

Police Aviation News

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Number 124 August 2006

IPAR



IS THIS REALLY
a vision of the future...

c Alex Skabinski

PAN – [POLICE AVIATION NEWS](http://www.policeaviationnews.com) is published monthly by
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EDITORIAL

With every day the numbers of pilotless aircraft projects grow. UAV's as they are known popularly have a large following in the military and there are clear signs that some sections of the law enforcement industry are paying attention to their development. It is not certain whether the current level of interest relates to a perception that they are easy and cheap to acquire and operate and likely to enter service with non-military operators soon or just as an object of curiosity.

Already there have been clear instances of amateur aviators feeling the sharp rebuttal of an aviation legislator because they failed to understand the product its dangers and limitations. They also apparently failed to appreciate the powers of the aviation legislators. On top of that there have been a number of failures of the technology to actually get the UAV's to stay up in the air just as the ground based operators desired.

An acceptable UAV in commercial law enforcement service will undoubtedly happen, but at the moment it looks like being a long road ahead. Meanwhile there may be some disillusioned groups waiting for the R&D to catch up with the desire.

Perhaps they should take stock for a moment and decide what they want to do with the technology and how they might achieve it. What is the tool to be used for? It's actually still cheaper to stand on a box to look over a wall – and you do not have to wait to long for it to be set up.

As past experience has regularly proven, some scenarios may turn out uneconomic. There is no point waiting hours for a cheap UAV housed in its not so cheap special truck, and trained operators [assuming they are not on vacation or shopping in the mall] when it's stuck in traffic miles from the need. That suggests you might need more than one or two strategically located systems, before long the \$50,000 UAV is costing as much as the specialised manned aircraft [that comes with a self contained operator, crewman and suite of cameras] that can speed to help out at all points of the compass within minutes.

Yes there is likely to be a place for UAV's, especially in pre-planned operations, but they may not be the answer to all the problems and may only be as effective as a more acceptable blimp in a non-shooting war.

Bryn Elliott

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LAW ENFORCEMENT

CANADA

CALGARY: The City of Calgary's finance committee has voted unanimously in favour of the police department to moving ahead with the purchase of a new helicopter to replace their original 1991 vintage MD520N HAWC-1.

Beyond the finance committee the deal still has to get past further administrative hurdles but it look like the order for a new \$1.9M Eurocopter EC-120 can be placed. It will complement HAWC-2, also an EC-120, which was recently purchased.

When it's operational next spring, HAWC-1 will allow the police to have a helicopter in the sky seven days a week. [AM770CHQR]

Ed: HAWC-1 was the innovative Canadian police helicopter acquired by fund-raisers to serve a local populace. The Helicopter Air Watch for Community Safety program began as a research project in 1992. In October 1993 Constable Rick Sonnenberg was killed in the line of duty while trying to stop a stolen vehicle and his sister established a memorial fund to purchase a police helicopter. They raised \$1.8M and purchased the MD that has served since 1995.

The fund-raising has led to an indispensable resource now largely funded by local government.

TORONTO: Citing lack of interest from the city, the free gift of a helicopter for Toronto Police has been essentially pulled from the table. The same free helicopter will instead be made available to southern Ontario police forces.

A 39 year old ex-police officer Trevor Harness is president of Regional Air Support and Res-

cue (RASAR) who were offering the facility. The group say that the door is never closed but they have lost patience waiting for a decision from the authorities. The group had offered a helicopter, training, a pilot, fuel and insurance to help the city in its losing battle fighting violent crime. [The Sun]

UNITED KINGDOM

UK POLICE 1: The oft repeated plans of the UK Home Office to force through a series of mergers have been set aside. Officially the idea is only delayed, but it seems likely that they will never be enacted. Even Lancashire and Cumbria, the two forces that were 'willingly' entering into a merger, have now ceased talks.

UK POLICE 2: On the eve of Farnborough representatives from eleven police air support units participated in a police open day organised by UK AgustaWestland agent Sloane Helicopters at their main base at Sywell, Northamptonshire. The main purpose was to introduce the Agusta 109 Grand to British police forces. A demo flight, open to all attendees, was preceded by a presentation delivered by Sales and Marketing Director, Giorgio Benedoni.



Of the Grand Jeremy Awenat, MD of Sloane Helicopters, said 'I am of the opinion that there is no finer aircraft available on the market today that satisfies the most stringent requirements of commercial, private and public service operators. The Agusta Grand is already enjoying incredible success within all sectors of the market around the world and the British market is in no way different. '

Since the AgustaWestland Grand was unveiled at the Farnborough International Air show in 2004 nearly 80 orders have been placed by customers in Europe, North and South America, Asia, Australasia, Africa and the Middle East. The aircraft has dominated sales in its class in the corporate/VIP transport market where over 50% of its sales have been made. [Sloane/AW]

Ed: A second similar event was held to promote the Grand to others in the market the week



after Farnborough. Only one Agusta 109E Power serves with UK police at this time. Two such helicopters have been sold to the Dyfed-Powys Police. The next most likely target police force is South & East Wales consortium based at Cardiff. That contract remains very much undecided but is likely to be finalised within police circles this month to ensure that Home Office funding can be gained in the next round.

In a way this 'sudden' high profile activity by the AW sales team may well be laid at the door of the temporary demise of the MD Explorer in the UK. For the time being there is no longer a three horse race in the UK and so any activity facing up to the ascendancy of Eurocopter and its 135/145 team must be newsworthy.

CAMBRIDGESHIRE: Just weeks after the local police moved their new helicopter onto their base at RAF Wyton it was announced that 1,000 jobs could be lost at the RAF station as it downsizes.

Although the proposal is to be confirmed the locally based Defence Logistic Organisation (DLO) wants to withdraw from several sites, including RAF Wyton, and move to Bristol. The RAF Wyton action is a downsizing rather than closure, more than 2,500 logistics staff are currently employed at the base. [DLO]

SCHOOL'S OUT: Reflecting operations by other air units in the summer season when schools are out Lancashire are publicising the undertaking of spot checks around local schools.

Operation Caretaker will run throughout the summer holidays and will aim to reduce crimes committed on school grounds such as vandalism, criminal damage burglary and arson.

The operation will also seek to target anti social behaviour where groups of youngsters gather in school grounds.

Over in the North East of England Cleveland officers and Police Community Support Officers will increase patrols and cooperate with the force helicopter to move on those found gathering on school grounds and to deter criminals. Again the operation is called Operation Caretaker [aka Janitor in the USA].

Meanwhile further north the British Transport Police have extended an existing strategy to catch vandals who trespass on railway lines to Scotland by bringing in an AS355F helicopter. The 'new' craft was launched last month in Glasgow, as Operation Clarinet over areas of Lanarkshire and Glasgow, in the first of what could become regular operations employing Constable Nicky Ritchie the first Scottish area air observer. Scotland only has a single full-time police helicopter operation operated by Strathclyde operating out of Glasgow.

British Transport Police do not have their own aircraft and are therefore pretty much dependent upon the resources given by Network Rail. As a result these relatively short exercises tend to be targeted 'frighteners' that actually depend upon other 'innocently' passing helicopter flights for much of their long-term effect in protecting the rail system."

Network Rail helicopters tend to operate high profile sorties around cities in the UK; most such have been hunts for vandals in Cardiff, London, Leeds and Coventry.

David Simpson, Network Rail's route director in Scotland, added: "We are hopeful this operation will have a real impact in Scotland.

"Now the BTP has a dedicated air observer, we will be delighted to offer the services of our

helicopter to combat railway crime, which is a particular problem at this time of year, when schools are on holiday and the weather is warm."

A recent joint operation by Strathclyde Police and the British Transport Police targeting trespassers in the city's northern transport corridor failed to catch any rail criminals.

Two Eurocopter AS355F aircraft are assigned to operating for Network Rail and it is these that were available to the BTP in Scotland. The aircraft they used are operated by the Scottish PLM Dollar Group at Dalcross. The featured aircraft was G-NTWK, the former AS355F2 G-FTWO but PLM also have G-NETR

which as G-JARV was previously regularly used by the rail maintenance company Jarvis.



HAMPSHIRE: Lee-on-Solent airfield which includes the Hampshire Police Defender 4000 and a MCA/Coastguard S61N among its residents is under threat to stop all daytime flying from 25 September for five weeks whilst some wartime pipe bombs are removed to enable new works on the MCA base. The announcement comes amid protests from aircraft and non aircraft related firms that use the field. In all there are some 35 flyable aircraft that would have to relocate if they wish to fly during this period. If it goes ahead new operating bases have already been identified for the emergency services operators.

UNITED STATES

FEDERAL: In the middle of July the first of the EC120s ordered for US Customs and Border Protection (CBP) was delivered at a ceremony at the American Eurocopter Mississippi plant. Following the ceremony the aircraft flew to New Orleans to make an appearance at the Airborne Law Enforcement Association (ALEA) Annual Conference and Exposition, July 19 - 22. Afterwards, the helicopter and pilots will return to AEC's Columbus facility for flight training.

The CBP's primary consideration in making the selection was to procure a helicopter that was technically compliant with its mission requirements: to provide low-level surveillance and security patrol of U.S. borders and to detect and apprehend persons either trying to illegally enter the United States or conduct illegal activity along US borders.

The Department of Homeland Security ordered ten of the EC120 helicopters. The goal is to deliver six more by the end of the year. [AEC]

CALIFORNIA: Bell may have lost out to Eurocopter when San Diego PD re-equipped by displacing their JetRanger's with AStar's but the County Sheriff's Department in the same region is replacing a current fleet of MD helicopters with Bell helicopters.

The unit commenced operations in 1971 with three Bell 47 helicopters and started to move to MD products in 1984 and by 1995 the unit was using a mixed fleet of Hughes 500D's, Bell 47's, UH-1's and Beech fixed wings. By 1997 the operation was centred on MD500s.

In June 2000 the unit undertook a massive sort out of its aircraft stock and disposed of a single MD500D, no less than seven OH-58s, a Cessna 180 and some other items representing eleven unused airframes for a total of \$983,800.

In August 2001 the Department announced a move of its fleet of six helicopters and one fixed-wing aircraft into a new 12,000 square-foot hangar part and parcel of a more comprehensive upgrade of the department's air unit known as ASTREA (Aerial Support to Regional

Enforcement Agencies).

After MD had their troubles the Sheriff's air unit turned their backs on the Mesa product. The San Diego County Board of Supervisors approved a Sheriff's Department request for the procurement of a Bell 407 helicopter and pilot training from Bell Helicopters. The \$1.9M cost will be funded by \$1,449,375 from an Urban Area Security Initiative grant and \$450,625 from a State Homeland Security Equipment grant. The Sheriff's Department will be phasing out two existing aircraft, and the cost savings from that will fund the estimated \$468,000 annual expense for ongoing training, maintenance, and operating costs.

In an evaluation process the MD 600 was the only other helicopter which met the general specifications. The MD 600 is similar in size and power to the Bell 407, but it uses a Notar System rotor which utilises compressed air instead of a mechanical tail rotor to counteract the torque created by the main rotor blade. It is said that the Notar System rotor creates undesirable handling characteristics, such as unintended dives, in some flight regimes and this made the type unacceptable. Lengthy groundings consequent of the recent serviceability issues was also cited.

The existing MD helicopters are to be replaced by Bell 407's in due course. [SDCSO]

CALIFORNIA: The San Bernardino Police Dept's new Robinson R44 helicopter started a 90 day trial period in mid-July. It will fly 40 hours a week, mostly between 5 p.m. and 3 a.m. In the past, the Police Department has relied on the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department for helicopter service, but this is the first time it has its own.

In June, the City Council approved spending \$97,500 on a three-month contract with California Aviation Services.

Details of an insurance agreement delayed things a bit - City Attorney James F. Penman said a stronger insurance plan would cost the city an additional \$12,000 to \$13,000 - but now the chopper is operational. [SB Sun]

CALIFORNIA: One year after the helicopter crash that rocked the Sacramento County Sheriff's Department, family, friends and colleagues gathered Thursday for the unveiling of a memorial to two deputies killed in the accident and a third who survived with major injuries.

More than 400 people attended the opening of a Star 6 memorial plaza along the shore of Lake Natoma, featuring a 10-foot, stone and metal sculpture honouring the crew of the department's Star 6 helicopter. The shape resembles the helicopter's unique tail rotor, as well as the number six with three lines symbolizing the three deputies.

Through the polished bronze centrepiece, visitors can look across the lake to the exact spot where the machine went down.

FLORIDA: Last month the Joint Aviation Unit of the Gainesville Police Department and the Alachua County Sheriff's Office celebrated 10 years of service to the citizens of Gainesville and Alachua County. The Joint Aviation Unit is currently operating one Hughes OH-6A and two Bell OH-58A+ helicopters and is staffed by two full-time aircrews (one pilot and one tactical flight officer from each agency) and a full-time maintenance technician.

The Joint Aviation Unit serves Alachua County which has a population of over 220,000 people and covers 965 square miles. The City of Gainesville, which lies within Alachua County, has a population of over 117,000 and covers 54 square miles in Alachua County.

FLORIDA: The Volusia County Sheriff's Air One fleet is composed of three comprehensively equipped Bell 407 helicopters which operate in the police fire suppression and EMS roles, at a rate of some 2,000 sorties annually.

The fleet has been modern, well funded and well planned for many years thanks to a tie up with the local Halifax Health Authority that pays half of the cost.

The Volusia County Sheriff's Office has already planned their replacement schedule and it

is projected that negotiations to purchase a new helicopter fleet will see delivery of the first new craft tentatively scheduled for December 2008. The helicopters are used for a variety of law enforcement and medical missions.

The Volusia County Council has already approved the first step in the process, authorising payment of a \$276,150 deposit to reserve three helicopters off the assembly line. Reservations years in advance is crucial because supplying the military with helicopters to fight the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have made the kind of commercial helicopters the Sheriff's Office uses hard to find.

The total package is expected to cost about \$5.5M for the three helicopters and another \$1.15M per-helicopter to re-equip the fleet for law enforcement and medical flights. Part of the cost will be defrayed by trading in the existing three helicopters, which are expected to fetch up to \$1.4M apiece.

The fleet is replaced about every seven years in order to avoid the cost of replacing major components. The existing fleet was purchased in 2001. The final terms of the purchase will be brought back to the County Council by December 2007 for approval. If the county can't agree on the terms, the deposit will be returned. [VCSO]

Ed: The operation has remained loyal to Bell from the beginning. The 206 JetRanger's gave way to 206L LongRanger's in the Mid-1990's and they have a covert fixed wing.

Articles reporting on this impending deal illustrated the differences between Volusia and Brevard County, Volusia's southern neighbour with a similar population, operating a four-helicopter OH-58 fleet, which reportedly flies cheaper but less often than Volusia's fleet. Where Volusia hourly flight costs are given as \$392 the Brevard OH-58s reportedly cost just \$120. A deal with Patrick Air Force base makes fuel significantly more economical for Brevard [\$1.71] compared with that paid by Volusia [\$2.40]:

ILLINOIS: A civilian who drew the attention of law enforcement officials by flying a helicopter marked with police logos ended up in court pleading guilty to hiding a criminal background in his application for a pilot certificate.

A State Police investigator noticed a Schweizer 300C helicopter at Schaumburg Airport, Illinois with markings that included "Homeland Security, Valor from Above," "Law Enforcement Aviation Coalition," "Police," "Air-One" and "Night Sharks." A few enquiries confirmed that it did not have an official connection to these organisations.

Winthrop Harbor Police Department were offered the use of the helicopter to cover a period when the department's own privately owned helicopter was down for repairs. Apparently, that is why the logos were on the helicopter. The retention of the logos was later

described as an abuse of what had originally been a Good Samaritan offer.

Randy Sanders, 44, was outed in a Chicago Sun-Times series 'Criminals Posing as Police' earlier this year.

In Sanders admitted piloting a helicopter from Kenosha, Wisconsin to Schaumburg for routine maintenance even though he did not have a valid airman's certificate because his application was deferred for medical evaluation.

Sanders had made a false application to the FAA for an airman medical and student pilot certificate in 2004, failing to disclose convictions that had resulted in imprisonment. [Chicago Sun]



INDIANA: The State Police, based in Indianapolis are clearing out their stock of DoD surplus airframes with a view of acquiring a new machine.

They began liquidating surplus aircraft through an online auction recently with the sale of two helicopters and an airplane, totalling \$684,999. A 1985 MD500E N98SP c/n 0117E used for transportation, SAR and patrol until 2003 when the only pilot trained to fly the

model retired was sold to a California resident for \$403,999. The State Police had acquired a number of OH-58s at no cost from a federal surplus programme in 1996 to use for marijuana eradication efforts, routine patrol and surveillance a 1972 example [N271SP c/n 41914 72-21248] was sold for \$215,000. Purchased for \$75,000 in 1986, the state's 1972 Beechcraft Baron was sold to an agricultural company for \$66,000.

A second round of on-line aircraft sales began in late June and this includes two further ex-DoD OH-58As dating from 1973. Lot 1 is a 1973 Bell OH-58A+ helicopter, N281SP c/n 42179 73-21912, and Lot 2 is N134SP c/n 42178 73-21911. Both airframes are powered by Rolls Royce (C20) engines and include a basic Nav/Com and Transponder fit. Minimum bids of \$125,000.00 were scheduled for July 20.

Ed: Meanwhile the operation continues with a fleet thought to include a Cessna 172 and Bell 206B helicopters.



OHIO: A Columbus police helicopter pilot died just prior to take-off last month. Moments before he was to fly while on duty, shortly before 2 a.m. at the police helipad, Officer Paul 'Stan' Kaiser, got into N554CP with Officer Roger Howard and was preparing for takeoff when Kaiser felt faint.

Howard secured the helicopter and notified other officers in the heliport then performed CPR on Kaiser. The 59-years old officer was transferred to hospital where he later died.

Kaiser had served with the force for 32-years and had been assigned to the helicopter unit for more than 22 years. The heart attack was said to be unexpected, Kaiser had passed his yearly physical three weeks ago.

OHIO: Allen County Sheriff's Office based in Lima is having its single helicopter repaired after it suffered storm damage. The sheriff's helicopter took a beating in June when the weather destroyed the hangar and damaged the Schweizer 300C N6136K inside. Repairs are estimated to cost between \$60,000 and \$100,000. Two days of storms included four tornadoes that touched down in Allen County, uprooted trees, tore roofs off buildings, and flattened the hangar at the Lima-Allen County Airport in Perry Township. Six small airplanes were damaged.

The county has used the helicopter for 13 years, patrolling for marijuana, backing up deputies, finding lost people, and general patrol during such as the Christmas holiday shopping season. The Schweizer was acquired by trading in two government-surplus Huey helicopters [N2290F and N2291C] in 1994. The helicopter crew is a pilot and an observer that operate it an average of once a week. [Toledo Blade]

Ed: Once a week, clearly a grossly underused 'important asset!'



TEXAS: Plans for Garland City to have its own police helicopter have come to nothing after a post-election change in the make-up of the City Council. Four new members elected in June tipped the balance against issuing \$2.5M in debt to buy a single-engine, six-seat Eurocopter.

Before the election changed its make-up, the council voted 5-4 to buy the helicopter, which would have made Garland the first Dallas-Fort Worth suburb to own one. [Media]

TEXAS: Meanwhile in Dallas proper a new Bell 407 scheduled for service with the unit is to be equipped with the WESCAM DS-12 mounted out on the nose using a Meeker mount. The Nightsun will be fitted back on the tail. [DPD]

TEXAS: A privately owned helicopter helped lawmen find a motorist Saturday near the Brownwood Country Club after he fled from an attempted traffic stop and abandoned his vehicle.

Shawn Brantley, 29, was flushed out from cover when the private helicopter flew over. He was charged with a number of offences.

The helicopter is owned by the brother-in-law of one of Sheriff's Sgt. David Mercer. David Furry, owns Leak Surveys Inc. based in Early. Furry had previously offered the use of the four-seat helicopter to law enforcement officials. [Brownwood Bulletin]

Ed: Joshua Furry of Leak Surveys Inc. told Police Aviation News that this was the first time the company had been involved in the capture of a person running from the law. Leak Surveys work closely with the local departments to aid them in any way they can. Day to day operation of the helicopters relate to the oil and gas business. They have developed an infrared camera that detects invisible gases such as methane and propane, just to name a few and operate the system across the USA, strictly looking for leaks.

TEXAS: After losing one of its three helicopters in a training exercise in November last year the Topeka PD is currently negotiating with its politicians with a view to get a replacement for the Schweizer S300 machine. Most of the estimated \$650,000 cost will be met by



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the insurance payout but the purchase is not yet confirmed.

Right now, the unit is made up of two helicopters, with one ageing out of commission and the other in need of repairs, Topeka police say investing in a 'state-of-the-art' replacement is critical.

Topeka Police Department is made up of six pilots and two helicopters, one is at its life expectancy end, the other is a 1994 model and it needs to be replaced. Topeka say that they hope to have the new helicopter airborne in about a month.

AIR AMBULANCE

CAYMAN ISLANDS

It is expected that a number of firms will be interested in bidding for the air ambulance service in the Cayman Islands which was scheduled to go out for tender last month.

Among the expected bidders is Sky Medical, a Canadian air ambulance company, which proposed a trial using two air ambulance aircraft. The trial offer will not be possible until the tendering process is completed and appropriate licenses are approved with the CAA.

ITALY

LOMBARDY: Last month Elilombardia received their first AW139, registered I-CEPA for operation in the EMS role at Caiolo for 118 Regione Lombardia. The helicopter is fitted with a winch to the starboard side. [DG]

UNITED KINGDOM

EAST ANGLIA: As reported earlier in PAN, readers of an East Anglian newspaper helped raise £66,000 to pay for a helipad at a local hospital, the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Kings Lynn. Almost as soon as the money was raised hospital bosses decided it couldn't be built on the site - on a grassy area near the disabled car park - in case they wanted to sell it to claw back some of its £11M operating deficit.

A site directly outside the Accident and Emergency department has now been selected. Now it has been estimated by air ambulance executive director Simon Gray that the estimated additional expense caused by the different location could cost up to £150,000 on top of the £66,000. Funding can be found from hospital reserves unaffected by the deficit.

A new planning application will be submitted to the council in the next few weeks, and planners have eight weeks to determine it. Construction could start six weeks after that if the plan is given the go-ahead, and building would take around three months. [lynnnews]

THAMES VALLEY: South Oxfordshire District Council have granted the Air Ambulance Trust permission to erect two temporary accommodation blocks at RAF Benson to enable the helicopter to move home from the airfield at White Waltham.

Bond Air Services applied for the erection of two Portacabins for use by the air ambulance in May. The application grants the placing of the portable structures for just five years but this period can be extended by further application. [Oxford Mail/BF]

UNITED STATES

The FAA has fined a air ambulance company \$1M as a civil penalty for operating as an air carrier without the appropriate certificate.

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The fine is part of a settlement reached after the FAA ordered the company to stop its operations on May 19 because it found Medway had entered into an agreement with Annapolis, Maryland-based American Flight Group that violated FAA regulations.

The company was allowing other companies, including Medway, to use its air carrier certificate for a monthly fee, even though the other companies had operational control over those flights and their crews. The FAA has revoked the air carrier certificate for American Flight Group. Medway has since obtained its own certificate and resumed operations.



SPAIN

Last month Bombardier Aerospace announced that the Government of Spain has placed a firm order for one Bombardier 415 amphibious aircraft. The contract is valued at approximately \$30.6M and includes initial spare parts provisioning, training and technical support.

With this order, the government of Spain is increasing its fleet to 20 Bombardier amphibious aircraft. It is already operating 14 CL-215T and 5 CL-215 aircraft. The new aircraft is scheduled for immediate delivery and is expected to enter service for the current fire season.

After having been the launch customer in Europe for the CL-215T 17 years ago, Spain is entering a new era with the introduction of its first Bombardier 415 aircraft to its fleet as early as August 2006.

Since the first delivery in 1994, Bombardier Aerospace has delivered 63 Bombardier 415 aircraft to fire fighting agencies in Croatia, France, Greece, Italy, Ontario and Québec. In the Mediterranean region, France, Croatia, Italy and Greece currently operate 41 Bombardier 415 amphibious aircraft. In addition to the Spanish CL-215 and CL-215T, Greece has 13 CL-215 piston aircraft in service. [Bombardier]

UNITED STATES

FEDERAL: Sky Connect provides a Forestry-approved tracking system for less than \$4,000, a \$15 monthly flat service fee, and \$4 per hour for position reports.

Sky Connect has developed a special package that meets all AFF requirements, enabling operators to compete for Forest Service fire fighting contracts in British Columbia and Alberta, Canada. The lightweight, flight-proven TRACKER-AFF system is more affordable than other systems and is widely used by US government providers for seasonal aerial fire fighting contracts.

CALIFORNIA: Sacramento Metropolitan Fire District spent \$28,000 to buy an old army Bell UH-1H Huey helicopter from Riverside County's Sheriff in 2004, unfortunately no one seems to have known about the deal and had failed to note the bulk of the stored helicopter until just recently.

The Metro Fire Chief was said to be 'stunned' when his officials discovered that the Huey aircraft - with an engine and transmission - was sitting unused in a hangar at McClellan Park since it was bought in March 2004 and shipped there for \$3,000. Once alerted officials found invoices and other paperwork about the 2004 deal.

The row that has surfaced centres around an apparent intention to hide the craft from audi-

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tors and the media. When the local paper put in a request for documents specific to fire-fighting aircraft via a Public Records request last year the machine did not feature even though the newspaper had explicitly asked Metro Fire for all helicopter related spending invoices.

Documents now show the Riverside deal was approved by a former chief and billed to the district's 'vehicle maintenance services account, special operations' rather than the regular air operations account where all other helicopter spending was tracked. The reason this took place was that the aircraft was acquired for spares not for rebuild to flight. [Media]

SEARCH AND RESCUE

UNITED KINGDOM

Aberdeen-based Bristow helicopters has joined a consortium with major helicopter providers, FB Heliservices and Serco to bid for the privatise SAR services of the future.

SAR cover currently provided by the RAF, the Navy and the coastguard, will be handed over to a single civilian operator in 2012 and run for 20 to 30 years.

Bristow currently operate the four coastguard helicopters at Sumburgh, Stornoway, Lee on the Solent, and Portland but it lost that contract to CHC when it was re-tendered last year. [BBC]

INDUSTRY

In the UK Police Information Technology Organisation, [PITO] based in London have recently issued an notice in the European Journal [OJEC/OJEU] inviting expressions of interest from parties to supply hourly support contracts for helicopters, aircraft, engines, airframes and systems – a framework agreement.

Framework agreements are put in place to save individual customers ['the police'] having to go to raise unique European Tender on each requirement.

The UK has not formulated a framework for support before, previous frameworks have related to the acquisition of the prime acquisition – airframe, sensors, equipment etc. The framework, which would have a similar effect to the existing PBH and SBH deals relating to new aircraft and systems, should open up the market. Where support is generally vested in just a few aviation companies the new framework may eventually attract a far wider range of interest – including finance houses.

The British Police Service operates approximately 30 helicopters and fixed wing aircraft each aircraft operating for between 500 and 1200 hours each year. PITO seeks to establish Framework Arrangements for the supply of spare parts for these aircraft to meet scheduled

Reims F406 Land & Sea Surveillance

and un-scheduled requirements over a number of years.

Agreements might take the form of hourly-based support contracts based on the aircrafts' flying hours and use.

PITO are stating that contracts should make provision for future parts consumption within the contracted period and demonstrate transparency in operation. There will be a need for a transition period to enable operators currently obtaining spares on an ad-hoc basis to enter such arrangements.

The time-limit for receipt of tenders or requests to participate expires on August 13.

The contracting authority and contact point are Andrew Moore at PITO, New King's Beam House, 22 Upper Ground, London SE1 9QY. Tel. +44 20 8358 5589. E-mail: andrew.moore@pito.pnn.police.uk. Fax +44 20 8358 5536. <http://www.pito.org.uk>. [PITO/IPAR]

Euro Telematik manufacturer of fleet tracking and communication solutions for road and aerospace applications, has completed the first installation of an Iridium Satellite LLC based aircraft tracking and communication system for the Luxembourg Air Rescue (LAR) service.

The Euro Telematik AeroFleet system allows LAR operations to monitor its fleet of jet ambulance aircraft and primary rescue helicopters, generating automatic position reports from the aircraft through Iridium's network of 66 low-earth orbiting (LEO) satellites. The same system also provides two-way voice and data exchange between ground operations and the flight crew. Two aircraft have been fitted with Euro Telematik's CDTI-2000 multi-function display.

Created in 1988, LAR provides a 24-hour, year-round service with a fleet of air-ambulance jets and rescue helicopters in Luxembourg and around the world. LAR expects a huge benefit for their operations with the introduction of the Iridium-based AeroFleet system, which will provide real-time tracking of the aircraft during missions and permit ground personnel to communicate with the on-board medical crew via a "chat" interface.

Helicopter Association International [HAI] the professional trade association for the civil helicopter industry has launched its 'First Responder Program' database, the worldwide helicopter resources database online. HAI is encouraging US and international helicopter operators to join up.

In times of crisis the helicopter, with its flight and ground crews, does not just appear; they have to be activated and coordinated.

HAI has developed a functioning First Responder database accessible at HAI's home page www.rotor.com HAI is encouraging all helicopter operators worldwide, both HAI members and non-members, to participate.

Participation in the First Responder Program is voluntary, and is open to anyone who operates helicopters. There is a step-by-step registration process. Everything is Web-based; no software to download or update. You tell us who you are, your company, the aircraft you have and their operational capabilities (e.g., IFR, night vision, EMS, external hook), their locations, and a 24-hour contact for each aircraft. HAI members will find their registration forms pre-populated with data pulled directly from HAI's membership database. You can edit and update your information anytime from any Internet-connected computer. There is no fee.

The First Responder database is NOT publicly searchable. Even participating operators will not have the ability to search the database.



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Presently, only HAI – as developer and manager of the database – has search capability. As an operator, the information provided on aircraft identification, capabilities, and whereabouts is secure.

During the initial period, HAI is seeking feedback on the First Responder Program format. Comments and questions can be sent to FirstResponder@rotor.com

It was the announcement that MDHI and others did not want to hear. To the eventual losers it was probably no surprise but they could hope couldn't they?

EADS North America and Eurocopter took the first prize in the bid for the US Army's next-generation Light Utility Helicopter (LUH) contract. The **LUH** requirement is for up to 352 aircraft with a potential program life-cycle value of US \$ 3 billion. The winning type for an initial production order is the UH-145 a military variant of the EC145/BK117C2.

EADS North America leads a UH-145 team of companies that includes four primary partners: American Eurocopter, which will handle the helicopter's production, assembly and delivery; Sikorsky Aircraft, responsible for contractor logistics support (CLS); WestWind Technologies, for systems integration, engineering support and program management expertise; and CAE USA of Tampa, Florida, the supplier of UH-145 cockpit procedures trainers.

A whole string of other winners in the competition includes the NORDAM Group, Keith Products, Thales USA, Turbomeca USA, Wulfsberg Electronics, Honeywell, Goodrich, Aerolite, Armor Holdings and L3 Communications.

The eventual contract includes 322 UH145 twin-engine helicopters powered exclusively by Turbomeca's Arriel 1E2.

As required by the contract, all of the 644 engines will be assembled and tested at the Turbomeca USA facility located in Grand Prairie, Texas. All this was helped by the success of the re-engining of the United States Coast Guard's HH65 fleet.

In order to accommodate the Army's contract, **Turbomeca USA** pre-established an engine build plan, adding 67,000 sq. ft to its existing building. Turbomeca is qualifying US supplier sources to have a minimum of 65% US engine content within three years, including parts such as blades, casting and other dynamics. Four Arriel 1E2 engines will be delivered in 2006 and ramping up to approximately 80 to 100 engines per year for over the next eight years.

The 28 variants of the Arriel engine power modern helicopters such as Eurocopter's EC 145 and BK 117 (both powered by the Arriel 1E2 engine), EC 130, EC 155, Ecureuil and Dauphin helicopters. As the world leader in its category, the Arriel has proven its reliability in a large variety of difficult missions including EMS missions, transporting company personnel, and utilitarian and offshore missions.

EADS North America is the prime contractor and will supply the UH-145 helicopter to Army and Army National Guard units for a wide range of light utility missions, including medical evacuation, passenger and logistics transportation, as well as homeland security operations.

As subcontractor to EADS North America, Sikorsky will supply materials, technicians, field service teams, and related logistics services for UH-145 aircraft based throughout the U.S.

MD Helicopters, Inc. Acting Chief Executive Officer Lynn Tilton called the US Army's selection of a European conglomerate to receive a multi-billion dollar military aircraft award an 'outrageous decision completely at odds with supporting American industry.' Ms. Tilton said that the award of a major American military contract to a foreign company belies rationality when US companies produce superior products for better value. As a result of the protest the finalisation of this contract remains in abeyance.

Ed: Many industry watchers secretly believed that it would go against the Eurocopter – just because they were 'the French and Germans' and not truly American. Against this assumption of failure there was the knowledge that both the airframe and engine manufacturers were investing heavily in the USA, the aircraft was sound, tried and tested [and like all others with well known operating limitations] and was to be built in the USA. The seeming trump card of directly involving Sikorsky and its died in the wool US credentials was impor-

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tant.

The other proposals included the Bell offerings – they are after all Canadian manufacturers and have won one contract already this year – they were possibly viewed as offering products too old in the technology stakes, the AgustaWestland AW139 potentially just too new and untried and MD with its own well appreciated stigma.

MD may be improving but it still has baggage and it must be recalled that an earlier generation of the US Army praised the conventional tail-rotor equipped MD530 Little Bird but, although they paid for its development, have always shied away from adopting Notar in any of its forms.

Despite the loss of the lucrative contract **MD Helicopters** is looking toward rapid expansion over the next few years.

This is a field of dreams,” said Lynn Tilton, chairman of the Falcon Field-based operations. “We can sell as much as we can build.”

MD Helicopters delivered only six helicopters last year, expects to produce 30 to 40 aircraft this year and expand to 250 by 2008 as the company gears up manufacturing in Mexico and China in addition to Mesa.

Despite the failure to win the Army contract, MD will not have to lay off any of the company’s nearly 400 employees.

“We will not step back on hiring,” she said, adding “this is a comeback story.”

Going forward, MD Helicopters will focus on improving its supply chain. The company is working to strengthen its relationships with Kaman Corp., Rolls-Royce PLC, Rockwell Collins Corp. and other suppliers.

Patriot Aviation a major UK agent based at Cranfield has bought two of the earliest AS355F2 helicopters used by the UK police for resale. One, G-BOOV, was acquired from a private owner and the other G-GMPA from Police Aviation Services. They were originally operated in the North West of England by Merseyside Police in Liverpool and the Greater Manchester Police.

The pair will become N325SC and N326SC respectively with Skychase LLC, 414-B SW 140th Ter , Newberry FL 32669. leaving the UK en-route for Jordan to service a contract in the region.

Ed: Whether this venerable pair – they were certainly the ‘trailblazer’ airframes for UK police aviation when they first appeared in the late 1980s – will survive long it debatable. The abrasive operating environment in Iraq and Jordan is not conducive to longevity and these cheap to acquire pair may well succumb to the conditions sooner rather than later. BOOV 10,400hrs. GMPA 11,180

Breeze-Eastern have announced that it has been selected by AAR Cargo Systems to develop and manufacture a minimum of 192 ship sets of Retrieval Winch Systems for the state-of-the-art Airbus A400M Military Transport Aircraft. Breeze-Eastern is teaming with AAR, of Livonia, Michigan and Pfalz-Flugzeugwerke GmbH, of Speyer, Germany.

Airbus Military has orders for 192 A400M aircraft from nine (9) governments with deliveries scheduled to begin in calendar 2009. Current projections are for sales of Breeze-Eastern's

Parachute Retrieval Winches for the A400M to exceed \$20M through 2020.

Aero-Optical, the UK based aerospace industry suppliers of specialist aviation equipment including High Resolution Displays, Digital Video Recorders, Aircraft Consoles, Antenna Actuators now have their latest DVAR in full production.

Announced in April, the unit comes with the option of single video with two audio channel inputs (DVAR-II-Single) or two video with four audio input channels. (DVAR-II-Dual) with full playback functionality on both channels during the recording, without interrupting either channels recording.



All this company's units look the same externally but offer either Compact Flash card (2 x 8GB), Solid State Drive (62GB) or Hard Disk Drive (120GB). At 25 minutes per GB (DVD quality), these units are ideal for either rotary or fixed wing aircraft.

With twelve years of experience in this industry, Aero Optical is able to offer solutions before and after sales. Their specialist equipment is aimed at various applications including Police Air Support, Border Patrol, Homeland Security, Search and Rescue, Power Line Inspections and Broadcast.

Dart Helicopter Services has announced the receipt of FAA certification for the Cargo Door Mounted Liferaft Kit for Sikorsky model S-76/A/B/C aircraft.

The S-76 Cargo Door Mounted Liferaft System has been developed by Apical Industries as an alternative to belly mounted kits. The system is designed specifically to allow occupants to safely exit from the aircraft after an emergency water landing and enter one or both of the liferafts that are deployed after landing. The liferafts are mounted to the interior of the door, thereby preserving access to the baggage compartment. The kit comes with two replacement carbon fibre cargo doors including integrated ten-man reversible liferafts, replacement hinges that connect to existing aircraft hardpoints and complete inflation system. With a 121 lb (55 kg) net weight increase, the Cargo Door Mounted Liferaft is significantly lighter than currently available systems while still meeting all applicable TSO-C70a requirements.

You may recall the Israeli sensor manufacturer **IAI's Tamam Division** who manufactured a low cost day/night observation systems for rotary and fixed-wing aircraft as POP (Plug-in Optronic Payload). It never took off in Europe because it was somewhat low grade for that market but the system picked up some sales in the USA under the IAI Taman banner. Now the same company is pushing the Controp its more advanced sensor in the same region. This time the IAI Taman link is muted and the marketing effort is under the CONTROP banner.

CONTROP exhibited their systems at this year's ALEA Conference in New Orleans. They

are a new member to ALEA and see the US market as a primary export market. Controp sensors, now offering Quad payloads, are represented in the US by Richard E. Owen of 1487 Chain Bridge Road, Suite 204, McLean, VA 22101 +1 703 734-9626



With the ALEA Annual Conference imminent one vendor saw an opportunity to score some marketing points. The Metro Air Support Unit in St. Louis, Missouri was the recipient of a donated repaint thanks to a donation by **Aerospace Filtration Systems (AFS)**, a St. Louis-based company.

The Unit is repainting the helicopters in a classic scheme reminiscent of the black and white patrol cars once widely used by law enforcement agencies in the United States. The \$10,000 donation from AFS kicked off the process of transforming the aircraft with the new universal paint scheme. One of the newly painted MD

500E helicopters was on display at the ALEA convention last month.

The Metro Air Support Unit combines the resources and personnel of the St. Louis County Police, St. Louis City Police, and St. Charles County Sheriff's Department. The combined unit now patrols more than 1,300 square miles and responds to other counties as required. Because several of the aircraft were painted in single locality schemes, establishing a consistent and recognisable look was important. The Unit established a non-profit foundation to begin corporate sponsorship and used the donations to fund needed equipment not covered by the standard operating budget. As the certification platform for its commercial MD 500 filter, AFS previously provided an Inlet Barrier Filtration (IBF) system for the Unit's MD 500E — and the results have been extremely positive. During a recent Rolls Royce C20B hot section inspection at 1,750 hours, the Unit's Chief Mechanic Robert Lasinski (ALEA 2006 Maintenance Technician of the year) said the compressor looked as good as the day it was installed new.

Barrier filtration systems filter out more than 99 percent of dirt and sand. Barrier filter systems actually enhance engine performance when compared to traditional particle separators, delivering more engine temperature margin (thus more load-carrying capacity), and providing a greater margin of safety.

AFS currently produces certified commercial filtration systems for a range of helicopters favoured by the airborne law community, including the Bell 206B, Bell 407, Bell 206L-3/4, Bell 206L-1/C30 and MD 369 (MD 500H/D/E/F Series). Certification is imminent for AFS filtration systems for the Eurocopter AS350, Agusta A119 and Bell 205/210 helicopters.

For more information, contact: Aerospace Filtration Systems, Inc. +1 636 300-5050
www.afsfilters.com



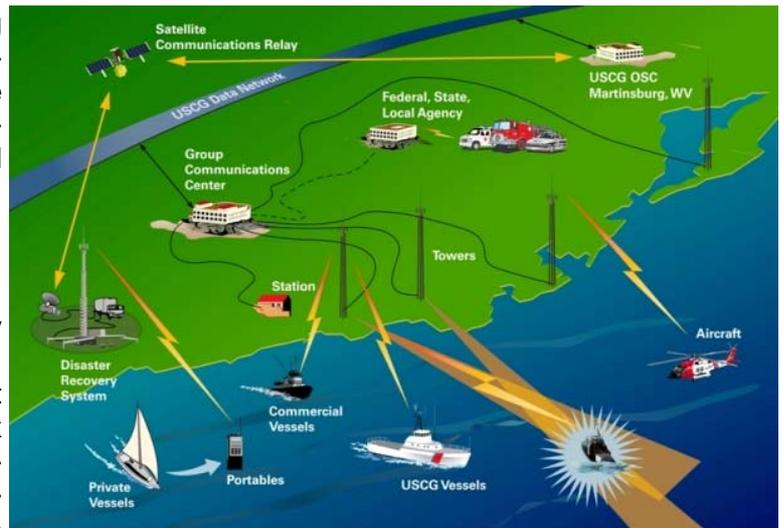
Frasca International, has been awarded a contract to provide Bell Helicopter Textron with several helicopter flight training devices in support of the Training Academy's Project LoneStar initiative. The contract includes a Level 6 Bell 407 Flight Training Device (FTD), six MentorH portable units designed for start-up and mission training for the Bell 206 & 407, upgrades of existing Frasca FTDs currently installed (including new visual displays and networked trainer technology) and Bell 407 Desktop and Classroom simulation software. The

portable units will be able to be shipped to various locations for onsite training and are designed to increase safety and understanding of Bell Helicopter systems and procedures. The new MentorH will feature computer generated instrumentation (CGI) with a Bell 206 overlay instrument panel, overhead panel and Pilot side replicated Bell 206 flight controls and TruVision with a 37" LCD monitor. The unit is designed for the convenience of teardown and packing and will be contained in one package for ease of deployment to various locations.

In addition to the new contract, Frasca has previously provided several helicopter FTDs to Bell. These include a Bell 206B/L FTD, 407 and 427 CPTs, and a Bell 412 FTD. Frasca provides a complete range of flight training equipment for both fixed and rotary wing aircraft.

The US Coast Guard has begun using a new command, control and communications system known as **Rescue 21**, for search and rescue, marine environmental protection and homeland security missions along the Alabama, Mississippi, and Florida coastlines.

Advanced direction-finding capability, a critical component of Rescue 21, allows Coast Guard to more accurately locate the source of a distress call. That capability also allows the Coast Guard to locate the source of hoax calls. Rescue 21 also includes a network of towers to help reduce coverage gaps in coastal areas and ensure more calls get through to the Coast Guard.



Hillsboro Aviation, Inc., was recently awarded a contract by the City of Chicago Police Department to complete a new Bell 206-B3 JetRanger Helicopter. The JetRanger will complement an existing LongRanger IV that was acquired from the Chicago Fire Department earlier this year and is currently being retrofitted by Hillsboro Aviation. As operations evolve it is anticipated that the Chicago Police Department and the Cook County Sheriff's Department will operate both aircraft as part of a joint Helicopter Task Force. The JetRanger completion, scheduled to begin in November, will be performed at the Hillsboro Aviation facility in Hillsboro, OR and delivery is expected in early February.

The retrofit will include a two-screen Chelton FlightLogic Synthetic Vision EFIS system along with a complete NVG configured cockpit. Highlighted equipment includes an Avalex Moving Map, two 12.1" LCD Monitors, a Digital Video Recorder and FLIR Pointing System in combination with a FLIR Ultra 8500XR Thermal Imager/Camera. Additional airborne police equipment will include a Spectrolab SX-5 Nightsun and a microwave radio downlink system by Microwave Radio Communications as well as other sophisticated electronic equipment to further the Police Department's Homeland Security Mission and Crime Reduction Initiatives.

In addition to these avionics upgrades, the helicopter will receive a customized paint scheme selected by the City of Chicago.

Hillsboro Aviation is the exclusive Independent Bell Helicopter Representative for the western United States. www.hillsboroaviation.com

AgustaWestland has announced signing of a contract for an AW139 helicopter for the Italian Civil Protection service. The AW139 will act as an airborne command post to support and supplement disaster relief efforts at national, regional and local levels.

The large cabin of the AW139 helicopter will be equipped with a comprehensive communi-

cations suite to allow Italian Civil Protection command staff to coordinate all the necessary emergency service activities performed by other government agencies rotary and fixed wing aircraft and ground element. The AW139 will add to an A109 Power already in service with the agency.

This new Italian Civil Protection AW139 variant will add to the many roles for which the AW139 has already been selected around the world in the public service and government helicopter markets.

International Communications Group (ICG) was a major participant in a recent series of test flights to demonstrate new-generation 'paint-on' antenna technology using a unique SA-60 spherical airship designed for high-altitude research. The test flights took place during June in the Nevada desert.

The goal was to demonstrate new, light-weight conformal paint-on antenna technology for high-altitude communications through the Iridium global satellite network. The antennas successfully transmitted Iridium voice and data calls from various locations on the airship with outstanding radio frequency performance.

Meeker Aviation and AirFilm Camera Systems have announced that they have now received EASA certification for three of their most popular camera / sensor mounts:

The Bell 206, 206L and 407 forward nose mount currently in use with both law enforcement and ENG operators, provides the greatest ground clearance and largest payload available. The Eurocopter AS350 AStar and AS355 TwinStar down-post camera / sensor mount, the mount of choice for the Los Angeles PD, Phoenix PD, San Diego PD and Texas Dept of Public Safety for their law enforcement operations and the alternative **Eurocopter AS350/355 single pole camera mount** that is the industry standard for long lens cameras.

These mounts are designed and manufactured by AirFilm and sold through Meeker Aviation. Meeker is headquartered at Pitt Meadows, British Columbia and also has a facility in Oceanside, California, USA Call +1 604-644-1125 contact us at www.meekeraaviation.com or 604-644-1125



ACCIDENTS & INCIDENTS

6 June 2006 Eurocopter AS350B3 N911MT. Air ambulance of Life Flight based at St. Patrick Hospital, Missoula, MT and operated by Metro Aviation. Helicopter had been called to transport a patient from a rural hospital. The landing zone at this hospital is a small parking lot and this normally requires the local ambulance or law enforcement stop traffic from both directions during landings and take offs.

The helicopter was in a 20 foot hover preparing to land, when a vehicle failed to yield to the ambulance, drove around it, pulled under the tail rotor and stopped. Unable to see the vehicle the crew aborted the landing. The police intervened, moved the car and the mission was completed without further incident.

15 June 2006 Eurocopter BK117 C-CKCM Air ambulance of STARS Air Ambulance based at Calgary, Alberta, Canada. During the Instrument Flight Rules (I.F.R.) portion of an initial pilot proficiency check-ride (P.P.C.) in Instrument Meteorological the #2 engine decelerated with a simultaneous indication of high torque. The ILS approach was continued and the affected engine was brought to idle. The #2 throttle was subsequently advanced and partial power was achieved. The approach was continued to Visual Meteorological Conditions (V.M.C.) prior to decision height. A long-field One Engine Inoperative (O.E.I.) approach was conducted and full power established on the affected engine. Prior to entering a hover, a run-on landing was carried out. Post-incident it was found that the torque transmitter was full of water, and water in engine over-speed cannon plug. The engine deceleration is under investigation. [Concern]

20 June 2006 Eurocopter BK117 N460H. Air ambulance of MedFlight Of Ohio based at Columbus. Operated by OmniFlight. After returning from a patient transport main rotor blades flexed down striking upper wirestrike system. Damage to all four rotor blades, wirestrike system, and windshield. No injuries to crew. Aircraft placed out of service. [Concern]

29 June 2006 Eurocopter EC135T2 N93LF. Air ambulance. Saint Alphonsus Life Flight based Boise, Idaho operated by CJ Systems. While approaching Boise the #1 engine shut down and the pilot was unable to restart it. The pilot declared an emergency to the Boise ATC and the aircraft continued on the #2 engine. The aircraft made a successful landing at the Boise Airport (BOI). No injuries were sustained to the patient or crew and no damage was apparent on the aircraft.

30 June 2006 Bell UH-1H N681FD. City of Chicago Illinois Fire Department. The helicopter crashed upside down in a grassy area on the lakefront just north of 39th street near South Lake Shore Drive, Chicago under unknown circumstances whilst answering an assistance call. The craft carried two pilots and two divers when the problem developed requiring an emergency landing -- hard enough to flip the helicopter over and destroy the tail rotor and main rotor as well as smash in the windshield. Persons on-board sustained some injuries. Two men walked to the ambulance on their own, while at least one of the other two needed assistance. Initial reports suggest a maintenance error in that a tail rotor failure may have been caused by parts being omitted. [FAA/NTSB/Media]

1 July 2006 Air Tractor AT802 C-???? Conair, Canada. Aircraft lost power on its approach to Kamloops Airport and landed hard, damaging the landing gear and the fuselage, the pilot walked away. The forestry tanker aircraft owned by the Abbotsford company was returning trip from dropping water on a fire near Golden. The rear of the plane, landing gear and fuselage were badly damaged.

3 July 2006 Westland Sea King XZ598. RAF SAR Force. rescue helicopter has had to carry out an emergency landing at RAF Lossiemouth after the aircraft developed a tail rotor fault. The four-man rescue team were carrying out an air test when the helicopter entered a spin and the pilot was forced to carry out a emergency landing on the runway. An RAF source suggested that something malfunctioned, probably the tail rotor and the helicopter crashed on the runway. The machine ended up upright but with its tail virtually torn off.

[Media]

3 July 2006 Beech King Air 200 N315MS. Air ambulance. Northwest MedStar of Spokane, Washington. After landing at an uncontrolled airport to effect a patient transport rendezvous with a ground ambulance, the aircraft exited the runway and taxied via the nearest parallel taxiway to the first feeder taxiway. The pilot observed that the first feeder taxiway was obstructed by a parked light civil aircraft and proceeded ahead and turned left onto the next feeder taxiway. The pilot then turned left on the back parallel taxiway towards the intended parking area. The pilot proceeded ahead slowly but struck the right front corner of a hanger with the right wing tip, which resulted in damage to the wing tip section, strobe light, and wingtip recognition lighting assembly. Another aircraft was dispatched and the patient transport completed without further incident. [Concern]

4 July 2006 Agusta A109E Power N901EM Air ambulance of LifeFlight of Maine operated from Bangor, Maine by Keystone Flight Services. Some 15 minutes after returning to the rooftop helipad from a prior mission the crew were called out. The pilot was still on the pad securing the machine and left to check on the weather as the crew arrived at the aircraft. On his return a flight weather briefing was undertaken and they boarded and started the engines. After lift off it was noticed that the wheel chocks had been left behind on the helipad and that the transmission oil temperature was high but within limits. The pilot realized that the engine intake covers were still in place. The aircraft was landed and shut down. Inspection confirmed that the intake covers were still in place. No damage was found and the aircraft was returned to service. A post flight debrief revealed numerous non-standard distractions during the launch sequence, which constituted a general breakdown of standard practice. [Concern]

8 July 2006 Sikorsky S-61 EC-FJJ Chartered by Helicsa to the Spanish Environmental Dept. Six people died in the sea off Anaga, Tenerife, Canary Islands. The co-pilot Antonio Ruiz Lacasa was trapped in the forward wreckage and sank in nearly 700 metres, 2,300 feet, depth. The body of the pilot Joaquin Ortiz de Zarate and four other bodies, two men and two women were recovered. The rear fuselage section was salvaged to the port of Santa Cruz de Tenerife. [Media]

11 July 2006 Westland Sea King. RAF SAR Flight. Helicopter was scrambled to an emergency in Scotland from RAF Boulmer in Northumberland but was diverted to Leuchars after hitting a bird. [Pprune]

13 July 2006 AgustaWestland CH-149 Cormorant. Canadian Armed Forces 14 Wing Greenwood. Three crew members were killed and four were injured when the SAR helicopter crashed into the ocean during a routine hoist exercise with Canadian Coast Guard and local fishing vessels. Survivors were picked up by the vessels.

The dead were Sgt. Duane Brazil, 39, a flight engineer from Gander, Newfoundland, L., Master Cpl. Kirk Noel, 33, a search-and-rescue technician from St. Anthony, Newfoundland and Cpl. Trevor McDavid, 31, a flight engineer from Sudbury, Ontario.

Capt. Ron Bush, 40 and Sgt. Marty Maloney, 48, were detained in a Halifax hospital with injuries that were described as not life-threatening. Two other injured crewmembers, Capt. Gabriel Ringuette, 41, and Maj. Gordon Ireland, 42, were hospitalised in Antigonish.

The remains of the downed helicopter were retrieved by a Coast Guard ship and transported to Mulgrave.

18 July 2006 PZL/Mil Mi-2. Indonesian Police. The helicopter exploded and burned after trying to land at the Pondok Cabe airfield, Tangerang injuring six people aboard.

The six police officers on board during a training flight were able to get out of the helicopter but were apparently hurt by the ensuing explosion.

The injured are Commissioner Danny, Adjunct Commissioner's Martin and Gunawan Second Brigadier's Mustakin, Sarlan and Gatot. [Media]

19 July 2006 MDHI MD600N EM-0063 Turkish Police. Five police officers were killed when the engine stopped in flight. The pilot tried to land at the Ataturk Stadium, Antalya but failed to make it. Four policemen were killed instantly and one was injured and died later.

21 July 2006 Bell 212 The helicopter was heading for a fire fighting mission in Castilla y Leon. During a landing one skid broke off and the machine turned over. Everybody managed

to get out of the helicopter before it burst into flames. [Pprune]

Ed: The General Confederation of Work (C.G.T.) has since issued a press release denouncing the general condition of contracted helicopters operating in the area. It describes the craft as 'flying scrap.' The craft are in the main ex-military with severe restrictions placed on where they can fly and who they can carry. They are prohibited to fly over city centres.

21 July 2006 Bolkow BO105CB HU.15-82. Guardia Civile, Spain. Helicopter operating off beach dived into water and sank. No fatal casualties known [MM]

23 July 2006 Mil Mi-8. South Africa - Working on Fire programme. The helicopter made controlled, emergency landing while fire fighting in the Sabi region of Mpumalanga. No-one was injured in the incident which happened as a result of a mechanical fault. [Media]

26 July 2006 Eurocopter BK117 N. Air ambulance. Aeromed based at Tampa General Hospital. Made an emergency landing after a mid-air collision with a turkey vulture. The crew was returning from Tampa General Hospital to its base in Inverness when the collision happened.

The impact shattered the windshield and killed the vulture, forcing an emergency landing in the baseball diamond at Hernando Christian Academy on Emerson Road.

No one was injured but the crew were covered in vulture guts and feathers. There were no patients aboard the helicopter at the time. [St Petes Times]

SAFETY

During a scheduled transmission change a crack was found near the left aft transmission attach point of an Agusta A109K2 N109RX with 6,843 hours operating for Intermountain Life Flight - Salt Lake City, Utah

The crack was in the vertical skin of the box beam area. The crack had propagated into the primary structure inside the box beam. The extrusion was cracked completely in half. Agusta is aware of the situation.

PEOPLE

Squadron Leader **Tony Cowan** MBE has been appointed Honorary Chief Pilot of the Sky Watch voluntary air observation and search service to provide advice to the Trustees on operational procedures and standards. A good deal of his aviation career has been involved in emergency and humanitarian air operations. During his RAF career he flew the C130 Hercules and Nimrods on search and rescue, in addition to executive RAF posts and specialist flying, including the Round the World Chipmunk flight; his personal aircraft, WP 962 is in the RAF Museum at Hendon. Following RAF service he flew the ubiquitous BN Islander in the service of the UK police and also flew the same aircraft for the Scottish Air Ambulance Service. As a member of the RAF reserves he currently flies the Grob Tutor in the Air Cadet air experience role. In addition to his military career and flying for the emergency services Tony, a former member of the crew of the Hartlepool Lifeboat, is a Governor of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution. He is also a Fellow of the Royal Institute of Navigation and a former member of one of the UKs civilian mountain rescue teams. [Skywatch]

Ed: Tony is currently the UEO of the Cambridgeshire Constabulary air operations at Wyton.





PARC ARBORPORTH AND CIVIL UAV'S

One US company states that it is currently estimated that there are some 50 US companies, academic institutions, and government organizations developing over 150 UAV designs. And that discounts designs in other parts of the World. So there are plenty about to be noticed and it is clear very large numbers of projects will disappear without trace in the years to come.

The realisation of industries dream of skies filled with UAV's [or UAS's as the military want to call them these days] may be some way off but it is predicted that civilian applications of these craft have received a major boost from investment projects by major aerospace and defense contractors in a new centre in Wales. ParcArborporth.

EADS, Thales, BAE Systems, QinetiQ, and Flight Refuelling Ltd are housing their operations in dedicated surroundings at ParcAberporth, the West Wales Airport site developed by the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) for developing and testing UAV systems.

One of Europe's largest defence contractors, SELEX S&AS, has become Parc Aberporth's anchor tenant. The site will give them the opportunity to develop and improve understanding of how our UAV systems can be deployed to the best advantage and to demonstrate them to customers.

Launching the development of an extension to Parc Aberporth's future took place at the Parc Aberporth Unmanned Systems event [6-7 July]. Some 600 industry representatives were on hand in the remote location.

R&D at the new dedicated location will cover a wide range of technologies, including secure communications systems and the virtual or synthetic environment for demonstrating UAV applications that EADS is developing at NetCOS in Newport, south eastern Wales. The dedicated centre will be part of a national programme to enable UAVs to fly routinely in UK airspace.

Market research indicates a huge potential for civil applications, including fire-fighting, homeland security, coastguard and environmental monitoring, with a market potential in Europe alone of \$1.5 billion by 2015.



Presentations at the event underlined that UAV's are not just seen as high altitude surveillance systems. One application for the smaller rotary wing UAV might be checking for suspect devices, a cheaper and safer option than currently available—largely taking such systems out of the realms of conventional air support. © PAN

WAG is providing approximately \$5.6M over 3 years to help the industry open up UK air-space for routine civilian operation of UAVs. This investment will lever additional funding of around \$13M for research and development into Wales in the UAV sector, a priority area within the Welsh aerospace industry.

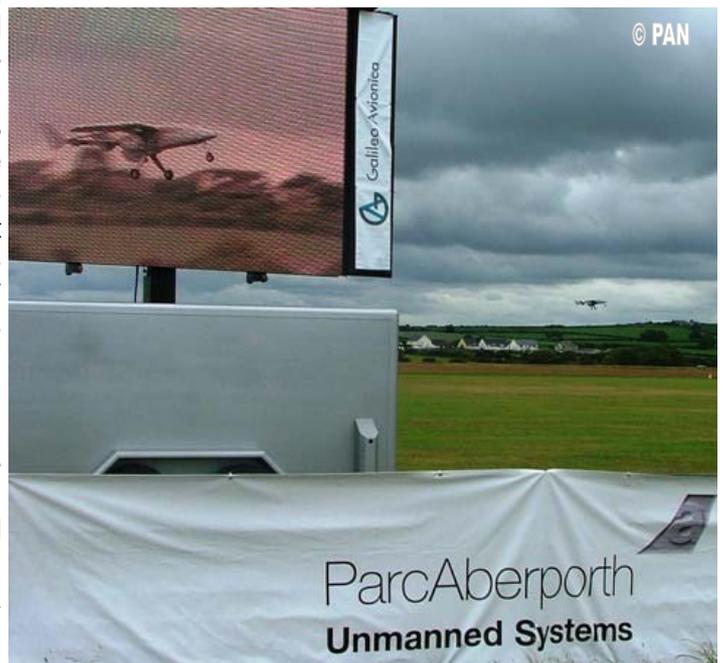
In June at Parc Aberporth, QinetiQ supervised WAG demonstrations showcasing how UAVs can be used for police forces, mountain rescue services and universities interested in developing sensor technology and using UAVs for research purposes.

A handful of UK police services are known to be deeply interested but, as in the case of the recent abortive Los Angeles County Sheriff Office [LACSO] trial these are not all associated with regular air support operations. As in the case of LACSO the lack of aerospace appreciation may well lead to a misunderstanding of the regulatory requirements and also lead to over active imaginations misunderstanding the true capabilities of today's UAVs.

The Parc Aberporth Unmanned Systems event was an opportunity to showcase UAV's in a dedicated operating environment, situated at West Wales Airport. Flight and ground demonstrations, an indoor exhibition and a static display offered the UAV industry direct access to its broadening target audience.

Nonetheless the flight demonstrations such were restricted to a high-value military craft, a 'cheap' hand launched machine that resembled the type of amateur craft seen in many a parkland and a static tethered blimp.

The latter is operated in the UK by Sonic a well regarded company



Falco, the first UAV aircraft to obtain the 'Permit to fly' from ENAC, the Italian Civil Aviation Authority, flew for the first time in the British sky at Parc Aberporth. The flight took place after approval of the British Civil Aviation Authority (CAA): an important goal that confirms the technical excellence of the aircraft.

The Falco is a fairly large, sophisticated and expensive military system, but it does not yet have installed systems that the UK CAA deem necessary to let it escape from the severely restricted airspace around West Wales Airport. Most of the flight was undertaken over the sea just a short distance from the airfield.

Falco can be equipped with different types of sensors such as the EOST 45. It is a complete and versatile system, ideal for satisfying today's requirements in military and civil surveillance of territories.

At present the UAV system, the pride of Galileo Avionica, is also engaged in daily flights at the Cheshnegirovo airport in Bulgaria, demonstrating its wide operating power even in bad weather conditions.

After the Parc Arborporth event Galileo Avionica attended the **UV Europe 2006** Conference & Exhibition in London on July 13-14 with the Falco UAV system and the concept of operations (CONOPS) demonstrator. At the event Galileo Avionica delivered a presentation on the Falco system's state of the art and growth potential. Another example of the Falco was also displayed at the Farnborough Air Show. Selex Sensors and Airborne Systems is set to begin integration and testing of an automatic take-off and landing system for the Falco UAV later in the year. The system is however aimed more at an expensive military customer base.

On the grounds of public safety in the civil sector there is a perceived need for 'twin-engine' UAV's and these are available although they may not actually offer a finite true 'engine out' flight safety. One provider of such craft is **L3 BAI Aerosystems**, a division of L-3 Communications Corp. They design, manufacture, and integrate Unmanned Aircraft Systems, targeting the tactical (less than 500 pounds) UAS segment.

Their Evolution XTS Rucksack Portable Electric SUAS System is a small craft featuring interconnected engines that ensure that both wing mounted propellers will continue to turn and successfully overcome any tendency to asymmetric turns. However in this model designed to meet military standards there is currently insufficient installed power to maintain height or climb so the feature is not currently designed to meet civil safety requirements.

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Sonic Communications (Int) Ltd, www.sonic-comms.com formed in 1977 are well known in UK police communications – mainly ground based systems for motor vehicles and covert work. Located near to Birmingham Airport in the West Midlands, Sonic recently changed ownership to the come under the construction, engineering and development group Bow-

mer & Kirkland, based in Derbyshire. B&K Group is moving the group into the security market sector, with Sonic Communications (Int) Ltd joining Cell Security Ltd of Bolton as the founder members of this new Homeland Security Division.

Sonic is already in UK police air support thanks to its association with imported air security products.

Sonic are now offering a light UAV the Casper-200 a hand-launched backpack model. That has yet to make its mark with the UK police whereas its Eagle Eye blimp has been used operationally.

The company teamed up with an Israeli company Topivision to make available a helium filled airborne blimp that can be deployed within 20-30 minutes. The system has already been deployed under contract to the helicopter operating West Midlands Police as a static surveillance system. There have been a number of camera carrying helium blimps offered to police over the years and most have originally been offered for sale to the police. The spasmodic nature of the need for the type of static surveillance they offer has militated against ownership and it has proven time and time again that short-term



leases from a contractor makes more sense. The system fielded by Sonic has reduced the manpower need to just three greatly enhancing the economy of the system. The blimp is transported partially deflated in a mid-sized articulated vehicle ['semi-trailer'] that acts both as protective hangar and control room. This arrangement allows Sonic to offer a fast response time to meet those occasional 'unexpected' needs.

POLICE AVIATION
NEWS First for
Emergency Services



ALEA NEW ORLEANS

The Editor was unable to go to the ALEA Conference in New Orleans this year due to a diary clash between it and Farnborough International and a long standing commitment to the local Town Show.

For the record Bell Helicopter were exhibiting a 210 and 407, Eurocopter were showing two Astar's and a USBP 120, MDHI a new MD500E for Houston and a MD902. Agusta showed no airframes and Schweizer and Enstrom were present.

POLICE AVIATION CONFERENCE 2006

Police Aviation News has teamed up with Shephard Conferences to produce the first in a series of annual Police Aviation Conference and exhibition.

2006 sees the first such event and it will be held in Olympia, London on 14-15 November.

If you book via the Police Aviation News website forms we are able to offer attendees a significant discount on the Industry Conference Rate of £800 – by booking through Police Aviation News you need pay only £710.

Furthermore ALL bona-fide members of police aviation units are able to attend entirely FREE of charge. See the website for details or call Sam Cader on +44 1628 606797.

The BHAB supported event is sponsored by Honeywell Skyforce, L3 Communications WESCAM and AgustaWestland with Police Aviation News joining the Shephard titles [Defence Helicopter and Rotorhub] as being a media partner.

DIARY

27-28 September 2006 Aero-Engine Expo. Earls Court, London, United Kingdom. Organisers: Aviation Industry Exhibitions.

The Aero-Engine Expo comprises of a conference and exhibition and brings together professionals from engine MRO shops, OEMs, leasing companies, specialist manufacturers / consultants / suppliers / repairers, airlines and airline engine shops. This year's Exhibition is over 60% bigger than 2005, with only limited exhibition space left. Tel: +44 20 7932 5589/5590 colinh@aviation-industry.com URL: www.ae06.com

French law enforcement agencies continue to lag behind in the use of airborne technology. Although well thought of the Gendarmerie still have not selected a sensor package for their aircraft fleet. On the other hand the French Customs fleet has access to Wescam sensors as illustrated by this example on one of their few AS355F helicopters recently. [image: Ian Grove]

