of waterfront.

*Ed: As this was being announced the police in the City of Baltimore were singing the praises of their EC120 fleet on reaching 15,000 fleet hours safely.*

**NORTH CAROLINA:** Nearly two years after a helicopter crash killed a Franklin County sheriff's deputy, criminal charges have been filed against helicopter pilot Ben Barrick for in-



voluntary manslaughter. Barrick is accused of flying the helicopter that killed deputy Ted Horton in May 2004, despite warnings that the helicopter was unsafe.

Barrick brought the helicopter to Franklin County and worked out a secret lease with the sheriff. The contract promised an aircraft in excellent condition but fatigue failure in the tailboom caused the fatal crash.

Barrick moved to Tennessee after the crash and it is hoped he will return voluntarily to Franklin County to face a manslaughter charge. If convicted, Barrick faces up to 20 months in prison.

## AIR AMBULANCE

### INDIA

GUJARAT: A Piper Seneca IV a twin-engine, six-seat aircraft has been procured from the US and improvised into an air ambulance to serve as the regions first air ambulance.

The air ambulance is operated by Ahmedabad Aviation and Aeronautics Limited [AAAL]. The company has tied up with Apollo Hospitals for air-evacuation of patients, wherein a team of doctors and paramedics and medical equipment is provided by Apollo. The air-ambulance can be used by all hospitals.

There are 75 air strips capable of accepting the Seneca in Gujarat and Rajasthan. The cost of air evacuation has been fixed at Rs 29,500 per flight hour [\$US662].

Elsewhere in India, Tops Security Ltd [TSL] launched Air Rescue an air ambulance transportation service for individuals and institutions. The company will use a fleet of chartered aircraft and have links with international air ambulance service providers. The Air Rescue wing of TSL can call on six types of aircraft, including Cessna Citation II, two Beech's [B 200 & C90], Pilatus PC 12 a Dornier and a helicopter fleet offering the Bell 206 and 407. [ET]



### UNITED KINGDOM



ESSEX: The air ambulance [EAA] has launched a new partnership with local operator Eastern Helicopters Ltd to raise awareness of 'Copter Kidz, the official kids club for the Essex Air Ambulance. On March 22 the EAA team and Eastern Helicopters dropped in on a Braintree primary school for a photo call and a talk about the new kids club. The children had the opportunity to view the helicopter close up, ask the pilot questions and have class photographs taken. The event marked the launch of Eastern Helicopters' new partnership with the charity and the new 'Copter Kidz Flying Visit' tour that will soon see 'Copter Kidz mascot Pilot Pete flying high across the county. [www.copterkidz.co.uk](http://www.copterkidz.co.uk)."

The club for children aged between 5 and 11 years is aimed at raising awareness of the work of the Essex Air Ambulance amongst children. The Appeals office on 01787 221828 has further information.

FARNBOROUGH AIR SHOW: The HEMS provision for this year Farnborough International Air Show [18-23 July 2006] has been let to Atlas Helicopters based at Lee-on-Solent. [MB]

**GREAT NORTH:** A cheque for £4,103 has been donated to the Great North Air Ambulance Service (GNAAS) on behalf of EGGER UK employees.

The money was partly raised by the company's Christmas Raffle, which is organised by EGGER's Charity Committee, and partly by a donation from the company, Europe's leading wood-based panel products manufacturer.

**SCOTLAND:** In the face of continued negative attitudes to the revised air ambulance arrangements in Scotland Shetland's new, state of the art Raytheon King Air air ambulance touched down at Tingwall airport as part of a flying visit to allow consultants to get a feel for the new aircraft.

Gama Aviation, which is taking over the air ambulance service from Loganair on April 1, will provide the service for the outlying islands using the purpose-built plane based in Aberdeen and a medically-equipped Super Puma helicopter based at Sumburgh Airport.

Another King Air will be based in Glasgow for the other remote Scottish islands. Both offer a more spacious interior than the previous Islander, with room for two stretchers and more seating for carers. The plane is faster, less noisy, fully pressurised and has wipe-clean surfaces to reduce the risk of infection transfer. Unlike the Islander the King Air has a double cargo bay door and automatic ramp which makes loading and unloading patients easier.

The extra speed will cut journey times between Tingwall and Aberdeen from an hour and 20 minutes to around 50 minutes. [Shetland Times]

Just days later the old arrangements stood down with a March 23 ceremony on Shetland.

After 37 years of flying patients to hospitals in Lerwick, Kirkwall, Aberdeen and further afield, Loganair marked the loss of the air ambulance service contract by bringing in company top brass to Shetland and then hosting a reception at the Gilbert Bain Hospital, in Lerwick.

The Scottish airline was contracted to operate the air ambulance flights from Shetland and Orkney in 1969. Simultaneously, Loganair developed a scheduled inter-island air service linking the outer islands with the Shetland and Orkney mainland.

In the intervening years the sturdy Britten Norman BN-2 Islander aircraft has taken thousands of patients from the outer isles to hospital in Lerwick and Kirkwall, and have flown numerous missions with sick patients and expectant mothers to hospitals on the Scottish mainland. [Shetland Times]

**SUSSEX:** The 'predatory' activities of Kent Air Ambulance Trust in seeking funding from the people of Sussex to fund an additional air ambulance service in the county continue to raise hackles.

The recent launch of a web site promoting the Sussex Air Ambulance [actually piggy-backing on the other proposed new service in Surrey] has further alienated the old from the new.

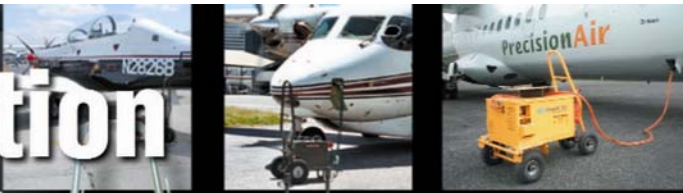
The new alternative Sussex service launched to the public early in June 2005 using a PAS MD Explorer, the Surrey Air Ambulance Appeal officially launched just a few days later at Brooklands Transport Museum in Weybridge using an AS355 helicopter. Each of these projects is being supported administratively by Kent Air Ambulance.

It is said that the long-standing Sussex Police EMS service was never consulted on the Kent proposals to duplicate their joint police operation.

**YORKSHIRE:** The air ambulance service could start flying out of new bases in North and South Yorkshire once the charity takes delivery of a second MD900 Explorer. An order is expected to be signed this month but it will not be ready for 18 months.

The new aircraft might possibly be based in the Harrogate district, with a satellite station at Malton to better serve the East Coast and the main route to the coast at Scarborough. Flights to the coast from the main base in Leeds take about 20 minutes where a base in

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Malton would halve the time. Ambulance bosses have chosen a site off the A169, to the north of the Eden Camp Museum. Consultation is under way about the proposed base at Malton, which would operate during the summer to cope with the added demand in that part of the county from holidaymakers, when the number of incidents almost doubles.

# FIRE

## CHILE

Kamov-Holding showed a Ka-32A11BC helicopter, a modification of an aircraft used throughout the world, at the FIDAE-2006 air show, which opened on March 27.

Two Ka-32s leased from Spain are currently flying in Chile to fight forest fires in the country. The aircraft already operates in the skies of Canada, Switzerland, Taiwan, South Korea and Mexico and can be used for rescue operations, construction purposes, and transportation operations in the mountains. [Kamov]





# SEARCH AND RESCUE

## EIRE

CHC Helicopter Corporation has been named by The Irish Department of Transport [The Irish Coast Guard] as the 'preferred bidder' to provide commercial search and rescue helicopter services from four bases in Ireland commencing July 1, 2007.

CHC and the Irish Coast Guard will now negotiate details of the operation with a view to finalizing a contract for the provision of SAR helicopter services from bases at Dublin, Sligo, Shannon and Waterford on a 24/7 basis. The awarding of this contract remains subject to the finalisation of terms and conditions.

CHC, through its Dublin-based subsidiary CHC Ireland, is the current provider of search and rescue and emergency helicopter services to The Irish Coast Guard. As previously noted CHC will provide commercial search and rescue helicopter services to the United Kingdom Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) from bases in the UK in 2007.

## JAPAN

The date of a presentation and display of the Beriev Be-200 amphibian in Japan is expected to be agreed shortly.

The manufacturers believe that the large number of islands in Japan make the type suitable for rescue, cargo and passenger transportation operations.

## UNITED KINGDOM

SAR: The Maritime & Coastguard Agency today released its search and rescue figures for 2005. These show that the total number of occasions where assistance was required went down compared with 2004, and that the total number of persons rescued (where lives were at risk) was also down.

The total number of alerts received by the Coastguard did show an increase but this was a positive response to the Coastguard campaign to encourage people to alert the Coastguard earlier when in trouble or to report those that are suspected of being in trouble more readily. A small rise in maritime accident deaths from 96 in 2004 to 100 in 2005 is seen as regrettable and one where there is some work to be done. Other recorded deaths, such as those by suicide or crime related, are ones where the MCA has little control or influence.

Hoax calls to the Coastguard were also up from a recorded 301 in 2004 to 406 in 2005.

For comparison purposes the figures for 2004 and 2005 are as follows:

|  | 2004   | 2005                      |
|--|--------|---------------------------|
| Total reports to the Coastguard:         | 14,240 | 16,754                    |
| Total occasions of assistance rendered:  | 8,056  | 7,252                     |
| Total number of persons rescued:         | 5,276  | 4,790 (life at risk)      |
| Total numbers of persons assisted        | 21,600 | 22,477 (life not at risk) |
| Recorded fatalities (accident maritime): | 96     | 100                       |

Of the fatalities recorded by the Coastguard 113 were either known or assumed to be suicide, 98 the result of crime and 29 were natural causes.

SKYWATCH: The voluntary group has introduced Air Observer training into its programme. Observers who successfully complete the course receive the service's Air Observer qualification and brevet.

The Air Observer course and qualification is also available free of charge to emergency services associated with Sky Watch. The York unit has commenced Air Observer training with the Scarborough Mountain Rescue Team which has recently concluded successful trials with Sky Watch using light aircraft in both the Search Commander Observation Platform

role and Sky Watch's normal air observation and search work.

The course which covers map reading, search techniques and pilot assistance was designed by the Worcester Unit's Exercise Director John d'Rozario and Ground Support Team Leader Ray Johnson. [Skywatch]

**JIGSAW:** Two of the most advanced SAR helicopters in the world have now taken up their positions in the North Sea.

BP is completing the final pieces of its Jigsaw - its new safety system for its offshore workforce. The £135M scheme involves three Super Puma helicopters, four 5,000-ton multi-role safety vessels (RSV) and eight rescue and recovery craft (ARRC).

The four RSVs carry four fast rescue craft - two 18-meter long ARRCs and two smaller ones. The larger craft can carry up to 84 survivors.

One of the Jigsaw Super Puma helicopters will be based at Scatsta, in Shetland, with another offshore in the central North Sea. There will be a third as a backup in Aberdeen. [RigZone]

## ON THE PRODUCTION LINE

**The Maritime and Coastguard Agency [MCA]** has announced that it has acquired the former Daedalus Airfield site at Lee-on-Solent from Defence Estates (DE).

The site represents a total area of 106 hectares (256 acres) and will enable the Agency's existing Search and Rescue Helicopter operation to continue to operate from Daedalus.

The Agency has already received consent from both Fareham and Gosport Borough Councils for the construction of a new helicopter hangar facility with appropriate small office accommodation to be undertaken on the site and it is envisaged that site works will commence in May with completion by autumn 2007.

The South East England Development Agency (SEEDA) has confirmed that it has also acquired the remaining 82.4 ha (204 acre) of the site.

The whole site, covering a total area of 186.4 ha (460 acre), was formerly used as a military airfield by the MoD but has since been declared surplus to their requirements and available for redevelopment.

The MCA acquisition is for airfield operations, to provide new facilities and improvements whilst retaining the airfield for other users including the police operation of the Hampshire Police.

Solent Maritime Rescue Co-ordination Centre in 2005 handled a total of 1,498 SAR incidents to which the Coastguard SAR helicopter was scrambled on 202 occasions.

*Ed: A handful of years ago the airfield – blighted by the reputed existence of 'vast' gravel deposits beneath the runways was going to be bought up by Hampshire County Council – primarily to secure a base for the Hampshire Police Air Support Unit BN2T. This alternative strategy effectively performs the same task. It will result in some changes including the rehousing of the HPASU aircraft as the hangar they use lies outside the area now purchased and preserved. The police unit is based in the old control tower on the east side, the hangars are on the west and the MCA base and hangars on the south side close to the water.*

When disaster strikes, limiting contamination and improving living conditions quickly become top priorities for disaster relief agencies and those in need. For disaster relief efforts, Graham Medical, a manufacturer of single-use medical products, has introduced a new product solution. **ComfortOne** disposable sleeping bag with pillow is portable, compact, lightweight and convenient. Its unique layered construction features non-woven materials that provide fluid barrier protection and are non-allergenic.

Traditional sleeping bags are often found on disaster relief preparedness lists. The ComfortOne bag includes an inflatable pillow, lays flat at 36" x 92", and weighs only two pounds. It fits in a resealable vacuum pouch and is engineered for use up to two weeks.

Graham Medical has developed a number of relief products including the MegaMover

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Graham Medical will feature the ComfortOne in April at the Government Security Expo & Conference in Washington DC. Call 1-800-236-8701 ext. 5332 or visit [www.comfort-one.net](http://www.comfort-one.net).

**Bell Helicopter** Textron Inc is to have a major static display, hospitality facility and sponsorship programme at the Farnborough International Airshow 2006 - the first Bell presence at FIA since 1998.

Farnborough International Ltd (FIL) has announced that Bell is to take five chalet units and a large static space at the show. This will be the first Bell exhibit there since 1998. The Company's chalet units will form an extensive business hospitality facility on Row L which faces the end of the runway. It will be capable of accommodating up to 300 business contacts each day. From the facility, guests will be able to look over the Company's static display area which will feature a number of Bell aircraft.

Textron will enhance its presence at the Show by sponsoring a fleet of E-Z-GO golf cars which will be visible across the show as they are used to transport individuals, on a complimentary basis, around the Farnborough International Airshow grounds. This will be the first time an exhibiting company has sponsored a courtesy golf car system at FIA.

Last month **Bell Helicopter** announced that sales of the Model 429 had already reached 200. The type remain's only a shell but Bell in Canada say its new 429 is on schedule.

The Mirabel-based company states that the 200 orders include around one-third coming from air ambulance services - a market it had been specifically targeting.

AirMedic of Quebec will be its first Canadian customer for the 429's medical configuration, placing two orders and taking options on five others. [Gazette]

**Pratt & Whitney Canada** Customer Service Centre Europe GmbH (P&WC CSC Europe GmbH) has officially started offering Repair and Overhaul (R&O) services for the PW500 series engine at its R&O facility in Ludwigsfelde near Berlin, Germany. The facility has also expanded its Mobile Repair Team (MRT) to support customers in the field operating the PW500.

Modifications were carried out to the layout of the facility to integrate the PW500 R&O services within the existing turbofan line. New test cell equipment has been added and certified, and staff at the facility has also undergone comprehensive training to provide PW500 related services.

P&WC CSC Europe GmbH is a joint venture of P&WC and MTU/Germany and operates two modern service centres plus Mobile Repair Teams (MRT) in Ludwigsfelde, Germany

**Reims F406 Land & Sea Surveillance**



and Southampton, UK. The Southampton facility is conveniently located adjacent to the Southampton International Airport. This 60,000-square-foot facility offers full repair and overhaul support for PW100 and PT6T Twin-Pac(R), including two test cells, one for each engine series. The Ludwigsfelde facility is located near the city of Berlin. In addition to providing new services for the PW500, it offers full repair and overhaul support for PT6A, JT15D, PW200 and PW300 engine series. [PWC]

**Aero Optical** the suppliers of specialist equipment for various applications, such as Police Air Support, Border Patrol, Homeland Security, Search and Rescue, Power Line Inspections and Broadcast have launched a new dual solid state recorder onto the market.

The DV-FAR MOV format, solid state video recorder offers two recorders in one unit a recording time of 25 min /

GB (DVD quality) on two 8GB cards provides a total of 7hrs record time with unlimited playback ability with uninterrupted continuous recording. Two recorders allow two separate video signals to be recorded simultaneously. (e.g.: FLIR and TV)

One recorder can be used to record continuously and uninterrupted for up to 3.5 hrs while the second unit is used to rew, prev clip, playback

With two video inputs; both recorded simultaneously with full playback features the system offers a compression ratio that is operator adjustable for even higher resolution.

The output on Mpeg-2 footage can be viewed on standard PC with standard windows software.

Contact details for Aero Optical are +44 7704 173864, Fax: +44 8712 424808, [info@aero-optical.co.uk](mailto:info@aero-optical.co.uk) [www.aero-optical.co.uk](http://www.aero-optical.co.uk)

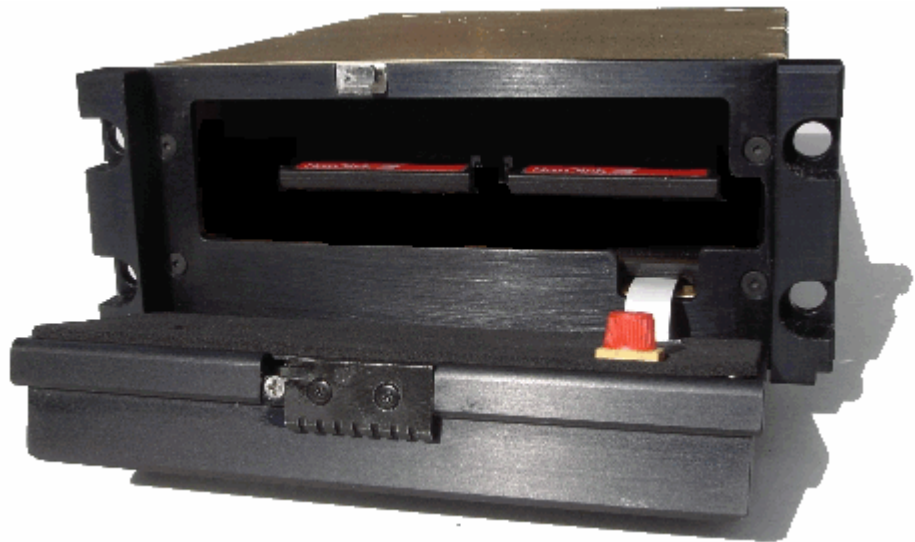
**LoJack Corporation** the global leader in tracking and recovering valuable mobile assets, has announced that it has expanded its Stolen Vehicle Recovery System Network into South Carolina, beginning with the greater Columbia, Charleston and Rock Hill areas. Further expansion in the state is expected in 2006.

Moving away from airborne systems for a while, the Los Angeles Port Police used **BlueView Technologies'** new multi-beam imaging sonar to assist in the location of the body of a lost fisherman near Cabrillo Beach breakwater.

According to the USCG, the man and a friend were fishing off the Cabrillo Beach breakwater when they were swept away by a freak wave shortly after midnight. The survivor was reportedly able to swim to shore, but the other man was nowhere to be seen.

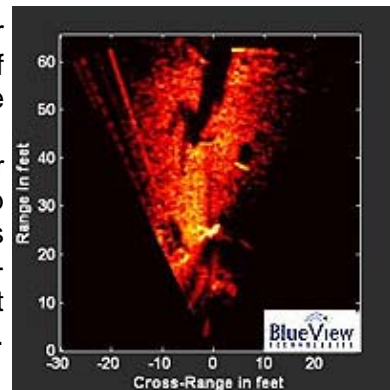
Rescuers from Los Angeles City Fire Department, LAPD, and the Los Angeles Port Police searched for the missing man with boats and helicopters for several hours with no success. In the early morning, Los Angeles Port Police got to the scene equipped with a newly installed BlueView High Definition Imaging Sonar mounted on their patrol boat. The body of the man was located using the new sonar about 30 feet from where he had been washed away by the wave.

The officer onboard the boat was able to view real-time streaming imagery that the new so-



nar produces and speak to the divers over an underwater acoustic communication system. Using this combination of tools, the officer was able to quickly direct the divers to the body.

Developed at the University of Washington, this new sonar technology is exclusively licensed to Seattle-based startup BlueView Technologies for commercialisation. Using this technology, BlueView has developed a series of high-performance imaging sonar products for law enforcement, port security, and other commercial applications. [www.blueviewtech.com/](http://www.blueviewtech.com/)



This technology is not exclusive to BlueView. At the recent Global Ocean Forum in London the **Coda Octopus Group** were one of a number of International companies exhibiting similar devices with high detail sonar scanning capabilities. Coda developing their Echoscope-HI harbour inspection sonar system and Echoscope II in cooperation with the USCG. Among the capabilities seen for this Windows XP compatible technology in the future are an ability to scan the underwater hulls of ships in real time 3D for any anomalies before they enter harbours. A relatively short-range system [less than 250 metres/825 feet] the portable equipment weighs 22kg/44lbs. [www.codaoctopus.com](http://www.codaoctopus.com)

**Richmond Toys** has released the latest two examples of models based on its die-cast MD Explorer. Already available in the colours of the West Midlands police and the air ambulances of London, Kent and Lincs & Notts the latest releases cover the Wiltshire Police and the MDHI LUH submission.

As before the models are crisp reproductions of the basic airframe with different paint schemes and none of the additional features sported by the originals.

The police machine is best value in that it offers a mix moulded plastic and painted detailing and is overpainted with the blue and yellow conspicuity scheme and numerous decals of the original Wiltshire airframe. Disappointingly market pressures have seen the price of this machine climb to £12.99 where some of the earlier examples retail from just £9.99. The Wiltshire Explorer also operates as an air ambulance and there is an element of fundraising in the price.

As previously mentioned the MD LUH scheme was commissioned by MD as a marketing exercise – although I have not personally seen any examples of that marketing. The resultant model, very much a Limited Edition of just 1,500 examples will have a following but all you get for your purchase is a matt green airframe bearing simple 'US Army' lettering in black. American readers may well be luckier in that they get them from MD but the LUH is treated as a special edition in the UK market and only 500 have been imported – a factor





which pushes the price up even further to £14.99. The importers [www.richmondtoys.com](http://www.richmondtoys.com) are based in the UK and provide a mail order service.

**Meeker Aviation** based in Canada and California has developed equipment for a growing Eurocopter EC135 and EC145 fleet.

Meeker has produced a step suitable for both aircraft types, just a matter of positioning the crosstube fitting. The forward station will be rated to 125 lbs (suitable for say a FSI Starsafire), the rear to approx 40lbs and suited for installing lights, loud-hailers and downlinks. Variations in the product mean that the operator can choose a number of fix configurations. ``



Meeker Image

**LifePort, Inc.** recently took an order to complete a medical interior for AirMed of Georgia's Bell 206 back-up helicopter. Earlier in the year, AirMed purchased a complete two-patient medical interior for its Koala A119.

The Bell 206 medical interior consists of a swiveling MedDeck and AeroSled VF, which allows the medical crew to quickly load and unload patients without lifting. The trolley is fully articulating and rotates easily for turning a patient into the cabin. The MedPak is a compact system that contains all the components in the cargo area and is plumbed forward to the aft MedWall. The 206 interior is a light-weight, user friendly, fully STC'd installation with several options and accessories.

**Bell Helicopter's** new Repair and Overhaul Center (ROC), located in Roanoke, Texas, recently announced completion of the first components sent to the facility for overhaul. The 82,000 sq.ft facility will repair and overhaul transmissions, rotating controls, rotor hubs, gearboxes, and rotor blades, as well as coordinate 2<sup>nd</sup> tier supplier repairs for all of Bell's US military platforms.

Another manufacturer bidding for a share in the expected high volume UAV market is the Swedish company **Helicopter View**. They recently displayed their Autocopter AT80 VTOL machine in London. The company [www.helicopterview.se](http://www.helicopterview.se) offers a range of products includ-

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ing static balloons and ground based gantries to carry cameras and the UAV is proven technology imported from the USA.

Promoted as a cost-effective platform for a variety of commercial and security applications the AT80 is the air vehicle not an integrated system. Flown using simple ground control systems based on a laptop computer operations can be point and click whilst being monitored in real time out to a distance of 7 miles.

The Autocopter was developed and built by **Neural Robotics**, Huntsville, AL [www.neural-robotics.com](http://www.neural-robotics.com) and the Swedish company has the rights in Scandinavia.



A little heard of sector of UK law enforcement is that performed by such companies as **Atlantic Reconnaissance**. Formerly trading as Air Atlantique this company undertakes work for the Maritime and Coastguard Agency [MCA] and provides their fixed wing element on SAR and pollution patrol operations.

They have designed and developed systems for monitoring various aspects of the environment. These systems monitor and record pollutants in the air, land and sea. Atlantic Reconnaissance either modify a client's own aircraft or provide a fully equipped aircraft with a variety of sensors and integrated control system capable of either real time or post mission analysis.

Over the years they have designed and produced dispersant spraying systems for the BN2A Islander, DC3, DC6, F406 and Electra aircraft. The systems have all been proven in operations, exercises and trials and are certified by the UK CAA.

The company has past experience in mapping from forest fires to ice formations, geology, monitoring shipping, SAR, oil and chemical spill detection as well as police air support and coastal patrol for illegal immigrants and smugglers. Finding them at an airborne law enforcement associated event can be difficult. I had to go to an oil spillage show in London to meet up with them. [www.atlanticrecon.co.uk](http://www.atlanticrecon.co.uk)

## ACCIDENTS & INCIDENTS

**8 December 2005 Eurocopter EC135T2 G-PSNI.** Police Service Northern Ireland. Microwave downlink antenna failed to retract properly resulting in slight damage to the extension tube on landing. [CAA]

**4 January 2006 Britten-Norman BN-2T - 4S G-SJCH.** Hampshire Police. Engine malfunction and power loss on port Allison 250 engine. Uneventful landing. Recurring fault – sample entry for a reported six instances affecting same engine. [CAA]

**12 January 2006 Eurocopter EC135T2 G-PSNI.** Police Service Northern Ireland. Following the smell of fuel in the cabin PAN was declared and a precautionary landing undertaken. Was found to be a leaking valve on the engine discharge pipe. [CAA]

**18 January 2006 Eurocopter AS355N G-SEPB.** Metropolitan Police [London]. Microwave downlink antenna failed to retract and system reset was unsuccessful. Aircraft landed with slight rearward direction enabling the shear pin to break with only slight damage to the unit landing. It was found that a fuse had blown. [CAA]

**19 February 2006 Cessna 182 N.** Pennsylvania State Police. Aircraft being flown at about 2,500 feet by Sgt. John C. LaRose on a routine flight from Williamsport Regional Airport to Harrisburg when a few miles from Selinsgrove along the Susquehanna River the plane lost power and was landed in a field near Lower Mahanoy Township, Northumberland

County. [Media]

**22 February 2006 Mil Mi-8.** Russian Interior Ministry. Three of the four persons on board at the time sustained non-life threatening injuries when the helicopter crashed in the Ural Mountains region of Sverdlovsk. [Media]

**23 February 2006 Bell OH-58? N5121C.** Lake County Sheriff's Department, Griffith, Indiana helicopter made an emergency landing when an engine malfunction alarm was activated while in flight. The aircraft was put down in a tank farm at Avenue H and Kennedy Avenue, west of the Griffith/Merrillville Airport. [Media]

**25 February 2006 Bell 206L3 N206UH.** Air ambulance of AirMed in Utah [Air Methods]. The helicopter had landed and the crew with patient had departed and entered the hospital. The pilot had secured the blades and doors prior to another flight service landing at the same helipad. On their second approach to land the other aircraft flew over the 206L3 and the right crew door departed the aircraft. The unidentified other machine aborted the landing and landed in an adjacent field without incident. Damage confined to the door and hinges. No injuries. The aircraft was back in service several days later. [Concern]

**3 March 2006. Eurocopter AS350B N350MV.** Air Ambulance of MedFlight based in Columbus, Ohio operated by OmniFlight. In flight the aircraft experienced a loud noise sounding like an explosion in the cockpit followed by white smoke from under the pilots seat and the fogging over of the windows of the aircraft. The pilot maintained control and landed without further incident. After inspection it was discovered that an aerosol can of window cleaning solution was placed in close proximity to the heat vent under the seat and the resultant heat caused the can to explode. The result of the explosion broke the plastic ring around the cyclic friction nut. All aerosol cans have been removed from MedFlight aircraft. [Concern]

**3 March 2006 Eurocopter EC135P1 N311PS.** Air ambulance of Northwest MedStar, [Metro Aviation] Spokane, Washington. Shortly after aircraft refuelling and on the return leg to home base, the pilot elected to make a precautionary landing due to an 'unusual' engine noise. The pilot landed the aircraft in an open area, west of a paved road without incident. A maintenance team was dispatched to the site and performed a maintenance check and found no discernible abnormalities.

The pilot and crew subsequently lifted from the site and again heard the 'unusual' engine sound. The pilot and crew elected to return to the main operating base, making an uneventful landing. During a subsequent ground maintenance check, the engine 'chip' light illuminated, necessitating the engine to be removed and replaced. [Concern]

**8 March 2006 Cessna 414 N5601C.** Air ambulance Hawaii Air Ambulance plane crashed into a Maui car dealership killing three people on board. As the aircraft approached for a landing at Kahului International Airport it reportedly lost engine power and fell into dozens of vehicles at a BMW dealership and burned. [FAA/Media/Concern]

**9 March 2006. Eurocopter Puma.** Red Cross operation helicopter leased from Starlite Aviation PTY Ltd, Durban, South Africa, crashed while ferrying food to earthquake survivors in Pakistan-administered Kashmir injuring the two South African crew members. The Puma on its way from Abbottabad to a village called Bandi came down near a heliport in Muzafarabad. The machine came to rest on its right side with its rotors and tail snapped off but its cabin largely intact.

South African pilots Mike Church and David Peterson were unconscious and were treated and evacuated to Islamabad by another ICRC helicopter. [Media]

**11 March 2006 Beech King Air 200 C-????.** Air Ambulance. BC Air Ambulance. The Vancouver, British Columbia based aircraft was forced to make an emergency landing when its front landing gear suddenly stopped working.

Shortly after take off from its base en-route for a patient pick-up at Prince George, B.C. the fault was discovered with the plane's front landing gear. They circled the airport to burn off fuel before landing back at Vancouver on two wheels. The plane skidded to a stop after the landing gear collapsed upon impact. No one was injured in the incident. [Media]

**16 March 2006 Eurocopter AS350 AStar N.** California Highway Patrol. California

Highway Patrol helicopter made an precautionary emergency landing in Sacramento after warning light activated, authorities said.

The Eurocopter had been in the air for about a half hour when the light went on indicating an engine problem, the pilot took the precautionary measure of landing in an open area behind the William R. Ridgeway Family Relations Courthouse at 3341 Power Inn Road. [Sacramento Bee]

**20? March 2006 helicopter [Mil Mi-17?].** A Sri Lankan Air Force. An officer drowned after falling from a helicopter during a search and rescue exercise

The man was descending a cable when it snapped and sent him crashing into the Indian Ocean. Recovered from the sea by fishermen Flying Officer Nalin Jayasinghe, 26, was dead on admission to hospital. It is claimed that the cable failed. [Sunday Times]

## FLIGHT SAFETY

The National Transportation Safety Board [NTSB] has called on the FAA to require all US-registered turbine-powered helicopters certificated to carry at least 6 passengers to be equipped with a terrain awareness and warning system. The recommendation is one of five contained in the final report of a fatal helicopter accident in the Gulf of Mexico.

On March 23, 2004, an Era Aviation Sikorsky S-76A++ helicopter, N579EH, crashed into the Gulf of Mexico 70 nm out of Galveston, Texas on an oil transport flight to a drilling ship. All aboard died. The Board determined that the probable cause of the accident was the a controlled flight into the water. A summary of the findings is available on the website, [www.nts.gov](http://www.nts.gov), under "Publications."

## PEOPLE

Sacramento County Sheriff Lou Blanas awarded the department's highest honours Thursday to three deputies involved in July's fatal helicopter crash.

Deputies **Joseph Kievernagel**, 36, **Kevin Blount**, 29, and **Eric Henrikson**, 29, were awarded the Medal of Valor and the Purple Heart.

The Medal of Valor is given for outstanding performance and conspicuous bravery above and beyond the call of duty. The purple heart is awarded for receiving serious bodily injuries in the line of duty.

Britten-Norman Aircraft Limited has appointed **Jeremy Liber** as Technical Director. With more than 20 years' experience in the field of aircraft design, modifications and structural analysis, Jeremy has utilised his expert knowledge of the UK CAA and EASA to play an integral part in the development design processes for companies such as Alan Mann and McAlpine Helicopters. During his previous role as Chief Designer for Gloucester based Police Aviation Services, he was responsible for implementing a new CAD based system which was used to deliver complex structural and systems based modifications under Part 21 Sub-Part J to both fixed-wing and rotary platforms.

Paramedic **Sammy Wills**, who flies with Yorkshire Air Ambulance, is to travel to America, Thailand and Europe to research the use of aircraft in mass medical evacuations.

Miss Wills, 37, of Sheffield, has been awarded £4,500 from the Winston Churchill Travelling Fellowship to pay for a trip that will take in New Orleans, Thailand and Germany. One hundred people were selected nationally for the award and she is expecting to start her travels in May.

During the tour Miss Wills will learn more about how aircraft use in civil emergencies with a view that they be shared with the Department of Health, the British Helicopter Advisory Board and the Confederation of Helicopter Ambulance Services on her return. [Yorkshire Post]



Photo David A Gardner.



## EVENTS

The **BBGA Annual Conference** was again held at Sopwell House, St. Albans, Hertfordshire on March 7. A key-note speech was made to the members by Sir Roy McNully of the Civil Aviation Authority.

The conference also attracted a small exhibition of GA industry exhibitors and sponsors including GA Buyer, Adams Supply and Air Service Training [Engineering] Ltd, Perth, Scotland, a company with a long history of providing training to the industry, having trained over 12,000 engineers from more than 150 countries.



*The BBGA's Mark Wilson [left] with Sir Roy McNully CAA*

## OLYMPIC ROUND-UP

After 16 days the Olympic Winter Games in Turin 2006 closed on February 26 during which the Corpo Forestale dello Stato [CFS] HEMS dedicated Agusta-Bell AB412 flew seven main emergency missions from mountain sites to regional hospitals carrying patients with serious ailments.

Immediately after the main Winter Olympic's drew to a close two other significant winter sport events took place in the Piedmont Region of north-west Italy:

From February 27 to March 4 the "III World Ski Mountaineering Championship' [WSMC] were run in Cuneo district and from March 10 to 19 the IX Paralympic Winter Games [PWG] occupied the Olympic sites in Turin district

Although at a lower level of mobilisation Italian Air Services' helicopters were busy to assure security and rescue.

The III-WSMC saw the presence of 300 athletes drawn from the teams of 35 Countries to compete over a range of 24 competitions.

During one of the competitions, on March 3, an avalanche overran over 60 athletes and spectators on a site in Artesina Rocca Giardina.

Fortunately the deluge of snow was only around 1.5 metres deep and the presence of some 200 rescuers with 8 specialist avalanche dog units allowed a very speedy intervention resulting in only a few people suffering minor injuries.

The rescue teams were supported by two AB412 helicopters, one from CFS and one from Regional Medical Service 118 Piedmont taking off from Cuneo-Levaldigi airport.

The avalanche was probably caused by two skiers skiing in a prohibited zone, on fresh snow. An inquiry was opened.

Just three days later the CFS AB412 staying in the Region during the Paralympic Games, also had its services called upon but on this occasion it was a more PR related exercise.

On March 6 they flew from Turin-Aeritalia airport to the Vigevano on Monte Rosa refuge at 3,000 metres asl with some very special passengers; three para-Olympic athletes (one blind and two with bodily disablement) and their escort to a symbolic Olympic Flame lighting ceremony. [Dino Marcellino]

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





# SAR Conference

Bournemouth International Centre  
13-15 March

It is some years since PAN attended a SAR event organised by Shephard Conferences and I am pleased to say that the re-acquaintance has been a happy one. After Shephard's gave up its Police Conferences of the 1990's it moved on to try out the SAR formula and found it suited them better. It is well known that the military are more receptive to meeting the costs of attending conferences than the police and Shephard's are after all in the busi-

ness to earn a living.

SAR thrived and grew to encompass similar events in other parts of the World. With a one day SAR event shortly in Australia there is also a 'Call for papers' for the main SAR 2007 event to be held in the USA.

This years SAR event over two days was split roughly between day 1 the civil scene and day 2 the military - but there was a mix of each daily.

## Preamble



The day before the event proper the organisers had arranged a trip to the nearby Royal National Lifeboat Institute [RNLI] HQ and College in Poole for delegates.

I must admit in having some difficulty in overcoming the stark contrast between the gleaming 21 month old college that cost some £25M, its paid staff and the thousands of ready volunteers who created the money to build and support it and the other army of volunteers that man lifeboat stations all around the British Isles. In another World all the college staff would work for nothing as well I guess!





The RNLI College is a beautiful well equipped facility fortuitously located across the road from the long standing RNLI HQ building and undertakes many fund-generating roles beyond training its own staff. The RNLI is now an internationally recognised organisation and both the college tour and a China SAR presentation in the Conference mentioned that a number of former RNLI boats were now serving in the role in China.

### Talking Shop

There is no way two days of talking can be reduced to an easy précis in PAN so suffice to mention some personal highlights.

Having tried and failed to rescue large numbers in past sea disasters where relatively small numbers were cast into an unforgiving sea a number of speakers dwelled on how the industry would cope with any major accident that befell the future super cruise ships intended to carry 7,000. That was in the knowledge of the recent losses of hundreds in relatively warm waters off Egypt.

In view of the unease felt in parts of the UK air support industry about the mere existence of a civil airborne SAR organisation called SkyWatch [in spite of readily accepting the sterling work undertaken by many earth and sea bound volunteers such as mountain rescue and the RNLI] it was interesting to learn from David Baird of the Australian Maritime Safety Authority that no meaningful SAR could be offered in his region without the ready assistance of hundreds of volunteer pilots in their own aircraft.

The hard hitting presentation by Lee Benson, Chief Pilot at the Los Angeles County Fire Department (LACFD) caught the attention, shook it about a bit and left a lot of nodding heads.

Lee, a familiar profile in a sea of International helicopter events, highlighted the chronic lack of appreciation of the dwindling well of engineers that keep the aircraft aloft. His US message was not out of place in the UK, where an equal lack of youngsters seeking engineering jobs in the industry is not appreciated and will one day result in a great deal of wringing of hands. LACFD solved their own problem temporarily by vastly improving wage rates but engineers are not always swayed by just money. Lee says they need to be appreciated and the recurrent adverts for them underscore his message. Not enough pay, security and benefits.

Lee wound down his attack on many with a tale of his dealings with the manufacturers and their unacceptable lack of support for their own product.

In his recent experience the owners of new aircraft regu-





larly find that the documentation accompanying their new acquisition does not necessarily match the airframe. In the past remedying such errors have been an added cost to the owners or the hapless completion centre. He now insists on a clause in LACFD contracts stipulating that correction of all errors in manuals will be paid for by the manufacturer and that these appear as page-for-page reprints rather than over-written manuscript additions.

Lee Benson's presentation was impressive. It is rare to get anyone at such events who rattles the cage somewhat but even with lots of burned fingers playing 'hard ball' needs someone with a substantial backbone!

### Second helping

Day two was primarily assigned to CSAR. Not being too well up on these things I always had envisioned that the term related to the military Combat SAR, specialist dedicated helicopters assigned to crew rescue, lots of equipment, extended range, in-flight refueling etc. Well it seems that aside from the US my impression was very wrong. The US can afford such resources but the rest of the World cannot. They train for the mission but cannot go so far as to set aside airframes to undertake the missions full-time so any vehicle might do. I must admit that I completely gave up when one delegate [tongue in cheek I hope] suggested that you could actually undertake the primary CSAR mission using a bicycle as long as you brought the fugitive home safely!

I had no such problem with Lt Michael Rasch of the US Coast Guard. The Lt had spoken the previous day – actually 'reciting' a talk originally slated for his boss who was unable to make the event. He was an adequate replacement but it was not his own material.

Switch to Day 2 and launch the Lt on his own stuff, a presentation on own experiences of working night and day on Hurricane Katrina rescue missions. Wow. I am getting pretty bored with Katrina stuff but Rasch was there in the hot seat and I swear you could smell and taste the missions he outlined. Brilliant stuff.

I look forward to another SAR mix.



### SAR Exhibition

The SAR Conference is also a vehicle for a small exhibition, it is one of the financially supporting elements and primarily provides a number of great opportunities for delegates and suppliers to Network. That said the exhibition is open to non-delegate visitors in its own right throughout the two days.

Three airborne sensor manufacturers were present in the hall two, FLIR Systems and Wescam, were no surprise but the appearance of the long-standing but very quiet intruder Polytech suggests that the pair might have another option snapping at their heels in future.

Wescam were highlighting recent sales into the SAR market of sensors for the Australian Coastwatch and Indonesian Navy.

The wizardry of electronics was a regular thread in the exhibitors stand – along with training for all manner of tasks.

Hot on the heels of the completion of the world's only virtual Winching Simulator, part of its established Voice Marshalling Simulator, Virtualis is now collaborating with Heli-Basket manufacturer, Precision Lift Inc. With training time in a Blackhawk helicopter currently exceeding \$2,000 per flying hour and the same time in a Chinook \$6,000, military organisations are forced to consider their training budget extremely carefully. The RAF has found the solution to cost and risk barriers in helicopter rear-crew training, which has proved to be a Virtual Reality (VR) training system developed and marketed by Virtualis and based upon a low cost, standard PC, which works from a single graphics card.

Whilst not quite as cheap as the Microsoft version - the basic system, complete with a year's support, will cost a shade under £100,000 – it is clearly a far better option than running the real thing.

Further up the market are cueSim, recently returned from their successful first foray into the vast hall at Heli-Expo, Dallas and with the significant sales of simulators to Bond Air Services [EC135] and Helisureste [Bell 412] under their belt.

Bedford, UK based cueSim [www.cuesim.com](http://www.cuesim.com) are a part of the QinetiQ group



And when you have trained electronically you will need to go and do the real thing from time to time! And there are vendors available to suit your every whim.

LiteFlite Aeronautical Safety [www.lite-flite.com](http://www.lite-flite.com) are based in Denmark and offer a range of belts and straps designed to get you hitched up and remaining so. Much of their technology was developed in response to high profile shipping losses – particularly the 1994 loss of the Estonia - in the cold northern seas.



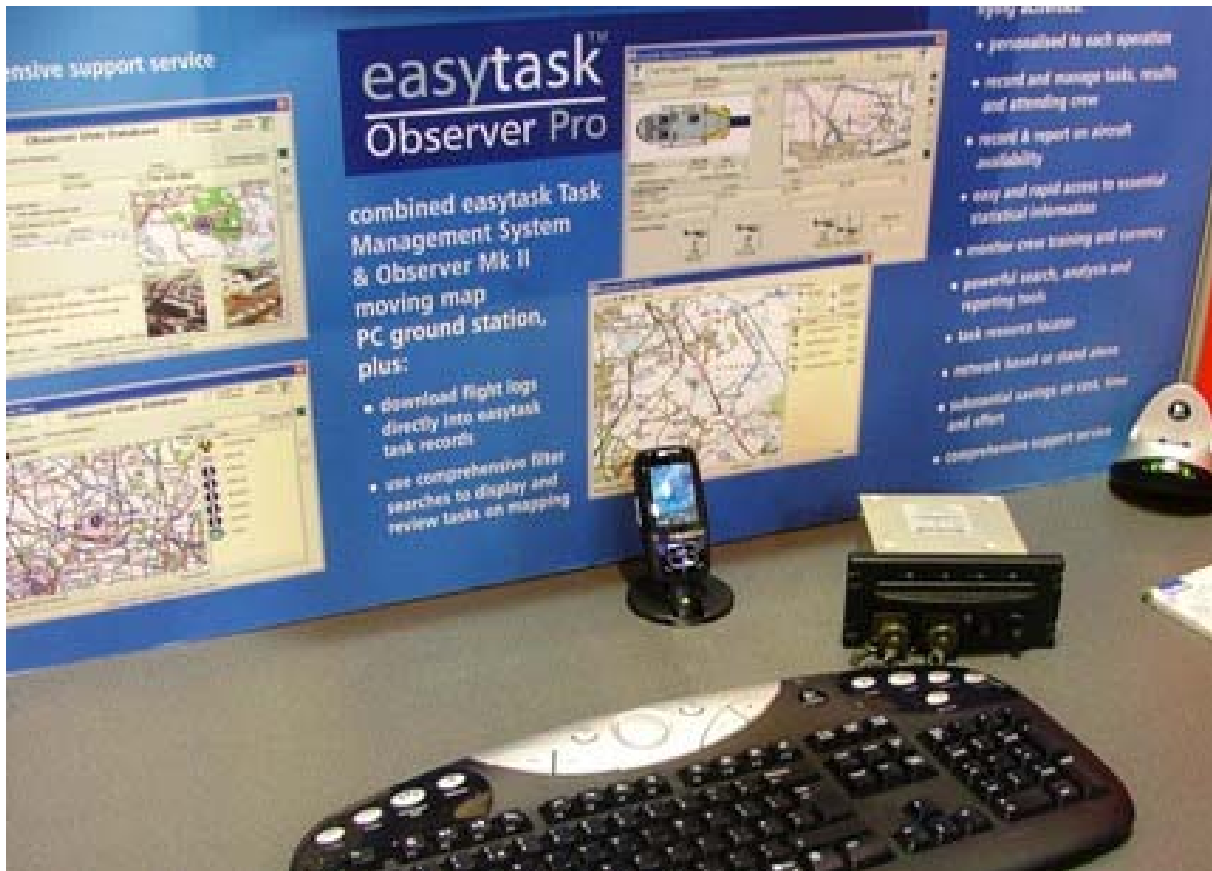
Hapless people thrown into Artic waters quickly have little strength so providing such as straps that are quickly and effectively closed around them just by their natural inclination to grasp at anything that promises safety works well.

The rescue sling is made from MIL-W-4088 Type 7 nylon webbing, with a tensile strength of 2700 kgp. and hardware in stainless steel. It features an extra safety strap and a towing grip.

*Here Denny Moorhouse the Chairman of International Safety Components [ISC] in Wales demonstrates the sling.*

ISC Ltd shared a stand with LiteFlite, they provide many of the metal castings used by that company and others across the World to make their products work. ISC is a world renowned company specialising in the design, development and manufacture of innovative engineered components and other 'solutions in metal'. Their factory has a machine shop, aluminium foundry and metal finishing facility.

They supply products globally to the 'Working at Height' Industry, which includes Arborists, Fire & Rescue, Rope Access, and other Industrial Fall Protection users, as well as the Motor Racing, Military and other specialist markets. [www.iscwaales.com](http://www.iscwaales.com)



As I took in the latest version of the most popular UK mapping technology at the Honeywell Skyforce stand I thought there was something familiar about the easytask product on the adjoining aeroteck uk booth. It did not take long to unravel its close links to a product that was once advertised in PAN. In the four years since easyweigh appeared in these pages it has been adopted by virtually every police air support unit in Britain. Now easytask is following in its wake with similar take-up rate.

Moving on from pre-flight weight & balance and performance calculators easytask handles task management applications on a similar PC base for the use of the emergency services, military and commercial operators.

The basic easytask is a powerful, easy to use task & mission management recording and reporting system.

*Lots of plastic boxes to be seen in the hall with both Peli and the relative upstart Italian GT Line Explorer taking stands.*





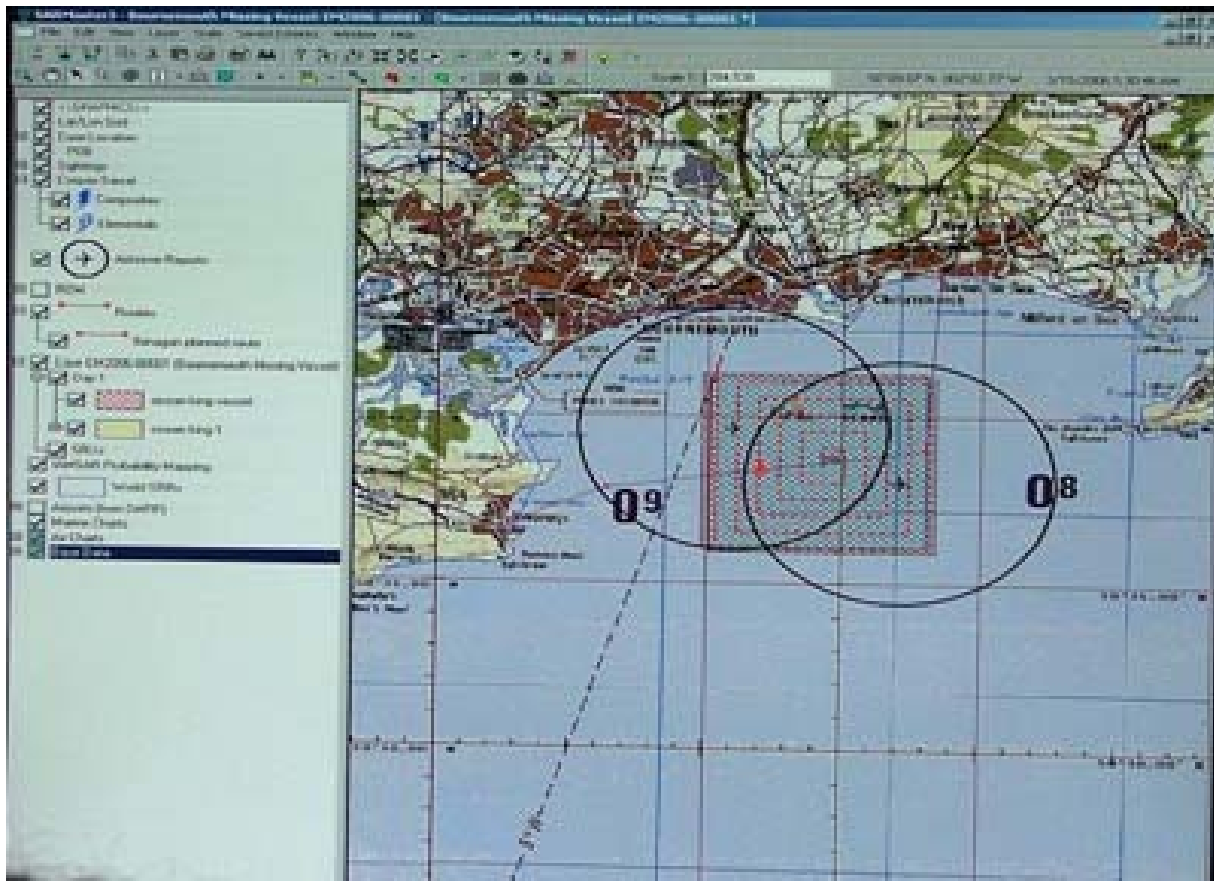
A one stop solution for the efficient management and tracking of all the tasking, crew and aircraft requirements of a busy Emergency Response flying unit.

A specialist task management tool for Police Tactical Support Units.

The easytask Observer is a PC Base Station for the Skyforce/HONEYWELL Observer MK II moving map system, available in three versions with a number of user friendly features.

The principle is that pre-flight planning is undertaken on the ground and loaded onto a hot stick and that is downloaded into the aircraft Observer moving map that then directs the flight

As the Yorkshire air ambulance illustrates it do not need mapping on the aircraft. Whilst they await a new aircraft potentially fitted with a map they operate by printing off the flight information in the control room and working from that print-out in flight.



EMS Satcom were showing up market displays designed to assist controllers pinpoint distress beacons and get concise information to the potential rescuers.

The logo for AeroExpo 2006 features a stylized orange 'A' followed by 'eroEXpo' in blue and red. Below the logo is the year '2006'. The text below the logo reads: 'AN INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION FOR GENERAL AVIATION', 'WYCOMBE AIR PARK JUNE 23 - 25 2006', and 'www.expo.aero'. At the bottom of the block are four small rectangular images showing various aircraft on display at an air show.

Underlining their role as a major completion centre for modern SAR airframes Field Aviation were displaying a model depicting a Swedish Coast Guard Dash 8. As previously mentioned Field have other programmes for the US Department of Homeland Security's Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency and Austrian Coastwatch.

The Antipodes featured quite strongly in the displays, with FRAviation/Cobham featuring their own stake in Coastwatch via their Australian based Surveillance Australia Division.



**31 May - 1 June 2006, Royal Pines Resort, Queensland, Australia**

## FUTURE EVENTS

The former bi-annual China Police Expo has spread its wings somewhat into a variation on Milipol. It is now called the ASIA PACIFIC CHINA POLICE 2006, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Asia Pacific Police Logistics & Equipment Trading Fair and is held at the Beijing Exhibition Centre from May 24 - 27 MAY, 2006.

Even at this late time the organisers are still promoting spaces at the event to paramilitary organisations – including helicopter manufacturers.

The Show is designed to provide a dedicated Forum at which international companies can promote their products, equipment, technology, services, management and training skills to around 12,000 trade visitors from throughout the Asia-Pacific Region.

The expected growth of this region with particular reference to the upcoming 2008 Olympic Games and the World Fair in Shanghai in 2012 promises to be attractive.

China, with India, is one of only two markets to which UK Trade & Investment have given top priority and are prepared to support with subsidies in 2006. In addition, in recognition of the fact the UK share of the China market is considerably less than the share the USA, Japan and our European rivals have achieved, the Government is actively promoting UK interests in this market in 2006 with promotional visits by the Chancellor and other high profile Ministers.

If you would like to receive brochures for this event please contact Mrs Carolyn Wilden ensuring you provide full contact details including your postal address at the UK/Ireland, Norway & Netherlands Representative Office for both these Shows. Enterprise Associates International, 30 Pennyford Court, Henderson Drive, London, NW8 8UF Tel/Fax +44 20 7289 6982 [eai@btpopenworld.com](mailto:eai@btpopenworld.com)

## DIARY

21-23 April 2006 FLY! The London Airshow 2006. Earls Court 1 [www.londonairshow.co.uk](http://www.londonairshow.co.uk) Exhibitors include Diamond Aircraft, Cessna, Garmin, Jeppesen, Lowrance Avionics, Garmin, Eastern Atlantic Helicopters, Fast Helicopters and many more. Addressing a general aviation audience and expanding that to a wider general audience. Clarion Events Ltd Earls Court Exhibition Centre London SW5 5TA +44 20 7370 8206 [karl.morgan@clarionevents.com](mailto:karl.morgan@clarionevents.com)

24-27 April 2006. IPAS 2006 EXHIBITION. Iran's 5<sup>th</sup> International Police, Safety and Security Equipment Exhibition (IPAS 2006) held in Tehran, Iran, organised by Naji Pas Co. which is a company affiliated to Iran's Police Force. The manufacturers of safety and security products present the latest technology in the related areas. For further information please visit our web site: [www.ipas.ir](http://www.ipas.ir) or contact us through our e-mail address: [info@ipas.ir](mailto:info@ipas.ir) In 2005 reference to aviation in Iran's 2006 police show lists.. I.R.I.P.A (I.R.I. Police Aviation) Captain Khanlari (+9821)55640207-9 (+9821)55640204 I.R.I.P.A.- Ghaleh Morghi- Tehran- IRAN

This is a show primarily attracting Iranian exhibitors but there are some from Arabia, Russia and Italy. The few aerospace exhibitors include Saba Aviation Industries who represent a group involved in the design, production & assembly of light and ultralight aircraft & civil helicopter technology in cooperation with ICP Co. of Italy [www.flight-clubs.com](http://www.flight-clubs.com) [info@flight-clubs.com](mailto:info@flight-clubs.com) and IRIPA (I.R.I. Police Aviation) under Captain Khanlari of Ghaleh Morghi, Tehran, IRAN.

26-27 April 2006 BAPCO 2006. Europe's premier event for professionals working at all levels of responsibility in the field of public safety communications and information management technology. Themes, speakers and issues will be debated at the annual international multi-agency conference.

**2006**  
**BAPCO**  
The Public Safety Communications and IT Event

On Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> April Chief Willis Carter, Director of Emergency Communications at Shreveport Fire Department, Louisiana, will open the Session and share a personal insight on the conditions of emergency communications centres and the specific challenges faced by the emergency communications personnel during the recovery efforts caused by Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans.

The Super Session will continue and conclude with a critical look at the events of 7<sup>th</sup> July 2005 in London and the changing role of the Central Casualty Bureau at New Scotland Yard by Deputy Assistant Commissioner Ron McPherson and Chief Superintendent Stephen McDonald of the Metropolitan Police Service.



Taking place from 26-27 April at the Business Design Centre in Islington, London, the BAPCO annual conference runs alongside the BAPCO annual exhibition. This event plays a vital role in bringing users and representatives of the world-wide public safety community together so that they may share their ideas, information and experiences and further the goal of enhancing public safety. For details contact +44 20 7973 4674 or visit <http://www.bapco.co.uk>

1 May 2006 Brooklands Emergency Services 'May Day'. Brooklands Museum, Brooklands Road, Weybridge, Surrey, UK. +44 (0)1932 857381 [www.brooklandsmuseum.com](http://www.brooklandsmuseum.com)

3-5 May 2006 EBACE2006 in Geneva, Switzerland. For more information about EBACE or to view photos from earlier events visit the official web site at: <http://www.ebace.aero>

6 May 2006 The American Heroes Air Show Canton Georgia. Since 1993, the admission-free American Heroes event has been dedicated to educating the public, the media and elected officials as to the unique capabilities and dynamic role of helicopters in law enforcement, fire service, public safety, homeland defense and national security. With different event elements being added over the years, the Heroes event has become more than just an exciting air show to profile helicopters:

The 'Code 3 Career Fair,' which brings together recruiting teams from law enforcement, the military; fire and public safety agencies to discuss career opportunities with event guests.

The SAR SITE1 event element introduces the community to many of the finest Search & Rescue teams from mountain, urban, swiftwater, canine and Combat / SAR organisations. The event provides free presentation space to these groups interested in fund-raising and membership development opportunities.

A Family Preparedness Fair delivers information, products from private vendors and resources from public agencies for families and businesses to prepare for, respond to and recover from emergencies, natural disasters and homeland defence incidents.

Flight demonstrations, concessions, aviation vendors along with helicopter rides at some sites along with entertainment and special awards. FREE Admission. Contact: Mike Grier Email: [FLIIFR@aol.com](mailto:FLIIFR@aol.com)

Interested in landing the American Heroes Air show in your own community? Log on to our website at: [www.heroes-airshow.com](http://www.heroes-airshow.com)

8-10 May 2006. ALEA Northeast Safety Seminar at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in White Plains, NY. The hosts are the Westchester County Police Aviation Unit.



*Underscoring the strong links between the Royal National Lifeboat Institute and similar organisations across the World is this RNLI College display of linked memorabilia presented by the US Coast Guard*