

Police Aviation News

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Number 113 September 2005

IPAR



LAST

OF THE LINE

DSEi 2005 and HELITECH 2005 U.K. show previews

PAN – POLICE AVIATION NEWS is published monthly by
INTERNATIONAL POLICE AVIATION RESEARCH
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In spite of layoffs the World aerospace industry regularly suffers skills shortages. When worker shortages bite the airline industry tends to be more successful in financing attractive packages than the emergency services sector. The ever growing airline sector is sucking in all spare capacity. Reports in this issue highlight a lack of skilled mechanics with a fire fighting operation in California, but the problem is far wider than the US West Coast and it can only get worse.

As the number of military trained pilots declines there will be increasing pressure to find alternative sources. Those countries that look with disdain at the idea of the emergency services training up pilots from scratch may soon have no choice. The airlines fell into the same trap many years ago in being reliant upon 'ready made' pilots and engineers and they were finally obliged to remedy that situation as a matter of urgency for their ever growing sector.

The need for emergency services aviation is proven. Now may be the time to take a not-to-leisurely look into future pilotage requirements before force of circumstances bring about a mad scramble to stave off meeting either astronomical wage levels or the threat of aircraft grounding.

Bryn Elliott

LAW ENFORCEMENT

GERMANY

Towards the end of 2004 the North-Rhine Westphalia Police [Polizei Nordrhein-Westfalen] took delivery of three new build BK117C1 helicopters, D-HNWO, D-HNWP and D-HNWQ. The trio, were acquired to replace an existing fleet of 1980s vintage BO105 helicopters and were the last three deliveries of the type.

Following delivery the BK117's were positioned to Mann Aviation Group (Engineering) Ltd (MAGE) at Fairoaks Airport in Surrey, UK where they were role equipped with Police Operators Console and Mission Equipment as well as being modified for NVG certification before returning to operational duty in Germany.

The three new helicopters were role equipped to the same standard as 2 BK117B2's previously completed by MAGE and ESG with Wescam 16DSM, Spectrolab IFCO SX-16 Nightsun, SLASS slaving system from Dynametric Systems, BKM Microwave Video and GPS Downlink, IR Laserpointer, Rohde & Schwarz DF, Skyquest CRT Monitors, Mann Aviation LCD and NVG Displays, Sony Digital Video recorder, with the exception of D-HNWP which was also equipped with a Ryan TCAD system.

The last of the trio to be completed, D-HNWP, departed the MAGE facility at Fairoaks Airport on August 2 after successful completion of the work. The completion was scheduled in time to meet the NRW Police requirement to have all three helicopters fully operational for the Papal visit to Germany by His Holiness Benedict XVI to mark the 20th World Youth Day.



In 2003 the two earlier BK117B2 helicopters in service with the NRW Police were upgraded by Mann Aviation Group (Engineering) Ltd under a contract led by ESG of Munich, Germany [Elektroniksystem- und Logistik-GmbH Helicopter Avionics], resulting in the successful completion of 5 BK117 Role Equipment and NVG modifications by the 2 companies.

The 5 BK117 helicopters modified by the partnership form part of a larger fleet including two Eurocopter EC155Bs, BO105s and Cessna Skylane's.

Ed: According to Eurocopter, although these were the last three deliveries of the BK117C1 the very last BK117C1 went to Mexico pre-dating the German Police models in delivery terms. All were completed in Italy last year.

Any BK 117 C1 deliveries taking place now – such as the one recently to HIKO of Croatia – refer to pre-owned aircraft upgraded and/or refitted. The C1 version has been officially superseded by the EC 145, referred to by the Japanese partner, Kawasaki [and the UK CAA] as the BK 117 C2.0

PAPAL VISIT: The Papal Visit provided others with an opportunity to try out some new technology. The DLR, the German Aerospace Centre - a civil technology organisation - were using the Zeppelin airship to trial low cost camera systems and BMS downlink equipment associated with a road traffic surveillance project that might one day oust German police from directly undertaking traffic control and surveillance. The system relies on low cost datastream and PC architecture systems operated by scientists. On this occasion the DLR surveillance team were using the Papal event to feed information into the police event control.

Ed: The growing number of special department of transport mobile intervention teams in the UK may well be part of a wider [European] agenda to sideline expensive police resources with a cheaper alternative on the roads.



Doing away with [sworn] police officers from key positions in air support might well be read off a similar agenda. In the face of various attempts to dismiss the threat there are a growing number of UK police units with civil observers, civil Unit Executive Officers [UEO] and their deputies. Current air support incumbents can console themselves with the knowledge that the UEO's are retired ex-police, subsidised by their pensions, but watch this space for the first one brought in from industry. Cheap as chips and potentially as much use. It can only get 'worse' as traditional policing is cheapened and marginalised across the board.

UNITED KINGDOM

CAMBRIDGE/ESSEX/SUFFOLK: The aircraft maintenance contract given up by Aeromega when they decided to give up 145 maintenance took a long time to re-assign. As from August 1 the current fleet of two EC135s and a AS355 will be cared for by Police Aviation Services at Staverton, Gloucestershire. For Essex it will be the first time their aircraft has not been in the care of locally based Aeromega. From having their support a handful of miles away they are now faced with support two hours drive away.

Part of the complication with arranging the contract is that two of the aircraft, the EC135s of Essex and Suffolk, are closely linked to Eurocopter by being on power by the hour. On that basis alone it might have been expected that the fleet would go to McAlpine at Oxford. With the UK helicopter business being its current parlous state the contract was keenly fought over. The third machine an AS355 flown by Cambridgeshire is due to be replaced by a MD900 Explorer 'later this year.' This aircraft would naturally be completed and maintained at PAS. So

far there have been no reports of the new aircraft being delivered to PAS at Staverton in the UK for the expected completion this year. Associated stories, some appearing in this issue, might suggest that delivery of the Explorer to Cambridgeshire this year is unlikely. [IPAR]

UNITED STATES

FEDERAL: The US Drug Enforcement Administration has put its first MD Helicopter MD900 Explorer into service in Hawaii. The agency took delivery of the twin-engine NOTAR helicopter last January.

The DEA has the option to purchase 50 additional Explorer's over the next five years, although there has been no commitment to date beyond the first aircraft. [R&W]

FEDERAL: Discussions are underway that could shift the agency responsible for ADIZ security from the US Customs Service to the US Coast Guard. The Coast Guard would be suited for the job because it has a dual role as a law-enforcement authority as well as a military branch. Traditionally the military can't patrol within US borders but the USCG can. The change could simplify the chain of command in case of a crisis, and perhaps make it easier for hostile action to be taken against an intruder. It has been suggested that the Coast Guard would relocate drug-interdiction helicopters out of the Bahamas to replace the Black Hawk helicopters and Citation jets currently used by customs to patrol the Washington area. Nothing has been decided, the discussions will likely continue into this month. [AvWeb/MSNBC]

GENERAL: In one area of the USA the FAA is said to require thermal imager laser designators to be interfaced with a radar altimeter to enhance laser safety.

The issue arises because the laser used in the imaging systems is not 'eye safe' and could be a danger to ground personnel if activated while the aircraft is on the ground. A safety interlock switch prevents the firing of the laser on the ground.



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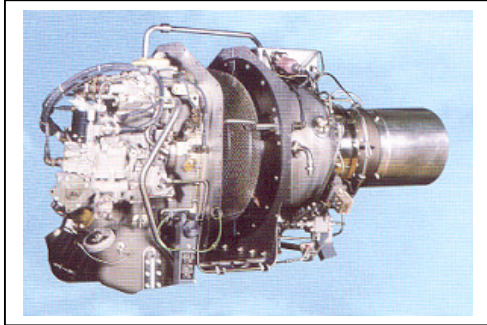
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CALIFORNIA: In the wake of the fatal accident to the Sacramento County Sheriff's Department EC120 helicopter, engine manufacturer Turbomeca has disclosed an apparent issue relating to a wrongly fitted part.

A letter from the company describes an identified problem with a fuel control unit that had been incorrectly installed in the factory. It appears that the police EC120 helicopter was operating with a fuel part installed backwards when it crashed killing two officers and injuring a third.



The letter says the company's investigation 'confirms the theory that the deterioration to the constant delta P valve diaphragm may have led to an increase of the fuel flow and the gas generator rating.' The alert letter continues 'This determination may be attributed to reverse installation of the diaphragm ... the fuel flow increase may be significant and sudden.'

This fuel control unit [FCU] regulates how much fuel gets into the engine, and it keeps it at safe levels, any malfunction moves radically alters the safety situation.

Turbomeca admits it made an error at its factory in France, but would not say its oversight caused the sheriff's helicopter to crash.

When the part failed, allowing maximum fuel flow to the engine, the only way to control the problem was to shut down the engine. In this case the engine destroyed itself, it got so hot and out of control [overspeeding] that it just blew apart.

The Sacramento County Sheriff's department has said that it finds some solace in the company's admission in knowing it was not the responsibility or any kind of error on the part of their mechanics or that there is anything to support a claim of pilot error.

The sheriff's department believes the part was put into the helicopter sometime in February. It's unclear why the part didn't fail immediately after installation.

At the moment the NTSB say it may have been a problem with Turbomeca - the company that makes the engine - or it may have been a problem with the manufacturer of the part. The crash investigation is far from closed, it could be another six months before a final report appears.

In the meantime, the sheriff's department's other two helicopters were grounded for some weeks. Other agencies grounded theirs, too. [KCRA3]

Ed: An Alert letter was published worldwide by Turbomeca. The delta P method of controlling the engine is a well tried and tested concept dating back over 30 years. It was on the Astazou 14 fitted to the RAF Jetstream. It is also used in Arriel and Arrius engines. In this instance it appears that someone fitted the part incorrectly. It appears doubtful that this is the first instance of this problem appearing in 30 years

DELAWARE: The Delaware State Police has auctioned off a Bell 206-L4, replacing it with a new Bell 407, and expanding their fleet of four 407s. The 206 was auctioned off last month through the State's Division of Purchasing's property disposal office under a sealed bid process. The role equipped Bell was due to be delivered last month. The four aircraft are split between two bases in the state, Middletown in the north of the state and Georgetown in southern Delaware. [R&W]

FLORIDA: The Sarasota County Sheriff's Dept., is to have a new \$405,000 aircraft hangar that should be finished early in 2006, providing ample space for Sarasota County Sheriff Bill Balkwill's fleet and aviation staff.

On July 27, the county commission agreed the finance so work could start. The new facility will be built on 1 acre at the Venice Municipal Airport. A 25-year lease agreement for the land is being negotiated with the city at an estimated \$12,000 a year. The deal reportedly includes a five-year renewal option. The hangar is needed for a new \$2M Bell 407 helicopter due for delivery in October but the fixed wing aircraft, a Beechcraft Baron acquired from the US Forest Service for \$3,000, will also be kept there. There are four pilots and a mechanic who will be housed in the new, secure hangar. A Bell 206 helicopter was recently turned in after the lease expired. [Media]

NEW JERSEY: The New Jersey State Police would like to add three new Bell 206 JetRangers to its aviation fleet. Superintendent. Col. Joseph Fuentes told the State Senate Homeland Security and State Preparedness Committee that the helicopters are needed for law enforcement. The three aircraft would cost an estimated \$1.2M each and paid for through a \$5 surcharge on each automobile annual registration fee. A similar funding system is used by the Maryland State Police Aviation Division.

The New Jersey State Police have three existing Bell helicopters based at Mercer County Airport near Trenton. They are between 17 and 19 years old.

The state is also considering purchasing a used S-76 to add to its current fleet of four S-76B helicopters used for air ambulance service. The S-76s currently aid in law enforcement when not being used as medical aircraft. [R&W/IPAR]

NEW YORK: The New York Police Department air unit are reported to be getting guns for their Bell 412 helicopters, but doubt has been raised on the story.

The Police Department has purchased Barrett .50-caliber semiautomatic rifles. The powerful sniper rifles can disable trucks, explode concrete barriers, and blast through the glass of airplane windshields.

While a CBS 2 report said the department was mounting the weapons on its Bell 412 helicopters the Mayor Mr. Bloomberg has said the rifles have yet to be installed and are 'not being mounted on helicopters' but 'if we needed them in an emergency, they could be.'

The M82 weighs 33.8 pounds, has a barrel length of 29 inches, and has an overall length of 57 inches. It fires bullets more than four times as heavy as typical sniper ammunition, at a speed of more than half a mile a second. [CBS]

NEW YORK: According to the New York Post all those stories about fences being mended between the New York fire and police departments are only skin deep. Late last month a smouldering mailbox tested the cooperation of the two organisations and exposed reality.

The FDNY got a call to a burning mailbox on 40th Avenue and within four minutes, nine firefighters and the police showed up.

Under new protocols for handling emergencies, the NYPD has control of any incident thought to be terror-related and suspecting the worst they worked accordingly and called out specialists of the Emergency Service Unit [ESU] to take over. Meanwhile the fire team wanted to open the box and deal with the fire. Bickering ensued. The incident ended when the fire crew ignored the bomb theory prised open the mailbox and put out the fire – well before ESU cops showed up. A 13-year-old boy was later arrested for the prank.

Subsequently the NYPD refused to comment and the FDNY played down the incident.

Ed: Peace and harmony in the Big Apple or no smoke without fire? Someone over reacted, and it looks as if it may just happen again regardless of all the PR put out about the two organisations!

NEW YORK: Suffolk County Police took delivery of a new Eurocopter AS350B2 AStar as a stopgap replacement for its medevac fleet early in July. With continued spares problems the operation have been operating just one MD900 all summer and as a result the AStar has been busy.

Meanwhile they are looking for a permanent replacement airframe for the operation. In addition to its police role Suffolk County undertake around 500 medevacs a year from two bases in Islip and Westhampton. [KTR2]



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SOUTH CAROLINA: Franklin County is free and clear of any liability in a helicopter crash lawsuit it has been reported.

In May 2004 the helicopter crash killed Franklin County deputy Ted Horton and injured former-deputy Benjamin Barrick."

The bank that loaned the money for the helicopter tried to sue the county for its money but county administrators say they didn't know that Sheriff Jerry Jones purchased the helicopter until it crashed.

Jones is still being sued because he allegedly knew payments were not being made on the \$81,000 loan. [NBC]

TEXAS: STAR (Shock Trauma Air Rescue), a public safety EMS helicopter unit operated by Travis County as part of the Austin-Travis County EMS System in Austin, Texas, is upgrading its fleet by replacing its two Eurocopter EC135s with two larger, heavier-lifting EC145s.

'The flying conditions in Texas are hot,' says Willy Culberson; STAR Flight's director of aviation, 'Add STAR's SAR duties, and we often find ourselves flying in adverse weather; such as heavy downpours resulting in flash floods. This is why we need a highly capable, highly robust aircraft like the EC145. The EC135 has been a top performer for STAR Flight, but the EC145 can do more.' [AEC]



AIR AMBULANCE

FRANCE

France: Proteus Helicopteres has further boosted its EMS fleet with its 8th Agusta 109 helicopter. The operator has acquired three A109E Power helicopters in the past year. Four other helicopters in the fleet include two Eurocopter's an EC135 and EC120, one Bell B206B3 and an Sikorsky S-64 Air-Crane. [EBAN]

UNITED KINGDOM

TERROR ATTACKS

In the first academic study of the response to the terrorist attacks in London, a doctor who worked on the London air ambulance has assessed the lessons that need to be learned.

Doctors who worked on the air ambulance during the attacks want biological warfare detectors to be installed on emergency vehicles to speed up response times in the event of more suicide bombings.

One of the key problems in the aftermath of the London attacks was communication. With multiple scenes and the cellphone networks in the city down, there were difficult command and communication problems.

There were also lessons to be learnt about the use of appropriate clothing for a terrorist scene from the aftermath of 9/11, when fears of a chemical attack first rose for emergency staff.

With teams of ambulance staff, doctors and fire staff working in difficult conditions in underground tunnels on 7/7, protective clothing was essential. Hospital workers were sent to the scene in operating room clothes. This was unsuitable attire, so they could not, and did not, work underground.

Another issue was the need to stay back until it became clear that chemical or biological weapons had not been used. At each of the London scenes emergency teams had to wait to enter until the fire service had established that there were no signs of chemical agents; delaying the teams from helping injured and dying victims.

There may be a role for chemical agent monitors and radiation monitors in response vehicles to reduce the delays across multiple incident events.

In spite of all the problems highlighted the seriously injured were rescued relatively quickly, provided with critical intervention on scene and transported to hospital.

The success of the emergency services could be attributed to the lessons that had been learned from several large emergency exercises which had taken place in recent years in the capital, most recently on June 12, a few weeks before the first suicide bombings.

[Resuscitation]



AIR MED: The Oxford based medevac and passenger charter company has taken delivery of its second Piper Cheyenne IIXL turboprop aircraft. Acquired at the end of June it was expected to start operations – primarily in the medevac role - last month. The delay follows the completion of some avionics work. [EBAN]

CORNWALL: In April 2005, police officers arrested three senior members of staff of the Cornwall Air Ambulance Charity on suspicion of theft. Although not named the arrested people were said to be a 31-year-old woman, a 62-year-old woman and a 40-year-old man all from North Cornwall. All three were detained and interviewed at Newquay Police Station before being released on police bail to a date in June.

All three were later charged with theft and released on bail to Liskeard Magistrates Court on 23 August 2005. [D&C Police]

Ed: Cornwall Air Ambulance operates an EC135T as the First Air AST charity fundraiser and is based in West Downs, Delabole, North Cornwall. This was the first new [non-military] helicopter air ambulance service in England and Wales in April 1987 with Margarette Worden MBE at its head. Cornwall Air Ambulance operates for West Country Ambulance NHS Trust [along with Devon and Somerset].

It was not until August 23 that it was reported that the three were Margarette Worden, a charity boss who received an MBE for her fundraising work, her son Richard Taylor and his girlfriend Linzi Jones. Margarette denied stealing from collection boxes when she appeared before magistrates in Cornwall. The sum is said to be just £29.95. All elected for crown court trial and were released on bail until a committal hearing on October 4.

DEVON: The Devon Air Ambulance Trust officially announced at the North Devon Show that Devon's second air ambulance, based at Belle Vue Airfield, near Great Torrington is to stay. In just 3 months of operations that were intended to be short-term and for the summer season only, over 220 missions were flown. This allowed the second helicopter to prove its worth. [DAAT]

EAST ANGLIA: The air ambulance operator is seeking the building of a helipad at Addenbrooke's Hospital Cambridge.

The air ambulance currently lands at the Gog Magog Golf Club, a mile from the hospital, with patients transferred the final distance by land ambulance.

A helipad is among proposals contained within the 'Addenbrooke's 2020 Vision', which sets out plans for the future expansion of the hospital site, but a date has not yet been set for its construction.

As reported last month, EAAA will get a bigger and faster BK117 helicopter in January - but it could not fly directly to Addenbrooke's at night unless there was a lit helipad.

A hospital spokeswoman said the helipad would be located on new hospital land to the south of the site. She said it would be lit for both day and night flying. [see also 'People']

GREAT NORTH: The troubled air ambulance re-opened a base in Cumbria on August 1. The BO105 helicopter *Pride of Cumbria* used until the service was closed down in the face of a severe financial downturn months ago returned from storage to fly from the police headquarters. It will move to a new base shortly.

HAMPSHIRE AND ISLE OF WIGHT: A fundraising campaign is being launched on the island and the south coast mainland to run an air ambulance to serve the two counties. [Isle of Wight County Press]

ISLE OF MAN: According to a report medical staffs are reluctant to fly with the air ambulance service because they feel the aircraft is inappropriate for the job.

Dr Mike Blayney, a consultant anaesthetist who flies with the service, said although the plane meets Civil Aviation Authority standards, it is widely felt it is not properly equipped for the purpose it serves. A lack of funding leading to the use of inadequate aircraft is cited. Emergency air transfers use small, unpressurised aircraft, with poor climate control, high noise levels and cramped working space.

Dr Blayney's comments reflect criticisms of public health director Dr Ian MacLean, who dedicated a chapter of his recently published 2004 annual report to the subject. On June 15 2000 a Piper PA-31 air ambulance operating for Island Aviation crashed into the water near Liverpool killing the pilot, two medical staff a patient and his wife. Dr MacLean calls for a twin

engined pressurised aircraft as a minimum standard regardless of the additional cost when traveling over water.

Woodgate Aviation IOM Ltd based at Ronaldsway Airport has the air ambulance contract. It has three fixed-wing, twin-engine Piper Chieftains based at Ronaldsway. The team handles the transfer of more than 350 patients a year, amounting to some 280-290 flights annually. This includes quite a lot of return flights. Woodgate has a fleet of 7 aircraft the largest is a 19 passenger JetStream acquired in 2004. [IOM/IPAR]

KENT: Trustees of the Kent Air Ambulance have voted unanimously for the service to expand and fly with doctors on board before the end of the year. ...

SURREY: A campaign, launched in June, is being run to raise an initial £250,000 to bring about an air ambulance in Surrey.

To raise the amount needed to operate a dedicated helicopter for Surrey and Sussex [the latter already uses a police helicopter], the Kent Air Ambulance Trust is setting up a fundraising committee, which will be chaired by Ms Penelope Keith, actress.

The Kent emergency helicopter will be able to fly in Surrey once the first £50,000 is raised. There are hopes that this will be achieved this month. The Kent helicopter, based in Maidstone, will then be able to provide cover reaching a majority of Surrey within 15 minutes.

Kent applied to the Charities Commission to raise money for the Surrey air ambulance and was told it could only raise money for it in Surrey. Once the full amount is raised it is believed Surrey's helicopter will be based at Dunsfold. Together the Surrey and Sussex and Kent ambulances will be covering an area of 6,500sq miles and serving four million people. For more information call 01662 833833 or visit www.surreyairambulance.com. [Woking News Mail]

WARWICKSHIRE & NORTHAMPTONSHIRE: In the light of recent incidents the Agusta A109E power helicopter ambulance may be forced to demand a police guard when it lands - to stop youths clambering on board.

The move was prompted after teenagers tried to scramble over the aircraft and refused to move after it landed in Bilton, near Rugby. Paramedics were inside the helicopter treating a woman with serious injuries.

The unit has had a spate of incidents where people are refusing to move. Not only are they risking the lives of the patients, who are already extremely poorly, they are also putting their own lives at risk. [BBC]

UNITED STATES

FEDERAL: A private company, UNC Air Care, is now responsible for the medical evacuations at Fort Bragg previously done by Army crews. The change became effective last month. So far, civilian helicopters have made three pickups on Fort Bragg at \$5,000 per flight.

UNC Air Care has a four-month contract, subject to a long-term extension, using two Eurocopter BK117 helicopters and six ambulances in Chapel Hill, as well as three satellite bases in Erwin, Henderson and Raleigh. If the UNC helicopter's are unavailable Womack Army Medical Center has plans to dispatch ground ambulances.

ACCIDENT RATES: The Helicopter Association International has tabled its own initial appreciation on the controversy surrounding high accident rates among US EMS operations. A White Paper 'Improving safety in helicopter emergency medical services [HEMS] operations' appeared on-line at Rotor.com last month.

Recent figures show that the EMS accident rate has been climbing since 1996 and has exhibited glaring increases in the past two years. Some 130,000 patients moved each year and 16 are killed in crashes on average each year. Death rates for all US workers are claimed to be some 5 per 100,000 and yet EMS Crew suffer 74 per 100,000, way above the rates for such as miners at 27 per 100,000.

The fatal accident rate for EMS helicopters is around double that of non-EMS helicopters, with plenty of 'evidence' to suggest that the accident rate reflects a disposition of crews to accept

night flying in marginal weather with aircraft ill-equipped aircraft. But all that still needs to be clarified. [pprune]

FIRE FIRE FIRE FIRE FIRE FIRE

FRANCE

Aerial fire fighting was severely compromised in France following the crash of a Canadair CL415 aircraft early last month. A week later two fires spread in southeastern France, while a blaze that began earlier near the south-central city of Aix-en-Provence was in check but not under control.

The blazes came as the fire-fighting services brought into action the new Dash-8 type of water-dropping plane, but the main fleet of ten 415 aircraft remained grounded pending investigation of a fatal accident over Corsica [see Accidents below].

The two new blazes were close to the towns of Hyeres, near the Mediterranean coast in the Var region, and Manosque, further to the north in the foothills of the French Alps. Officials have evacuated some 1,700 people from a camp site in the Var region as a precaution.

The fire near Manosque sparked the evacuation of a campsite, while the Hyeres blaze was getting close to the city's outskirts.

A large fire which began on Saturday near Aix-en-Provence, affecting some 500 hectares of land containing scattered homes and leading to the evacuation of some 100 people, was meanwhile being held in check, but could be reawakened at any time if the wind rose.

Major fires are also blazing in Spain and Portugal. France and other parts of western Europe have been hit by unusually hot and dry conditions this summer. [Gulf Times]

An 81-year-old Frenchman fired his shotgun at fire-fighting helicopters because they were disturbing his afternoon nap. He was convicted by a court and had his small home weapons arsenal confiscated.

David Thiel was given a suspended one-year jail sentence for shooting at helicopters flying low over his home to drop water on a fire threatening the southern town of Grasse on July 21. Police called to him ended up facing one of his guns.

A struggle ensued, with police only disarming the octogenarian after receiving several blows from saucepans. They confiscated 15 hunting rifles from his home.

While noting that the helicopters were out of range of the shots fired, the judge told the irascible old-timer that he should not shoot at water-bombing helicopters as if they were wild ducks. [Media]

TURKEY

Turkey's Undersecretariat for the Defense Industry (SSM) has formally launched an international competition for the purchase of 32 military helicopters and 20 fire fighters worth around \$700 million. The fire fighters will be used by the Forestry General Directorate.

UNITED STATES

GENERAL: Last month the National Interagency Fire Center was reporting some 30 large fires as active in Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Florida, Hawaii, Idaho, Minnesota, Oregon, Texas, and Utah. So far this year, wildfires have charred 5.1 million acres, compared with 5.5 million at the same time last year. [HAI]

CALIFORNIA: Los Angeles County Fire Department [LACFD] helicopters have been spending more time on the ground than in the air, sidelined by a shortage of mechanics. The problems have not hit operational flying severely.

Recruiting is deterred by pay lower than offered to helicopter mechanics in general. Three of 12 mechanic positions remain vacant. A fourth position is held by a mechanic out on long-term sick leave.

There is also a problem getting replacement parts for the helicopters when the needs of US military fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan are placed first.

Four of the seven helicopters operated require frequent repairs. Two date from 1981 and are scheduled to be replaced next year for \$7M each. Two others are 13 years old. Two helicopters have been grounded since March, one was grounded half the time from May to July. The modern aircraft are Sikorsky Firehawks.

County fire officials say the goal of having at least three helicopters available at any give time in June was not met on 26 days. With the start of fire season in July, the goal was raised to a minimum of at least four helicopters, and the department fell short on 18 days.

The department offers mechanics about \$58,500 a year, which is about \$10,000 less than what's offered by the LA City FD.



Meanwhile Air Methods Corporation announced the delivery of the third FIREHAWK™ aircraft to the LACFD. The aircraft made 70 water drops on two separate fires during its first day in service.

The S-70A FIREHAWK™ is based on the successful UH-60L Black Hawk helicopter utilised by the US Army. The aircraft has a maximum gross weight of 23,000 lbs., can cruise at 155 knots, and is equipped with specialised systems and equipment making it capable of performing a variety of missions including airborne firefighting, swift water and blue water search and rescue, emergency medical transport, fire crew transportation, and internal or external cargo transport.

In the firefighting role, the aircraft is able to precisely deliver 1,000 gallons of water using a belly-mounted tank. The tank is filled through a retractable snorkel operated by the pilot that allows the aircraft to refill from almost any available water source near the fire area to maximize delivery rate. The power provided by the two turboshaft engines gives the aircraft a large margin of safety when operating over fire sites as well as rescue operations and cargo transports.

Air Methods provided the multi-mission interior system and a significant upgrade of the flight instruments, including a glass cockpit and additional navigation and communications systems. The aircraft is outfitted with Air Methods' multi-mode pilot control system which allows the pilot to manage all of the systems for firefighting, rescue hoist, or external cargo missions by switching from one operating mode to another on the control panel. This system maximises aircraft operational safety by allowing the pilot's hands to be kept on the controls during critical periods.

This aircraft joins two FIREHAWK™ aircraft that have been in operation with the LA County Fire Department since 2001 performing more than 8,000 missions.

SEARCH & RESCUE

PAKISTAN: An army helicopter rescued Slovene climber Tomaz Humar from an icy ledge in the Himalayas where he'd been trapped for six days at around 6,000 meters after attempting to ascend Pakistan's 'Killer Mountain'.

Humar, 36, was winched to safety from the notorious 8,125-metre (26,812-foot) Nanga Parbat Mountain, the world's ninth highest peak, after two earlier helicopter rescue attempts failed because of the high altitude and poor weather.

Pakistan's military hailed the rescue as a 'highly daring and extraordinary mission' conducted above the normal ceiling for flying -- and rivalling its 1983 rescue of Belgian mountaineer in the Himalayas from 22,000 feet (6,670 meters).

Two Lama helicopters had equipment stripped off to reduce their weight and help them fly in the thin mountain air. Neither aircraft was able to land near where Humar was sheltering, so one dropped a sling to him and lifted him dangling from a rope.

Humar was originally at 21,520 feet (6,520 metres) but had descended a few hundred meters before the rescue and had been huddled on a steep slope at around 5,900 meters (19,470 feet).



Alpine Club of Pakistan picture of a Pakistani army helicopter getting ready to fly from the base camp at Nanga Parbat mountain to search for Tomaz Humar on August 9.

Ed: There are many claimants for highest rescue and most of them revolve around the basic but elderly Sud Aviation Lama. Recent moves by Eurocopter continue to push the AS350B3 as a worthy replacement.

An Indian AF HAL Cheetah (SA315 Lama) carried out a series of rescue flights on the Kamet glacier in the Garhwal Himalayas at 23,240 ft (density altitude) in May 2004 to rescue casualties from a mountaineering expedition.

NEPAL

The Nepalese authorities plan to notify international aviation bodies that Eurocopter's claim to have landed at the summit of Everest is false. With France in the throes of its month-long National holiday in August the firm has yet to respond to the allegations by the Nepalese

government that it violated aviation guidelines. The controversy has been rumbling for three months.

Eurocopter sought permission from the government to carry out a test flight around Everest and permission was granted.

But Nepalese authorities were taken aback when Eurocopter organised a news conference in Paris claiming that its helicopter had made history.

An investigation carried out by the Civil Aviation Authority of Nepal (CAAN) said in June the Eurocopter claim was totally false and had violated the guidelines set by the International Civil Aviation Organisation [ICAO].

SWEDEN

Swedish SAR operator Norrlandsflyg has acquired a second Sikorsky S-76C on lease purchase. The company has six Sikorsky helicopters, two S-76C models being used on the SAR contracts and the three A and single A+ operating air ambulance services.

UNITED KINGDOM

SKYWATCH: The group of volunteers continues their uphill struggle for just a little cooperation from the Authorities. Almost on cue [see last month 'East Anglia'] John Astbury Director of the *Maritime and Coastguard Agency* brought up the thorny question of co-operation with Sky Watch at the UK SAR Group, using the data supplied by the volunteer group. The result was the airing of the usual crop of concerns about the 'liability' of any organisation 'tasking' Sky Watch.

Ed: As Sky Watch keep saying - there is no liability because all the aircraft are insured third party, public liability and passenger liability and the CAA have said Sky Watch operations are acceptable.

As for 'tasking' there is no way that the groups involved can be tasked. They are completely independent and once in possession of useful information they make the 'go'/'no go' launch decision and make their own safety decisions during the flight. Just like the Royal National Lifeboat Institute rescue service or any independent motoring rescue service – groups regularly 'self-launched' based on emergency services information.

The rest of the scenario relates to feedback information from Sky Watch members upon which the emergency services can make their own decisions. Day on day the emergency services make arbitrary decisions based on information received from the public – and they sometimes get it wrong. That's life. Perhaps the issue is whether Sky Watch should worry about their liability in 'tasking' the emergency services? Maybe they will get it wrong?

Maybe both sides should stay at home and do nothing about anything? Maintain the secret service that is policing.

YORKSHIRE: A man has been rescued by helicopter after being trapped in prickly gorse for two days. The 32-year-old was stuck in an area of 8ft high bushes on a cliff face at Primrose Valley near Filey until he was seen waving a lighter on Tuesday.

Emergency services were unable to reach him so a helicopter was scrambled from RAF Leconfield and the man was airlifted to hospital with hypothermia. [BBC]

INDUSTRY

In the wake of Boeing's failure to gain a contract with the 'Little Bird' helicopter **Lockheed Martin** have joined forces with MDHI to compete for the US Army's Light Utility Helicopter (LUH) programme. The team will offer the MD Explorer.

The pair announced the move on August 9 at a press conference hosted by Dan Rice, Multi-Mission Solutions business director at Lockheed Martin Systems Integration, Owego, NY, with Adam Miller, the company's LUH program director and Henk Schaeken, chief executive officer of MD Helicopters Inc.

The team will offer the NOTAR equipped MD Explorer twin-engine helicopter to meet the requirement for producing 322 new LUH helicopters between 2006 and 2015. The winning type will perform a wide range of general support missions in the United States and overseas,

including transport of personnel and supplies, disaster relief operations, medical evacuation, reconnaissance, drug interdiction and homeland security.

Lockheed Martin Systems Integration in Owego, NY, will lead the team as prime contractor, overseeing aircraft assembly at MDHI's production facility in Mesa, AZ, and providing training, simulation devices and contractor logistics support. The Lockheed Martin/MD Helicopters team is offering a proven commercial-off-the-shelf [COTS] aircraft, and the training and logistics support to ensure long-term aircraft flight readiness.

Ed: As Little Bird clearly demonstrated it is one thing to strive and another thing to bring home the goods in the way of a contract.



Paul Kelsey

One month on from the reports that MDHI was being delivered from going to the wall little more has been heard until this. Nothing has been heard on how the miracle will be managed. Within all the recent words reporting Kaman's own financial turnaround from loss to profit in the Aerospace sector there has been nothing spoken about returning to a business association with MDHI. It is true that Kaman's problems were across the whole of its air sector but that does not set aside the major depression specifically caused by MD's inability to financially support the parts production contracts for rotor blades and airframes.

Even if, as is suggested, MD has a 'large' stockpile of parts previously manufactured by Kaman the company needs to be announcing its willingness to restart production right now if the future of the MD line is to start perhaps a year hence. The ability to meet the LUH contract may otherwise be compromised. In view of the trauma Kaman endured it might be expected that they would be less than enthusiastic to 'do it again.'

Flight International last month [August 16-22] carried an item ascribed to Eastern Atlantic the UK distributors of the MD line. Although it transpires they were somewhat misquoted the source states that it does not expect deliveries of three outstanding [24 months] MD Explorer helicopters to take place before mid-2006. It is not yet known whether this statement only relates to these Eastern Atlantic orders but it suggests an across the board 12 months delay whilst MDHI gathers its resources.

A month on from the financial restructuring announcement neither MD nor Kaman is talking about Kaman's plans to restart parts production. Perhaps another option might be that they are considering an alternate source, perhaps Lockheed Martin.

On March 1 in its cancellation announcement the KLPD [Dutch Police] stated that they thought production was at a standstill in Mesa. Nothing seems to have changed in six months. As PAN reported at the time [April 2005] MDHI were claiming that certification of the Dutch airframes was 98% complete. What is the position relating to the certification of these higher weight airframes? Is the certification process frozen or did MD gain the ticket for the type and forget to tell us? I have asked but there had been no answers as PAN went to press.

Europe's **EADS** has stated that it is to bid for the sale of more than 300 light utility helicopters to the US Army, a deal valued at up to \$2 billion.

EADS North America and American Eurocopter will offer a variant of the civil Eurocopter EC145 as the UH-145 for the so-called Light Utility Helicopter [LUH] mission.

The Special Forces of the German police have received the last set of fast roping and rappelling devices from **ecms Aviation Systems**. The Unit had ordered a total of four systems

for their fleet of EC155s. Eurocopter has made ecms' systems part of its standard equipment and is offering the systems with all new deliveries.

The systems are in use by police and military forces around the world. The Preferred tool for storming ships, buildings, and other structures and rescue mission, the systems are known for their reliability and safety. Fully certified, the systems allow for a quick sequential hooking-in of eight crewmen and the simultaneous rappelling of four. A self-locking coupling mechanism prevents inadvertent release, meanwhile providing a quick release in case of emergency. The system incorporates a pilot activated electric explosive device (EED) that enables instant release in case of emergency.

A retractable version of the system was recently ordered by the French Gendarmerie intended to be used for a variety of special-forces missions. This retractable arm brings the rope point out of skid range and allows for the simultaneous operation of two ropes per helicopter. [ecms]

Simplex Manufacturing Company of Portland, Oregon has announced that it had shattered several of its long standing sales records. Thus far, sales for two individual months in 2005 have far exceeded any previous monthly sales figures in its nearly 60 year history. Simplex is also on track to have a record sales year, exceeding any previous year in its history. Top products this year were Fire Attack Systems for the Kamov Ka-32 helicopter and the Sikorsky CH-54.

Ten classic American aircraft from the 1930s, '40s and '50s took to the skies in the form of **commemorative postage stamps** when the US Postal Service dedicated the American Advances in Aviation commemorative stamp pane today. The First-Day-of-Issue ceremony for the sheet of 20 stamps (10 designs) took place under the shadows of many of the aircraft depicted on the stamps at the Experimental Aviation Association's (<http://www.eaa.org/>) 2005 EAA AirVenture Oshkosh (WI) fly-in convention. The stamps were available at Post Offices and Philatelic Centers from July 30.



McDonnell Douglas Helicopter Co., Mesa, Arizona has been awarded a \$27,094,895 modification to a firm-fixed-price contract for training device suites for the Government of Kuwait. Work will be performed in St. Louis (80%), and Mesa (20%), and is expected to be completed by April 15, 2008. [US Dept of Defense]

Sea rescue authorities in Adelaide are set to take delivery of an especially role equipped Eurocopter Squirrel for **shark patrols**. [ABC]

Nearly a decade after electronic newsletters like PAN started the format is getting very popular.

Helicopter Association International has announced the debut of their new electronic newsletter, *Rotor News*. *Rotor News* is similar to HAI's weekly electronic newsletter, *Rotor Gram*, in that they are both an HAI Member benefit, delivered by email weekly, and have easy to use subscription services. However, while *Rotor Gram* focuses on industry news, such as happenings at HAI, and legislative, regulatory, and safety issues, *Rotor News* will be entirely dedicated to announcing HAI Members' new products, services, and industry announcements.

GKN has sold off its remaining 50% share of AgustaWestland to Italy's Finmeccanica. The agreement will make AgustaWestland a wholly owned subsidiary of Finmeccanica by the end of the year. [R&W]

Erickson Air-Crane has selected Ducommun AeroStructures Inc. to produce main-rotor blades for the S-64 Air-Crane helicopter in Gardena and Monrovia, California. Deliveries of sets of six

32-ft.-long main rotor blades per helicopter are to begin shortly. The contract is worth \$5 million.

Sikorsky S-64 blades have not been produced for 30 years. The new batch will incorporate modern techniques and materials while maintaining the original design. The new blades will allow Erickson to support the current fleet and support a manufacturing effort producing around four new aircraft.

Ducommun AeroStructures has a long history of blade production over 40 years. Over 100,000 rotor blades have been produced for the Boeing AH-64 Apache, Carson Helicopter S-61, Bell 47, UH-1 Huey, and 206 JetRanger.



Gippsland GA-8 AirVan Civil Air Patrol [CAP] line-up

Gippsland Aeronautics has announced that it has received European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) certification for the GA 8 AirVan aircraft.

Gippsland Aeronautics is in the final stages of negotiation of a substantial order with a German operator and has received serious interest from parachute operators in the UK.

The Australian Civil Aviation Safety Authority first certified the AirVan in 2000 with the US FAA and Transport Canada following in 2003. To date 75 AirVan have been delivered to customers in 13 different countries from Africa to Alaska.

Since Gippsland have recently amicably terminated their arrangement with NAC Aviation at Oxford Airport Aviation Consultant Neil Plumb now represents Gippsland Aeronautics in UK/Europe. Neil will be conducting flight demonstrations in the demonstrator aircraft, which is based at Cranfield Airport in Bedfordshire in the UK, and will also provide product support services. Neil can be contacted at by phone on +44 1908 270 911 or by Email at neil@fly-unlimited.com

Lockheed Martin UK Holdings Ltd., a subsidiary of the Lockheed Martin Corporation has announced it has entered into a definitive agreement to acquire INSYS Group Limited, a UK based supplier of military communications systems, weapons systems and advanced analysis services headquartered in Ampthill, Bedfordshire.

Air Methods Corporation has received a contract in excess of \$4.8M from Sikorsky Aircraft Company for the production of 11 HH-60L Multi-Mission MedEvac Interior Systems. The work is expected to be completed in the next ten months.

The HH-60L Black Hawk is a specialized multi-mission helicopter that can support medical, personnel or cargo transport missions. The aircraft is equipped with state-of-the-art medical systems to provide critical care for up to six patients. Medical systems include a Patient Litter System, an on-board oxygen generation system, medical suction, patient monitors and high intensity NVG compatible lighting. The aircraft is also equipped with advanced avionics and special mission systems to assist the crew in locating and rescuing injured personnel. Specialized equipment includes a Forward Looking Infrared (FLIR) system and an external rescue hoist.

Tech Tool Plastics has announced approval of an STC for a new line of replacement windows - windshields, skylights, chin bubbles and cabin windows – for the BK117. [R&W]



CAE has reported improved financial results for the first quarter, ended June 30, 2005. Earnings from continuing operations were CAN\$20.8M.

The 15% increase in revenues compared to the year-earlier quarter stems mainly from higher Simulation Products revenues in both the Civil and Military segments. [CAE]

Apogen Technologies, Inc., a top 50 Federal contractor headquartered in the Washington, D.C. area, has announced that it has signed an agreement with UK based QinetiQ to become part of QinetiQ North America. Upon regulatory approval, Apogen will become a wholly-owned subsidiary, remaining autonomous and retaining the Apogen name, management team, and entire employee staff.

Apogen Technologies provides technology solutions to government entities to address complex, mission critical challenges of national significance. Current customers include both the US Department of Homeland Security and the US Customs and Border Protection.

<http://www.apogen.com/>.

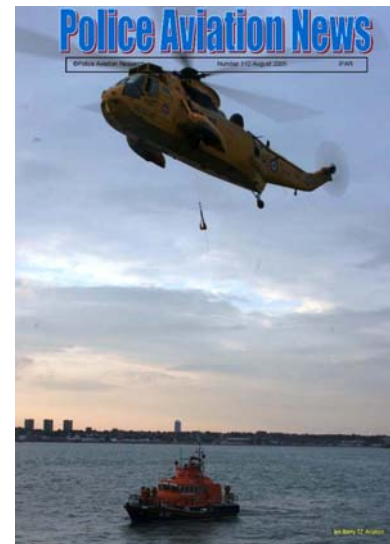
Kaman Corp. has reported much improved financial results for the second quarter and six months ended July 1, 2005.

Net earnings for the second quarter of 2005 were \$2.8 million, or \$0.12 per share diluted, compared to a net loss of \$1.7 million, or \$0.07 loss per share diluted, in the 2004 period. The 2004 second quarter loss was attributable to the Aerospace segment.

The **Sao Paulo** Helicopter Pilots Association is launching a new group representing helicopter pilots throughout Brazil. The group was announced at the association's third International Helicopter Flight Safety Seminar held in Sao Paulo in May.

The goal of Associação Brasileira de Pilotos de Helicóptero [ABRAPHE] is to represent pilots from the whole country and serve as a forum for representatives from other related areas including operators, owners, services, government agencies etc. [R&W]

ERRATUM



The cover of last month's issue included an image of the joint exercises off the UK East Coast kindly supplied by Ian Berry of TZ Aviation. Through an Editorial error no credit was given to the image. The Editor apologises unreservedly for the error.

Aerospace industry employment in the USA continued a positive trend that started last year, adding 11,100 jobs since the end of 2004.

Statistics compiled by **AIA's** Aerospace Research Center in June after the first two quarters of this year showed total aerospace employment of 618,400. This compares to 607,300 in December 2004.

Aerospace employment had been falling steadily since the early 1990s as a result of the end of the Cold War and other factors. It hit a 50-year low of 579,700 in February of 2004, but then immediately started a sustained rebound, adding 27,400 jobs by the end of the year. [AIA Arlington VA]

Tennessee Gov. Phil Bredesen joined **Bell Helicopter** CEO Mike Redenbaugh for a ground-breaking ceremony launching a new five building 37-acre construction project at the Tri-County Industrial Park. The new facilities will be used by Edwards & Associates, a Bell-owned subsidiary specialising in the repair, refurbishment and sales of new and used helicopters. The new buildings will include an office facility, completion centre, maintenance hangar, paint shop and a building for the production of the Bell 210 new light utility helicopter. Edwards currently occupies two other buildings in the Industrial Park. [BH]



Bell's Edwards & Associates begins major expansion. The growth will double Edwards' workspace to 300,000 sq. ft. and add employees bringing the workforce to 430. Tennessee Gov. Phil Bredesen, second from right, and Bell Helicopter CEO Mike Redenbaugh, centre with Sullivan County Mayor Richard Venable, far left, Carolyn Ferrell, Edwards & Associates VP Administration and Human Resources, second from left, and Edwards & Associates Pres. Phil Dieterich, far right

Bell Helicopter's Mirabel facility marked the delivery of the 3000th helicopter assembled in Mirabel since 1986 at a ceremony last month.

The helicopter delivered by Bell is a Model 412, a model the company has been assembling and supporting for 16 years already. Air Logistics, the owner of this 3000th helicopter, will be flying transportation, maintenance and other support services to the oil and gas industry, throughout the Gulf of Mexico.

Bell is actively recruiting an additional 600 persons. By the end of 2007, this will bring the workforce to a record 2200 employees in Mirabel only. Bell Helicopter anticipates its suppliers will increase accordingly. [BH]



Bell

The **Allison Advanced Development Company** (AADC) has changed its name to Rolls-Royce North American Technologies Inc. This new name better positions the organization as a Rolls-Royce company providing full-service advanced technology and system solutions. The company will continue to be based in Indianapolis. [PRN]

ACROHelipro Global Services Inc., a subsidiary of Vector Aerospace Corporation, has been awarded a contract to perform Repair and Overhaul services for US Navy H-3 helicopter Main Gearboxes. The contract is a US\$7,738,522 firm-fixed-price, indefinite-delivery/indefinite-quantity contract with a total estimated value of US\$24,893,757 if options are exercised. This procurement was competitive and is a significant addition to existing programmes that support Sikorsky H-3/Sea King/S-61 helicopter dynamic components, engines and structures for military and commercial customers worldwide with facilities in Canada, the United States and the United Kingdom.

ACCIDENTS

4 July 2005 Eurocopter BK117 N485UM Air ambulance. Eastcare operated by Air Methods Corporation Greenville, NC. While on a patient transport, the engine oil pressure on one of the engines fluctuated. An engine oil pressure caution light followed the fluctuation. In anticipation of an engine failure, the pilot elected to shut down the affected engine. A single engine landing was safely conducted at the closest airport. Patient was then transferred to an awaiting ambulance and the transport was completed by ground. [Concern]

6 July 2005 Ayres Corporation S2R-G10 N440AT Fire fighting. Suffered damage during a forced landing following a loss of engine power near Wickenburg, Arizona. The airplane was being operated by the State of Arizona as a fire suppression tool to fight forest fires. The commercial pilot, the sole occupant, sustained minor injuries, the aircraft was substantially damaged.

The Ayres departed Marana with a full load of fire retardant and about 4.0 hours of fuel, dropped the fire retardant over the assigned area and was at 1,000 feet agl, when the engine lost power, touched down on rough and uneven terrain. The gear collapsed and the wings sustained substantial damage. The propeller separated from its drive shaft. [NTSB]

19 July 2005 Grumman Tracker F- Securite Civile fire fighting aircraft. Crashed fire fighting in the Var region in southern France. The pilot escaped unhurt.

31 July 2005 Helicopter. Turkish Coast Guard. Two people were killed and two reported missing after a coast-guard helicopter crashed in the sea off southern Turkey. The aircraft, which was returning from a surveillance mission, went down in an area near the town of Kumluca. The cause of the accident was not immediately known.

The bodies of two of those on board were found by fishermen and rescuers were searching for two other people missing from the crash. They were found in the wreck a week later [Arab Times/Turkish Media]

Ed: The Turkish Coast Guard are known to operate AB206 and 412 helicopters but also have an A109.

1 August 2005. Canadair CL415 F- Securite Civile, France. During fire-fighting operation over Corsica the aircraft broke up in the air. The tail was seen to part company as it released its 6,137 litre (1,620USgal) water/foam mixture on a forest fire. Observers, including fire fighters on the ground, saw the rear section separate completely from the main fuselage, hitting the ground several seconds after the rest of the aircraft. Both pilots, Ludovic Piasentin, 49, and his co-pilot Jean-Louis de Benedict, 55, were killed. [Flight/Media]

4 August 2005 Agusta A119 N911SL St. Lucie County Sheriff's Office made a hard landing at Fort Pierce, Florida whilst undertaking an autorotation. This is the County's only air rescue helicopter. Two of the three people onboard were taken to a local hospital with minor injuries and released. The pilots said that something went wrong with the engine and they decided to land at the Sheriff's Office Aviation Unit hangar. They made a hard landing near the hangar, with the tail touching the ground first.

3 August 2005 Bell 206 N45EA Air ambulance of Midwest Life Team at Wichita Kansas. Upon landing at receiving facility helipad the crew noticed increased smoke from the engine exhaust. The pilot noticed fluctuating oil pressures during the cool down period. The pilot shut down the aircraft and notified maintenance. Inspection revealed restricted flow at the engine oil sump return line due to carbon build-up, which caused oil to be forced into the combustion section, increasing the normal level of smoke output from the exhaust. Maintenance serviced the engine and returned the aircraft to service. Pilot, Flight Nurse, Flight Paramedic. No injuries reported. Patient on board. [Concern]

6 August 2005 Hughes 369HS N500SD Bernalillo County Sheriff's Dept. The helicopter crashed into trees and a fence in northwest Albuquerque, New Mexico. The crash sent the

pilot, Chris Holland, to the University of New Mexico Hospital, where he underwent surgery to repair a leg injury. Deputy Ward Pfefferle, who was on board the helicopter, was sent to the hospital as a precaution of minor injuries, but has been treated and released.

Reports suggest that the crash was directly or indirectly caused by gunfire. Pfefferle and pilot Chris Holland were searching for a robbery suspect around midnight when Holland was hit by something in the arm and then there was a loud bang. [FAA/Media]

7 August 2005 Mil Mi-8. Operated by the KR MEDR (Ministry of Emergency and Disasters response) Kyrgyzstan [Central Asia]. 18 people (17 tourists and 1 interpreter) and four crewmembers of a Mi-8 helicopter which crashed were rescued and transported to Bishkek. None of the passengers and crewmembers was seriously hurt, the crew commander Alexander Voloshin has a broken leg, and copilot Azamat Bogubayev has burns. The Mi-8 fell down from the height of about 15-20 metres near the Inilchek glacier on Khan-Tengri peak. Mountaineers and shepherds immediately came to rescue the passengers and crew. The Mil burned.

8 August 2005 Hughes 369D N58431. Las Vegas Metropolitan Police, Nevada. Hit the tail rotor during practice auto-rotation at Las Vegas. [FAA]

11 August 2005 Bell 430 N430SL. Air ambulance of Air St. Luke's [Idaho Helicopters, Inc.] of Boise, Idaho. Crew was picking up two patients from a road accident near Gardenia, Idaho. The helicopter landed some distance from the highway so the ambulance was used to transport the two patients to the helicopter. The first patient transport was uneventful, although the pilot warned the ambulance driver about being too close to the helicopter. When the ambulance returned with the second patient, the ambulance driver drove directly into one of the four main rotor blades. The blade corner pierced the box of the ambulance. The one rotor blade was replaced and the aircraft relocated to Boise. Both patients were transported to Boise via road ambulance. [Concern]

11 August 2005 Eurocopter BK117 N138HH. Air ambulance of LIFE STAR [Air Methods Corporation]Hartford, Connecticut. While returning from a cancelled call, the medical crew member in the front seat adjusted the small sliding window on his door. As he was adjusting the window, it departed the AC. The pilot did not notice any unusual changes in AC performance and the team landed at home base without incident. No other damage or crew injuries. [Concern]

12? August 2005 Helicopter. Man arrested August 19 in Monterey, Tennessee after firing on a law enforcement helicopter with a shotgun. The land of the suspect was being searched for a marijuana patch. [Media]

14 August 2005 Eurocopter BK117B-1 N117US Air ambulance The helicopter crashed through a fence and onto its side in trees beside Interstate 95 just after lifting off from Shands-Jacksonville Medical Center, Florida and the pilot and two health-care workers walked away from the wreckage.

Officials said it developed an engine problem and was unable to make it back to the helipad. [FAA/Media]

18 August 2005 Eurocopter BK117.C1 Air ambulance of Helitalia SpA based at the 118 Parma base (National HEMS Service). In flight near Gombio Di Castelnuovo in Appennino Mount, touched a tree with the tail rotor at an altitude of 3 metres. All the crew and passenger escape safely. The helicopter suffered damage to the rotor and skid. [DM]

20 August 2005. Grumman Tracker F- Securite Civile. Firefighting aircraft. Crashed while battling a 15-hectare forest fire in the Ardeche region in southeastern France. This is the third accident suffered by firefighting aircraft in France in a month. Witnesses reported the aircraft's engine failed just before it dropped its water cargo. The crew, 43-year-old trainee pilot and his 45-year-old instructor, were both killed.

23 August 2005 Eurocopter AS350 N. US Border Patrol. Helicopter operating in California was hit by a rock allegedly thrown by an illegal immigrant and forced to make an emergency landing after a rotor was damaged. [Media]

23 August 2005 Eurocopter BK117C1 N271NE. Air ambulance. Boston Medflight [Keystone Helicopter Corporation] Hanscom Air Force Base, Bedford, Maryland. After lifting, with patient on-board, smoke began to fill cockpit and cabin area. The pilot returned within one minute to the hospital helipad safely. The aircraft was shut down. It was determined that a faulty air conditioner blower motor was the source of the smoke in the cockpit and cabin area. [Concern]

FLIGHT SAFETY

A STRANGE REPORT

A study by researchers from the **Johns Hopkins School of Public Health Center for Injury Research and Policy** has stated that the crash-resistant standards for the fuel systems of civilian helicopters are not as effective in protecting passengers in survivable crashes as stricter military helicopter standards. The civil standards may be less effective than anticipated when they were established in 1994. The first study of its kind to determine the effectiveness of the standards is published in the August 2005 issue of Aviation, Space and Environmental Medicine.

The report states that post-crash fires are the single most important hazard to survivors of helicopter crashes. Even though crash-resistant fuel systems have been almost 100 percent effective in survivable crashes of military helicopters, manufacturers and regulators of civil aircraft have been 'slow to implement the technology in civil helicopters.'

The researchers examined NTSB civil crash data from 1982 to 2004. They compared Bell 206 helicopters with crash-resistant fuel systems to Aerospatial [sic] 350 helicopters, which did not have crash-resistant fuel systems. The AS350 helicopters, made after 1981, had the highest proportion (11%) of crashes with post-crash fires. Fewer than 4% of Bell 206 helicopter crashes had post-crash fires. Bell voluntarily implemented crash-resistant fuel system standards in 1982, twelve years before they were mandated but not really state of the art in 2005.

Ed; I wondered whether this report had been misrepresented by the press coverage, although it appeared to follow the original press release. The authors have since confirmed that the study related to just the two types. They were chosen because of similarities between the aircraft and their use, as well as the fact that one had and the other did not have a 'crash resistant' fuel system.

Still wondering what relevance either of these 30+ years old design airframes had to a comment denigrating modern build standards I pressed the point. Making apparently detrimental references to the 'civil standards formulated in 1994' and then taking all 'the evidence' from airframes of a much earlier era is perhaps a distortion when commenting on the worth of modern JAR/FAR standard airframes. If anything the demonstrated effectiveness of the improved Bell fuel cell is a positive angle on the many other improvements that the 1994 regulations subsequently sought to introduce. The report does not identify the 'military helicopter' types referred to. Were they referring to the 1960s Huey or 1980s Blackhawk?

Well the answer is that the military benchmark was Mil-T-27422B covering just about everything rotary in the US military arsenal. It seems that historically they exhibited 'essentially zero post-crash fires in survivable crashes.'

The issue for which the group still have concern is whether the current FAA CRFS standards are really as effective in preventing post-crash fire as desired. A secondary concern relates to the US Army's buying COTS helicopters for military operations. Whether the parameters are a little narrow or not - at least they are asking questions and that can be no bad thing. More need to follow that example.

[www.jhsph.edu/publichealthnews/press_releases/2005/baker_helicopter.html]

PEOPLE

Alistair McGill the Chief Pilot of London's Air Ambulance has resigned from the post and will be leaving the operation on September 12. He is going to fly for Starspeed Limited based at Blackbushe Airport. Londoner McGill joined the Virgin HEMS operation in 1996 and he took over the Chief Pilot role early in 1999 in the lead up to acceptance of the new MD Explorer G-EHMS.

The sudden departure of Alistair from the operation comes at a difficult time for Virgin HEMS; recently another of the pilots, Jonathan Salt, left on medical grounds.



Gerry Hermer the Managing Director of Sterling Aviation has retired from flying on reaching the age of 60. In the past Gerry and his company founded and piloted the Norfolk police helicopter and the East Anglian Air Ambulance and Rescue team, he has played a key role in providing a vital safety net for local people.

In 1990, Hermer and colleague Dick Bendy at Sterling persuaded the police to launch their first airborne service, and he is immensely proud that what started out as an occasional service has become an essential part of local policing operating five days a week.

In 2000, the company turned their attention to launching an air ambulance for Norfolk, Suffolk and Cam bridge, which has also been a huge success. Mr Hermer, who lives at Belaugh, near Wroxham, was awarded the Air Force Cross for bravery during his time with RAF SAR in Hull and Coltishall, Norfolk. As PAN goes to press there are unconfirmed reports that he has sold Sterling.

Microwave Radio Communications (MRC), of N. Billerica, MA has announced that the company has hired **David Emma** as the new Vice President of Sales, responsible for managing the worldwide sales organisation and systems engineering. Mr. Emma's primary focus will be to develop and manage MRC's sales strategy and continue to grow MRC's leadership position in broadcast, public safety, military and satellite communications markets.

www.mrcbroadcast.com

Many older emergency services aviators will remember **Mark Trumble** the co-creator of Police Aviation Services [PAS]. He 'left' the business when PAS was taken over. Now his family is back in the aerial business through his sons.

A recently formed leisure flying business based at Exeter International Airport and operating a Bell 206L trades under the banner Helicopters UK [one of the Trumble era operating names for PAS]. The company recently hit the news purchasing fire and rescue equipment, a fire support vehicle and an AOC thanks via a loan.

The new Helicopters UK is headed up by Jasper Trumble, a commercial helicopter pilot, and his brother Toby, an aviation insurance broker. The target market for the company, which will have further offices in Kingsbridge [Mark Trumble's original base], is the pleasure flying sector as well as helicopter charter.

In 1984 PAS consisted of Mark Trumble, Paul Hannant and Steve Bidmead, three ex-military pilots trading exclusively in the support of police aviation mainly using leased helicopters, and operating both the pilot and maintenance contracts for Devon and Cornwall's helicopter. The company grew and was eventually taken over by others and each of the partners moved on. Mark Trumble left to run a hotel.

WALK ON THROUGH

It may be time to consider wearing laced shoes next time you travel to that trade show in the USA. That chore of taking off shoes at security control may be a thing of the past.

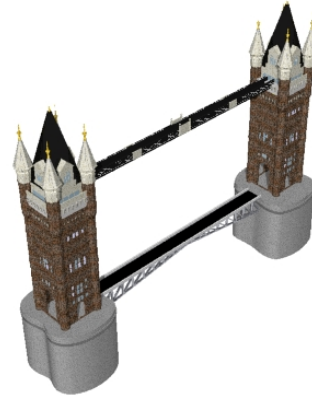
The US Ministry of National Security is reportedly developing new technologies allowing passengers not to take off their shoes when passing through the control points at airports.

The TSA has requested a number of companies engaged in developing equipment to design an instrument that would scan passengers' shoes to detect potentially dangerous foreign matter such as explosives. The TSA plans to start testing the instrument this coming winter. The TSA is also testing a new instrument allowing the detection of suspect objects on the body. A previously designed instrument created Civil Rights problems in that it effectively stripped the body naked.

FUTURE EVENTS

DSEi [Defence Systems and Equipment International] London Docklands September 13-16, 2005

Adam Hall Limited, one of the worlds most respected suppliers of hardware components to the Event, Pro-Audio, Music and allied manufacturing industries will be exhibiting at the DSEi this year for the first time. Adam Hall are the exclusive UK distributors for US high-quality moulded case manufacturer 'SKB', who are *the* USA's approved military supplier for transportation cases and equipment racks. Adam Hall will be showing SKB's new range of injection moulded IP67 cases as well as their range of shock-mounted 19" rack cases. For more information please visit stand No 907 at DSEi 2005 or contact Adam Hall on 01702 613922 / mail@adamhall.co.uk / www.adamhall.co.uk



ICORE International will be promoting its capability to design and produce wired systems and complete harnesses for the defence and military aerospace markets. The company will also address its innovative plated composites capability for lightweight, corrosion resistant materials.

The product focus on the stand will address ICORE's electrical interconnect and hose products in aerospace and military applications.

High on ICORE's list of priorities for the defence industry is the development of new methods of providing improved corrosion resistance in aircraft. As a result, prominent on the company's stand will be its plated composites capability <http://www.icoregroup.com>

You need to be at DSEi STAND 789 if you are interested in acquiring the latest gizmo – a tablet PC. Blazeport Limited of Chalgrove, Oxford have announced their first new product based on their collaborative partnership with the Itronix Corporation of Spokane, USA.

Structured around the well proven performance of the Itronix industrial product, the new rugged tablet is to be launched under the Blazeport *ndura* brand and has been developed specifically for emerging military opportunities with particular emphasis on future soldier technology and the digitisation of the battle space.

Already similar products are being adopted by the emergency services – a useful tool when attending to patients when out of the aircraft. www.blazeport.co.uk

BGAD September 15, 2005. Cambridge Airport.

European Business Air News and Marshall Aerospace are holding the third bi-annual Business & General Aviation Day, which will be held at Cambridge Airport.

BGAD 05 will once again provide an opportunity to see the very best of business aviation, including many of the latest business jet, turboprop and private aircraft, as well as helicopters for business and leisure.

There will be an indoor exhibition in hangar space alongside the business aviation terminal at Cambridge, as well as aircraft on display immediately outside on the apron. There will be meetings during the day hosted by BBGA and full catering is offered on site. The show is open from 10am to 4pm, and there is free parking on site.

Reserve your space now!

Log on to the BGAD05 web site - www.ebanmagazine.com/bgad05
 Or email Mark Ranger at mark@ebanmagazine.com
 call +44 (0) 1279 714509

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HELITECH UK 2005 IWM DUXFORD

27-29 September 2005. Helitech Imperial War Museum Duxford, near Cambridge, UK. Helitech is a 3-day exhibition which regularly attracts more than 250 exhibitors from around the world representing every tier of the supply chain. In 2003 over 6,500+ commercial and military trade visitors and private owners viewed the latest helicopters and newest systems and equipment on display. www.helitech.co.uk

The first-ever directly linked conference to be held during is a one-day programme focusing on COMR (commercially owned military registered) contracts brings together



potential military customers and civil suppliers under one roof for the first time.

Senior military officers, including the Royal Navy commander in charge of the joint service team responsible for researching COMR opportunities, and the commander of the US Coast Guard's fleet of Agusta A109E Powers, will explain how they operate and what they look for in the ideal military/civil partnership.

Conference topics will deliver perspectives from every piece of the COMR jigsaw, including military customers and civil suppliers from both the commercial and public service operating arenas. The requirements of regulatory authorities, financiers and insurers will also be analysed and discussed during a full programme on Tuesday 27 September – Day One of Helitech.

The conference, to be held at the Wellcome Trust centre – less than five minutes drive from Helitech's Duxford site. The COMR conference is being organised by Tangent Link. For further enquiries contact Chrissie Gaskin on +44 (0) 1628 660566 or at cgaskin@tangentlink.com

The Alan Mann Group based at Fair Oaks continue to market their AIMS, Advanced Integrated Mission Seat to potential customers from the Police, Maritime patrol, Surveillance, Reconnaissance and Airborne Broadcasting world. It was at the last Helitech in 2003 and will be there again this year.

AIMS, claims to meet a need for a sophisticated and ergonomic management and display system capable of providing the operator with fingertip control over a large number of mission systems.

CAM GmbH based in the suburbs of Munich represent US based **Broadcast Microwave Systems [BMS]** and will be exhibiting a range of microwave downlink systems.



CAM has had a busy month at the ever growing list of trade shows. Late in August they were promoting the system to the military in Poland and before getting to Helitech will have been showing at IBC [the premier broadcast technology show in Europe] in Amsterdam from 9 -13th.

Adams Aviation Supply Co Ltd of Biggin Hill Airport will be showing a low-weight, small and - crucially - low cost approved Mode S Transponder, some 406 ELT beacons and some new helicopter headsets from Sennheisser and Telex at Helitech. www.adamsaviation.com

Headset Services Limited can be found on Stand No. 1819 displaying an array of aviation headsets, Bose, David Clark, Sennheiser and Peltor as well as the ALPHA Eagle pilot helmet.

FLIR Systems are having a busy month in September. They are at IBC in Amsterdam from 9 -13th mainly promoting the UltraMedia HDTV and then its immediately on to DSEi in London from 13-16th promoting the full military imaging range. The final show of the month sees the company travelling 40 miles north to Duxford at Helitech from 27-29th September where they will have the Star SAFIRE HD and the new UltraForce II EP as the main products.

Helicopter window manufacturer **Tech-Tool Plastics** is expanding its European presence with newly approved products, new distributors and expanded inventories in Western and Central Europe. Tech-Tool Plastics windows will be on display in Booth 1515 at Helitech 2005. EASA recently cleared the way for the sale of Tech-Tool Plastics' Bell 407 standard and custom helicopter replacement windows in the European Union. Ross Aviation of Gloucestershire, England, distribute the windows in the UK and Swiss based Fuchs Helikopter in Austria, Germany, Italy, and Switzerland.

McAlpine Helicopters are expected to take a full range of current production Eurocopter helicopters with them to Helitech. In addition to their own EC145 examples of the EC120, EC130, EC135 and EC155 will be present in the static park. Other operators are likely to fill gaps in the range.

Powervamp have taken a total of 36 sq. metres of space this year – by far the largest stand they have ever taken but shared with other associated vendors including Semia – Vibration monitoring equipment and Calzoni – Helipad lighting.

Powervamp have taken over the UK and Eire /Europe Distribution/spares and service business of the Chopper Spotter helicopter mover and will be showing models at Duxford

On the Powervamp range, the company is launching a revolutionary miniaturised two pack power supply/portable GPU. Because the company anticipates a strong demand for the product launch customers will be offered a special introductory discount against a firm deposit and a secured slot in the delivery queue.

Powervamp believe the outstanding versatility of this new unit will appeal to both the light single and twin turbine operators, 24/28 volt piston machines and even the much larger transport helicopters. Maintenance and FBO's will also benefit from the unique versatility that this new unit can offer.

As well as Powervamp's well proven GPU range, the Company will be showing it PS80 and PS360 power supplies—the latter being extensively used at the Paris Air show. A new Ramp cart, also for large fleet operators and FBO's will be on display together with the now widely used portable fuel pump and GA 12volt/24 volt GPU.



TLC Handling has again been appointed official ground-handler for skid-mounted helicopters at Helitech. They will be located at the static display area, helping to move helicopters and providing demonstrations, as well as having a stand indoors - number 1303.

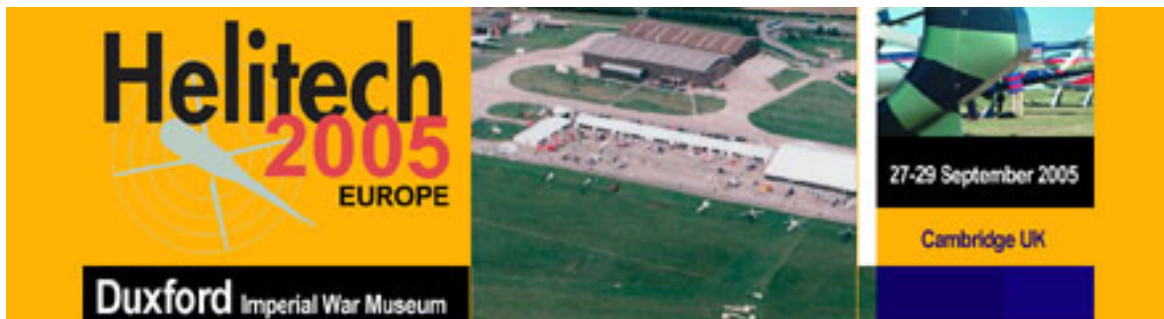
B-N Group. As fixed wing manufacturers the company might not be expected to display at Helitech. Following a lead by Piaggio a few years back they are entering the competitions lair and exhibiting fixed wing solutions in booth number 1811.

The main thrust will be showing the Defender 4000 surveillance aircraft and their facility at Bembridge Airport, Isle of Wight.

L-3 Communications WESCAM are displaying at both the DSEi [#1473] and Helitech [#1710] exhibitions. At both the main thrust will be announcing that the 'Evolution Continues' with the addition of advanced performance features to the MX line of multi-spectral imaging turrets.

System advancements specific to MX models intended to offer customers 25% lighter systems offering significant performance improvements. www.wescam.com

Martin-Baker is exhibiting on Booth number 619 to display their Multi-Functional Operator's Seat (MFOS) along with new high comfort seats.



ACPO-APA 2006

Summer Conference &
International Policing Exhibition

ACPO-APA 2006 Conference 23 - 25 May 2006, now hosted by Brintex on behalf of the Association of Chief Police Officers and the Association of Police Authorities. ACPO was previously part of a major series of events at the NEC Birmingham this stand-alone event has now moved to a different date and 100 miles south to ExCeL in the Docklands area of London. The event will move around and is set to move north to Manchester in 2007.

The ACPO-APA Summer Conference is the annual forum that brings the most senior ranking police officers of all the forces, police authorities and national police agencies in England, Wales and Northern Ireland together, to discuss and review all aspects of policing polices, strategies and methods. The Conference will be held in the Platinum Suite at ExCeL.

A Welcome Reception will be held on the evening of the 23rd May for delegates and exhibitors. This will allow delegates to have an exclusive preview of the ACPO-APA International Policing Exhibition that will run alongside the Summer Conference in the South Hall of ExCeL. The exhibition's format will change in 2006, focussing on 2 days of intense business surrounded by great social occasions culminating in

the Gala Dinner at the Painted Hall, Greenwich on Thursday 25th May. For the first time in the event's history, tickets to this prestigious dinner will be open to exhibitors and visitors as well as delegates.

The ACPO-APA International Policing Exhibition will involve 200 exhibitors from the UK and abroad representing the top specialist manufacturers and suppliers to the policing sector.

President of the Association of Chief Police Officers, Chris Fox said 'The ACPO Conference and Exhibition in 2006 is set to be an exciting and hugely important event. I hope that the new London Docklands venue will attract exhibitors and delegates alike to a conference in which the policing context is challenging but forward looking. Policing has been at the forefront of the political agenda for some time, and the new emerging terrorist threats and activities have now put the British police service in the spotlight more than ever.

FARNBOROUGH AIRSHOW 2006

The Airshow foresees benefits from the London 2012 Olympics. That year's exhibition will take place in the month before the Olympics and the organisers will probably theme in on the events centred on east London.

In the meantime plans are well under way for next year's show. A fully finished and available for public inspection Airbus A380 expected to be on display for the first time. Exhibitor numbers are expected to top 2004's record 1,360. <http://www.farnborough.com> [ABTN]

DIARY – the rest

8-10 September 2005 Enforcement Expo 2005 I-X Center, Cleveland, Ohio. Police and law enforcement officers are challenged as never before. Traditional roles have been expanded with the added responsibilities that enhanced homeland defense and security measures require. The need for the latest equipment, products and technology to meet these challenges is unprecedented, and so is the need for information to do the job.

Now, for the first time, an event has been created to serve the needs of one of the largest law enforcement markets in the country. Enforcement Expo will provide an annual and accessible forum for the police and law enforcement community to learn about vital new techniques as well as to view and compare the latest equipment necessary to do the job.

Attendees of *Enforcement Expo* are law enforcement officers and managers who have the responsibility to evaluate and purchase a full range of products, services and equipment. They represent the complete command structure and come from all types of departments, agencies and services including:

24-28 September, 2005 112th International Association of Chief of Police. Annual Conference: Law Enforcement Education and Technology Exposition Miami, FL www.theiacp.org Public Information IACP 800-THE-IACP ext. 209 (fax) 703-836-4543

24 – 26 October 2005 Air Medical Transport Conference. Austin Convention Center Austin, Texas, USA. The association, a voluntary non-profit organization, encourages and supports its members in maintaining a standard of performance reflecting safe operations and efficient, high quality patient care. AAMS is built on the idea that representation from a variety of medical transport services and businesses can be brought together to share information, collectively resolve problems and provide leadership in the medical transport community. www.aams.org

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