

Police Aviation News

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IPAR



KAZAKHSTAN

*Robinson R44
in police service*

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LAW ENFORCEMENT

EUROPE

FRONTEX: Some 114 migrants died along European Union borders during the last month of 2006, 108 of them off Senegal and Canary island, 1 in Malta and 3 off Turkey, then 2 people asphyxiated on a truck where they were hidden on a ferry sailing to Italy. His takes estimated of the number known to have died in trying to emigrate illegally into Europe over the eight years since 1988 to 5,856 people. Some 1,949 are missing in the sea.

In mid-December near Dakar, Senegal twenty-five survivors landed – they were the only survivors among 127 who left Casamance, at the border with Guinea Bissau, two weeks earlier intent on sailing to Canary islands. A storm capsized them twice and many were drowned. With supplies lost to the waves the survivors were further decimated after two weeks drifting.

Madrid says there were 31,000 arrivals to the Canary Islands during 2006, a record compared with the 5,000 of 2005.

In 2005 Spain regularised 690,000 illegal immigrants of whom 20% were from Ecuador, 17% Romanians and 12% Moroccans. The Sub-Saharan Africa invasion that everyone feared even back then did not exceed 4% of the whole. A similar situation applied in Italy the illegals mainly came from Eastern Europe and the Balkans. In 2006 63% of the immigrants entered Italy with a tourist visa that expired, and 24% arrived from other Schengen Countries profiting of the new open frontiers in Europe. From Northern African coast 20,000 arrived in 2006, up slightly from 19,000 in 2005 – just 13% of all the illegal entries.

It remains a major problem for all the southern European countries and measures to dampen the flow are ongoing but not apparently showing much success.

A top EU migration official has called for the EU states to quickly give patrol boats and helicopters to the bloc's new border agency to prevent a massive wave of illegal immigration this summer.

EU migration and security Commissioner Franco Frattini was talking at a two-day meeting of EU justice and interior ministers in Dresden, Germany.

He called for the EU states to pass this equipment to Frontex control no later than April if

FRONT COVER: In December the Central Asian Republic of Kazakhstan introduced to service a Robinson R44 Raven II helicopter. See page 4.

the agency was to be able to handle the expected onslaught of even more illegal migrants.

Meanwhile the interior ministers discussed how to provide enough incentives to the home countries of migrants to reduce the wish for their citizens to make the hazardous journey into the EU.

Each of the affected countries sought to promote their own position but it was German Ambassador Karl Andreas von Stenglin who went on record to state that EU solutions on immigration must take into account Malta's small size, its limited resources and the fact that it is responsible for a vast search and rescue area disproportionate to its territory.

Support by Frontex and other member states has to be tailor-made, take account of the smallness of the country and recognize that Malta has the largest per capita influx of immigrants.



In the same forum there was talk of a German plan to enshrine in EU law the so-called Pruem Treaty on police cooperation, which 7 states have already signed.

The Pruem Treaty allows police to pursue fugitives across another EU state's border in case of imminent danger to individuals. It also allows joint police patrols.

The treaty, which has already entered into force in Germany, Austria and Spain, gives police from all the signatory states access to DNA and fingerprint data. There is a debate on within air support in the various countries relating to the treaty in so far as it affects instant pursuit across borders. This was touched on at the November 2006 Police Aviation Conference but as a generally accepted principle it appears a long way from resolution. The Low Countries have accepted it almost as a matter of course but other countries bordering them are less flexible on allowing their National borders to be porous to air support.

Britain, Poland, Ireland and the Czech Republic have expressed concerns about the general intent of the Pruem Treaty on legality and cost considerations.

FRANCE

GENDARMERIE: Last month Eurocopter signed a significant contract with the French Gendarmerie for the acquisition of thirty seven EC135 helicopters to re-equip the French Gendarmerie. The twelve firm orders and twenty-five options are valued at €233M.

The EC135 [no engine choice has yet been indicated] will be used for police missions, replacing the single-engine Ecureuil B, BA and B1 that the French Gendarmerie has been operating since 1980. The first role equipped helicopters will be delivered during the last quarter of 2008.

At the same time, the French Gendarmerie confirmed an option for three EC145, taking their fleet to fifteen aircraft, mainly used for high altitude missions and replacing the Alouette III fleet.

The Gendarmerie, a unit of the French Army, is the primary provider of law enforcement air support in France and has been operating helicopters in that role for more than 50 years. Other air support is provided by Securite Civile and private contractors.

INDONESIA

The Indonesian Polisi has recently taken delivery of two Austrian Diamond DA400 single engine aircraft. The pair P-1010 and P-1011 [D4.184 and 188] have been noted on test over the past year at Wiener Neustadt.

KAZAKHSTAN

In December 2006 the Central Asian Republic of Kazakhstan introduced to service with the police a Robinson R44 Raven II helicopter. This is the first foreign-manufactured helicopter operated for law enforcement use, it will primarily be operated in support of the in the capital city of Astana.

Ed: Little is known of prior arrangements in the Republic. Ten years ago helicopters there were mainly manufactured by Mil and they may have been operated in support of what in 2004 the US State Department considered was Kazakhstan's success in its fight against drug trafficking:

Kazakhstan and the US signed a Memorandum of Understanding on narcotics control and law enforcement in December 2002. In June 2004, an additional protocol to the memorandum was signed, establishing a framework to support projects to improve the capacity of Kazakhstan's law enforcement agencies to combat narcotics trafficking and organized crime. Kazakhstan retains ambitious plans to integrate this Central Asian country with Western regional institutions and simultaneously maintain close relations with Russia and China – all driven by an interest in Kazakhstan's rich energy resources.



SOUTH AFRICA

It has been alleged that politics kept a police helicopter from helping rescue workers evacuate a seriously injured doctor from the mountain side site of his air crash last month.

A two-seat motorised glider, piloted by Dr Johannes Petrus Gous, 62, crashed into an mountain slope seriously injuring him and killing his passenger.

Fortunately members of a gliding club and a mountain club were walking in the area at the time and between them they carried the injured doctor down off the mountain overnight. Questions were subsequently asked as to why a police helicopter had not been sent to relieve them of the long trek.

It transpired that although a police helicopter was available at Port Elizabeth it could not be dispatched to the scene because of internal police politics. The only pilot was off duty and restricted to the number of hours he is able to fly by the local CAA. The Eastern Province air wing division head, Senior Superintendent Theo Meyer had taken over the standby position when the pilot was off duty and away.

Unfortunately complaints were laid against Meyer in December and as a result he was banned by the provincial office from flying any of the Port Elizabeth police aircraft, despite being in charge of the unit and having flown helicopters for more than 27 years. He was available but the ban stopped him flying. [Herald]

UNITED KINGDOM

CHILTERN: The rushed nature of December's move of the Luton based unit to a new base will mean that there will be a delay in the unit enjoying a return to high quality integrated accommodation in its new home of RAF Henlow. The usually lengthy business of

getting planning permission for a new build complex and the subsequent building process would suggest that arrangements will be at best ad-hoc for the next year.

HUMBERSIDE: The Humberside Police helicopter support unit has brought together a number of their aerial images of some of the most distinctive parts of their policing area and produced a 2007 calendar.

Produced during the flight time when not actively operating on crime sorties the resultant images are a spectacular selection ranging from the effects of nature on the east coast of Britain like Spurn Head to man made structures including Coast guard facilities and the Spectacular Humber Bridge. The year ends with a natural snow scene portraying a children's play area.



A picture of the coastal resort of Bridlington from the sky is one which has been included in what is an unusual calendar

The initial print run of 1,000 calendars sold out immediately with proceeds being given to the When You Wish Upon A Star charity, which helps terminally-ill children.

www.whenyowishuponastar.org.uk [Bridlington Today]

SOUTH YORKSHIRE: A decision on the future of Sheffield City Airport is expected soon. It has been proposed that the majority of the runways are dug up and the hangars demolished to make way for a new 22 hectare industrial estate.

If the scheme goes ahead it may result in the airfield disappearing completely although continued use by helicopters remains a possibility. One third of the runway and the terminal building are not included in the area to be redeveloped but the aircraft hangars must be removed within 12 months of the runway closing.

It is feared that the South Yorkshire Police helicopter, based next to the runway, will have to move away.

Sheffield's airport at Tinsley opened to a blaze of publicity a decade ago and the then new South Yorkshire Police helicopter unit moved in to give the fledgling business its support as did the helicopter used by the traffic report company who broadcast over local radio sta-



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tions. There were scheduled flights to London, Jersey and Amsterdam from 1998 but they all stopped. The short runway limits the range of aircraft attracted to it. Not far away a new airport to the area was based on the former RAF Finningley and called the Robin Hood Doncaster Sheffield Airport and a number of airlines operate from there.

UK INDUSTRY GRIPE

There are times when I have to resort to scratching my head when working out how to treat a story – it's not very high-tech but it does seem to help a bit. One such instance applies to the latest developments in downlink technology. It looks as if the police in the UK appear to be breaking some pretty basic rules of competition in the European Union but that the long stated prediction of one manufacturer is coming home to roost.

The European Union is based upon ensuring the free movement of people, goods, services and capital within the Union. In the police aviation field it has long been accepted that if you want to buy anything you either have to go out to tender for each new contract or you have to buy into a Framework Agreement that circumvents individual purchases. Indeed the Home Office is setting up the latest versions of these agreements to cover future purchases at the moment and the police forces and ACPO [Association of Chief Police Officers] will buy the majority of their aircraft, parts and services through this relatively open and accountable scheme.

Except that it seems that not every item is being covered, and it looks as if the back-room boys in UK National Security are driving one area of purchasing in a manner that is far from open and above board. The problem area is in the field of encrypted digital downlinks.

For some years now industry has been pushing digital-downlinks on reticent operators. Although the technology did offer a number of positive aspects, until recently they have been against the idea. It is very expensive, can require additional power to give a similar range to the existing analogue systems and, as we now know, it can fail to work as promised. One turning point was the appearance of recently transmitted unencrypted police footage on the You-tube video sharing web site – it was 'stolen' from a Midlands police operator but the primary reason has been forced on the UK Police by the forthcoming withdrawal of their analogue frequency allocation for use by Government-revenue-generating telecoms companies. The Police's new allocation at 3.5GHz is 'digital only' as mandated by OFCOM, this allocation lies in the middle of the WiMAX allocation and may yet prove troublesome.

The benefits over analogue systems after the initial development problems have been overcome include the encryption of the signal. Currently most of the operators have analogue systems. Notwithstanding the unexpected You-tube case analogue encryption has served the UK police well for many years.

Across the World a large number of specialist manufacturers produce suitable systems. Most have been mentioned in these pages in the past, BMS, MRC, Tandberg, Terrasat, etc but the three main contenders in the UK market are Enterprise Control Systems (ECS), Gigawave and Navtech. Each has invested large sums in the technology some exclusively using their own money and others riding on the back of military programmes.

In an industry where there is a continued problem of agencies unable to talk to each other



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through having dissimilar radios moves to standardise are quite acceptable. PAN has carried stories on digital radio standardisation in the UK [Tetra] and across Europe. So, there is a requirement for all UK Police downlinks to be interoperable but also 'secure.' This implies either selection of equipment from a single source or adherence to an open standard to which multiple manufacturers can buy in. The basic technology standard adopted for digital links is DVB-T which utilises COFDM modulation. As such, it is relatively straightforward for all manufacturers to produce equipment to this standard that should interoperate and yet maintain a healthy level of competitive product development in what is seen as a £30M UK police market.

The problems arising recently are that all digital encryption systems can be further enhanced with systems that will make the system essentially 'proprietary' – used with exclusive legal right such as a patent or trademark. Such a system might attract a high financial penalty on others seeking to use it – which would tend to put them at a financial disadvantage in free market bidding. In going down that road there would be a tendency to stifle product enhancement by the wider industry.

Within the last few weeks it looks like a branch of the Cheltenham based UK security agency GCHQ is insisting that the Government Protective Marking Scheme must be applied to future police systems in the UK. This is aimed at security of digital data on a network. The recent anti-terror pressures have led to a wish to foist onto all transmissions a minimum CESG-approved standard that can only be bought in one place. CESG is the Information Assurance (IA) arm of GCHQ and is the Government's National Technical Authority for IA responsible for enabling secure and trusted knowledge sharing.

A similar sort of message is also being peddled by supposedly independent equipment installation and maintenance organizations operating in the west of the country. It looks like the numbers singing from the same hymn sheet is growing and that is making industry even more agitated.

Only one of the UK manufacturers, ECS, has a proprietary CESG-approved encryption system largely financed on the back of 'military markets'. To get this approval CESG as a commercial organisation demand large sums of money.

Where the others in the UK market – and this applies equally to free market pressures from non-UK manufacturers as well – are up in arms is that they believe that because ECS undertook Government work that required the CESG-approved encryption it was effective the government/military that paid the 'hundreds of thousands of pounds' to gain the certification and that is an unfair market position for CESG to now place on the others.

To put this in perspective I can say that I have had many conversations in the past with the Principal of ECS, Colin Bullock, at trade shows. He regularly stated that ECS was paying out 'massive amounts' to get his equipment approvals and certifications which his competitors who were then in a position to undercut him on price would one day wish they had themselves paid more attention to.

It is alleged that ECS, through their alliance with McAlpine, have been successful in getting their downlink systems on to a significant number of Eurocopter police helicopters, equally some MD Explorer police aircraft role equipped by PAS are similarly equipped. Far from this being a conspiracy by a small sector of the industry ECS can be considered to have long been the market leaders in the UK for both analogue and digital downlinks over a period of time.

The point of the industry complaint is that under the CESG requirements the only way for other forces to be interoperable with ECS digital aircraft (or with their associated receive sites) during encrypted transmission is for them to have ECS equipment. This would effectively tie the technology to the capabilities of one manufacturer – and bring about Colin Bul-



It may be a few weeks yet before West Midlands will have their own EC135P2 permanently on their pad at the Birmingham International Airport [BHX] but meanwhile the first UK police EC135, the Central Counties EC135T1 'Classic' G-CCAU took the opportunity to fill the anti-ram protected fly-spot whilst the current MD902 was away on what seems to have been a lengthy maintenance. [January 28, 2007 Richard Cook]

locks prediction. As a result others in the industry have proposed that there should be an independent stand-alone encryption device that the Home Office could administer on behalf of the police or they could adopt the internationally-accepted BISS encryption system.

BISS might ensure easy international cooperation in a United Europe. The Metropolitan Police chose the system for their Gigawave system on their new EC145 helicopters over a year ago. When the new CESG interoperability requirement takes hold it looks as if the Met will eventually have to scrap their Gigawave fit. Meanwhile the force that is the one most likely to be expected to provide aid to other UK police services will find itself unable to transmit encrypted video to an increasing number of CESG equipped forces. It appears that all other new aircraft from this year are being pushed down the CESG path, so such as the Midland's forces with their new EC135's will become the first areas outside mutual aid from encrypted downlink unless they fit a dual system in their HQ's – most unlikely.

Meanwhile it is alleged that the major players in this battle over technology, the Home Office and ACPO are not taking responsibility for ensuring that the needs of all players in the introduction of digital encryption are being met. It is easy to do nothing, ten years ago when a section of industry complained about the content of a Home Office book designed to help police in their aircraft purchase aspirations the embarrassing book was allowed to wither away despite its promising content.

PAN wrote to ACPO on January 7 and there has been no reply or acknowledgement in 21 days. It looks as if ACPO are again wringing their hands in the sidelines – and thereby failing to take a lead on the digital issue and indeed to ensure that there is a sense of fair play for all sides.

And finally? Having seen a rush of this storyline it looks as if even the source is not over happy with the treatment of this story, far too easy on some of the industry villains it seems! Ah well you can never please anybody all the time but now its out in the open perhaps the sniping can begin in earnest!

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

FEDERAL: A measure of US Army air support is to continue for the US-Bahamas drug interdiction efforts even after the Pentagon withdraws Sikorsky Blackhawk helicopters for combat support later this year.

The Drug Enforcement Administration [DEA] is to receive three Sikorsky S-76 helicopters from the Army by 2008 to replace the Blackhawks. In addition \$3.4M a year is to be spent for the next five years to maintain the 'Hawk's Nest' helicopter base in the Bahamas.

The helicopters are a vital part of the DEA's Operation Bahamas, Turks and Caicos -or OP-BAT for short - which is credited with seizing thousands of tons of cocaine and marijuana since 1982 and with helping drive drug smugglers away from the vast island chain.

Without the Army helicopters, the DEA would have only one helicopter in the Bahamas along with three Coast Guard Jayhawks. [The Ledger]



The crew of the Coast Guard Cutter Bear offloaded more than 1,800 pounds of cocaine in Key West today after it was seized in the Caribbean Sea in December. The Bear is a 270-foot medium endurance cutter based in Portsmouth, Virginia. The crew of the Bear detected a vessel on radar on December 19 and flew a deployed MH-68 Sting Ray helicopter to identify the large fishing vessel. A boarding team from the Bear conducted an extensive 16-hour boarding and unearthed the contraband hidden below concrete in the fish hold.

It is reported that the US Customs and Border Protection use of General Atomics MQ-9 Predator UAV's is to be extended to the northern border with Canada as soon as enough machines have been delivered. The extended operations can only commence after two additional Predator's arrive next September [Flight]

Meanwhile US Customs and Border Protection Air and Marine Operations continues to take on charge additional deliveries of the Eurocopter EC-120 helicopter. Last month two EC120s were delivered to the Yuma sector headquarters to replace 40-year-old Hughes OH-6 helicopters.

The new aircraft signals the opportunity for CBP to patrol the border from the air longer, and to respond to incidents more quickly. The older helicopters had high maintenance requirements because parts were no longer made for them.

The new aircraft also hold out the promise of having air conditioning.

The combination of the new airframe and air conditioning should allow longer sortie times – to the order of 50%. Prior to the promise of the AirCon summer border patrols were only made tenable by a constant supply of drinking water and flying with the doors removed.

At the other end of the scale the new helicopters, with their protect Fenestron tail rotor, offer heaters and hydraulics – again features not available on the earlier type.

The new EC120s cost \$1.4M each and were funded by special appropriations to buy 40 helicopters, five of which will be used in Yuma. The other three should arrive this month.

The two recently retired Hughes OH-6As had over 16,000 hours of flight time logged on them. [Yuma Sun]

CALIFORNIA: Placer County Sheriff's Department's drive for a new \$3.6M Eurocopter AS350B3 is making progress through the legislature. The Placer County Board of Supervisors voted 4-1 to support funding.

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The funding plan would see sales-tax revenue earmarked for law enforcement provide an initial \$1M to go with \$1.5M already pledged to the Placer County Sheriff's Department. The remaining \$1.1M, to cover additional role equipment for firefighting, SAR and communications and cost overruns is expected to come from a combination of private and public funding. Possible partners include the United Auburn Indian Community's Thunder Valley Casino.

The Sheriff's Department is now free to order the helicopter with delivery slated for mid-2008.

The B3 is 30% faster than the Sheriff's Department's existing DoD surplus Bell OH-58 helicopter, provides better visibility and will have modern equipment that would increase safety aboard a helicopter that was essentially designed in the 1950s. [The Journal]

Ed: Not so long ago the industry was put in great fear that the availability of massive stocks of ex-DoD surplus machines would be detrimental to the new airframe industry. The latest move in Placer Country is just one more example of an operation moving up into new aircraft operation where they may never have done so if faced with an expensive new purchase in the first instance. The downside is that it is Eurocopter that is increasingly reaping the benefit—albeit building Stateside.

ILLINOIS: Hillsboro Aviation, Inc., has delivered a recently retrofitted Bell 206L-4 Helicopter to the City of Chicago to further the Task Force's Homeland Security Mission and Crime Reduction Initiatives.

The LongRanger N911YY [c/n 52047] was acquired from the Chicago Fire Department and began law enforcement operations in January 2006. The Chicago Police Department and the Cook County Sheriff's Department will operate this aircraft as part of a joint Helicopter Task Force. The retrofit which was performed at the Hillsboro Aviation facility in Hillsboro, OR was completed in December.



Hillsboro Aviation, Inc

The retrofit included 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 and MRC downlink. The aircraft is equipped with a Spectrolab SX-5 Nightsun. Hillsboro Aviation is currently outfitting a new Bell 206B-III Jet Ranger for the Task Force which is scheduled for delivery to the City in March of 2007. The Chicago Fire Department now operates a 2001 Bell 412EP N682FD c/n 36279.

ILLINOIS: The Law Enforcement Aviation Coalition that supports police departments in the state announced its launch in November 2006 [see pages 6-7 December issue]. The first of two DoD surplus OH58 aircraft, N79PD [70-15279] registered to Winthrop Harbor PD, has now entered service. Meanwhile the Coalition continues to petition the legislature on improving funding so that the fleet can be increased to three OH58s. For the last three years this operation has operated a range of Eurocopter EC135 helicopters loaned by private owners, the Kiowa's are the first dedicated airframes for the Coalition.

IOWA: The Cedar Rapids Police Dept is to end its helicopter programme. The City Council has voted to close down what is the only helicopter operation in the State to save money. The annual cost of keeping two Bell OH-58C's flying is given as \$600,000 plus salaries. Cedar Rapids has been flying helicopters since it acquired a Hiller some 35 years ago and currently has three Bell OH58's on strength. The five police pilots and commander will return to other uniform police duties, but three mechanics will lose their jobs.

There are still a number of Iowa police air units operating light fixed wing airplanes but it is unclear whether Cedar Rapids still has a Cessna it once operated. According to the FAA it has a number of other helicopters that may therefore come up for disposal in the near future.

Ed: Whether all of those five police pilots will wish to return to other uniform duties after flying is debatable. Already industry has shown its interest in those mechanics wishing to relocate to other states.



MARYLAND: It has been more than a year since the Princess Anne Police Department in Somerset County received helicopter donated by the US DoD but it has yet to fly a single police mission and there are murmurs about the lack of action.

It has been sitting idle at the Salisbury-Ocean City-Wicomico Regional Airport ever since it was handed over by the DoD.

The Police Chief in Princess Ann [population just over 2,300 people] Russell Percoraro had been hoping that surrounding police forces would help out with the costs but so far they seem disinclined. The main targets are agencies in three neighbouring counties. It is unlikely to fly operationally before the summer. www.princessannepolice.com

NORTH CAROLINA: A refurbished DoD surplus helicopter for the Southeastern North Carolina Airborne Law Enforcement unit is now operating. The blue and white Bell OH-58 Kiowa Warrior, to be operated as SABLE 1, will be based at the Wilmington International Airport and assist operations of the Wilmington and Leland Police Departments, along with the Pender County Sheriff's Office.

The 1970s-era helicopter was refurbished with a new engine, interior and exterior paintwork in Florida. It is FLIR equipped and carries a 20 million-candlepower searchlight and a multi-agency communications system.

The two SABLE helicopters were obtained through the US Army surplus program. Expenses for fuel, a pilot and enhancements will be paid for during the next three years by drug money seizures and contributions from the Leland and Pender County agencies.

SABLE has one full-time pilot available to fly for member agencies and plans to hire another. Each helicopter costs about \$245 an hour to operate and maintain – giving a estimated annual cost of about \$62,380.

AIR AMBULANCE

CANADA

STARS: The Commission on Accreditation of Medical Transport Systems (CAMTS) will conduct an accreditation visit of the Shock Trauma Air Rescue Society – STARS (the Alberta Shock Trauma Air Rescue Society) from February 13 to 15, 2007.

The purpose of the site visit will be to evaluate STARS compliance with nationally established medical transport standards. The results will be used to determine whether, and the conditions under which accreditation should be awarded to the program. STARS has been accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Medical Transport Systems since 1998 through this voluntary process with renewal occurring every three years.

CAMTS accreditation standards deal with issues of patient care and safety of the transport environment. CAMTS is based in Anderson, South Carolina. Since it began in 1985, STARS has flown more than 14,000 missions. www.stars.ca

JAPAN

Although air ambulances have been in use for five years there have been numerous instances of complaints from citizens over the noise, dust and other problems they create. In 2005 the helicopters were sent out about 4,000 times.

Moves to add an air ambulance in Osaka have been delayed by the local government because of the area's dense population and fears about noise. One hospital that accepts around 400 flights annually felt it had to spend ¥35M [\$290,000] constructing a noise insulation wall.

With the same aim in mind the University Hospital in Wakayama offered locals rides in the helicopters to sweeten them and a medical school hospital in Kurashiki

talked to the local and put in place mutually agreed flight paths avoiding residential areas.

Not all ploys have worked however. Last year a hospital in Saku constructed a hangar away from the hospital for night operations of the air ambulance during snow conditions only to find that opposition from nearby residents resulted in it still not being used. [The Yomiuri Shimbun]



NEW ZEALAND

The Auckland Rescue Helicopter Trust (ARHT), operator of the Westpac Rescue Helicopter, has achieved its objective of owning its first helicopter on behalf of the people of the greater Auckland region.

The trust has purchased a fully equipped BK-117B2 are failing to meet its August 2005 intention to replace its leased BK-117 with a second-hand Bell 412EP. The larger Bell 412EP was sought to expand the service and operate for the next ten years. No second hand 412EP of suitable quality and condition was available and time ran out to meet the replacement need.

The 'new' BK-117B2, purchased from, and upgraded by, Oceania Aviation Limited at Ardmore Aerodrome, has lower flying hours than the existing leased machine and has been equipped with enhanced technology that was not previously available to the operation. This means that they have at least achieved the objective of owning their own machine.

SAUDI ARABIA

The first HEMS operation in the nation was launched in mid-December after a month of training. Two Eurocopter BO105LS helicopters [HZ-SRC1 and HZ-SRC2] were purchased from a German EMS provider by Eagle Aviation for the operation and these were flown in support of the large number of pilgrims on the Hajj.

Initially the service will be limited to operating in response to incidents within Makkah Region and the road from Jeddah to Makkah. – road accidents being seen as the greatest cause for concern. The crewing is typically one pilot, one doctor and a paramedic. www.saudihems.com

Ed: See under accidents – one of this pair has now been involved in a fatal accident.



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UNITED KINGDOM

This UK air ambulance helicopter market supported by charity based funding has now grown to over 20 airframes, operated by 15 support organisations. This discounts the Scottish NHS operation of helicopters and fixed wing and the commercial operations that cover such as placing medevac operation into a special event such as motor racing, an air show or just getting the patient home from Switzerland with a broken leg.

Overall there are now 23 daylight EMS dedicated helicopters up and running, plus two police joint operations available 24/7 and a number of other police and military with a capability that effectively extends the national medevac capability to 24/7 in the most serious of cases.

Move forward 12 months and it looks like the coming year will see another 6-7 to add to the daylight EMS capability. On present plans it looks like at the end of this year there will be around nine each of the EC135, MD900 and BO105, and one each of the BK117, AS365N and A109E in the core HEMS fleet. The latest on-line will be G-DORS from the 15th of this month. The Princess Royal will launch that at Yeovilton.

The next question may be whether the overall charity market in the UK can stand as many as 30 aircraft making a call on fundraising – especially if all the operations move on to new airframes that will each require around £1M funding.



CORNWALL: Cornwall's Air Ambulance, the first helicopter emergency medical service in the United Kingdom, was brought into service on 1st April 1987 and at 20 years is the oldest of the UK charity sector air ambulance operations.

When operations started with a BO105 helicopter the annual cost of the service was £250,000 – this has now grown to an annual rate of £1,250,000, around \$2.3M.

To mark the anniversary the current all red Eurocopter EC135T2 G-KRNW helicopter will be given a revised colour scheme including yellow. [J Butland]

COUNTY: The air ambulance has celebrated another successful year after its three EC135 aircraft completing 2,389 missions, the majority of which were road traffic accidents. The service, which covers 11 counties, celebrated its 15th anniversary in May last year. The opening of the new premises at Brierley Hill [replacing the control at RAF Cosford] is expected to provide much needed additional capacity.

NORTHERN IRELAND: One of Northern Ireland's top doctors has again urged health chiefs to consider providing an air ambulance for the province - to boost life-saving hospital services that are to undergo a major revamp.

In the wake of a recent report into trauma health services in the Province Dr Brian Patterson, chairman of the BMA Council in Northern Ireland, said it was now time to look at an air ambulance service.

SCOTLAND: With disquiet over the standard of current air ambulance provisions in Scotland continuing the arrival of the Shetland Islands first ever, brand new inter island aircraft starting operations on routes to four small islands – and more suggested – may have a bearing on future medical flights.

The Shetland Islands Council's property arm SLAP took delivery of the new £600,000 Britten-Norman BN2B-20 last month – reportedly four months late – and joining a similar second hand Islander based at Tingwall Airport, in Shetland's central mainland.

Both planes are being operated on a three year contract by Bedfordshire-based airline Di-

rectflight. They took over the service last August from Scottish company Loganair who had been operating in the islands for 37 years. Loganair withdrew from the service after it lost the Scottish air ambulance contract to another English operator, Gama Aviation.

Local hope to enhance the service, now no longer constrained by the air ambulance role as it was under Loganair. There had initially been hopes that the second Islander aircraft could provide a back up to the air ambulance service, but the idea was dropped after the Scottish Air Ambulance said the aircraft could not meet its high standards for medical hygiene.

[Shetland News]

THAMES VALLEY & CHILTERN: The Eurocopter BO105 helicopter of the Thames Valley and Chiltern Air Ambulance has moved from its long term home at White Waltham to its new home at RAF Benson in Oxfordshire. The base is also the home of one half of the Chiltern Police air support consortium and RAF helicopters including the Merlin's of 28 Squadron and the Puma's of 33 Squadron. It is a front line support helicopter base working within the Joint Helicopter Command (JHC), located in South Oxfordshire.

The move, which places the air ambulance in the centre of the region enabling it to provide a faster, more efficient service, took place over two days.

The helicopter and staff now have access to better facilities at the RAF base, including a purpose-built heated hanger.

The head office and fundraising department of the charity will remain in White Waltham and the helicopter can come back within minutes.

Stevie Horton the Fundraising Manager of the charity operating the helicopter thanked the people around their previous base and West London Aero Club for providing the air ambulance with a home since it began to operate in 1999. In the past eight years, the helicopter has flown almost 9,000 missions from White Waltham.

WALES: The Mid Wales Air Ambulance, based at Welshpool airport, has completed their 300th mission in just over seven months operating a BO105 [right].

The operation was set up as a summer season resource last year and proved so successful that a series of last minute extensions to its operations finally led to it becoming the third HEMS in Wales – this being finally ratified on January 1, 2007.

WILTSHIRE: The Great West Ambulance Trust [GW] has confirmed that it has plans to move out of the joint operation with the Wilshire Police and set up a separate stand-alone, daylight only, air ambulance service in Wiltshire. The plan includes later setting up an Avon air ambulance with an appeal set to be launched in May. Although this is very much in line with the allegations being published by a local newspaper GW say that these are outline plans and that none of them affecting the funding or future of Wiltshire will be enacted earlier than mid-2008, if then. In both instances the police operation would be expected to continue to provide out of hours ambulance cover with a Paramedic. There is no news on how the current police/air ambulance funding or the existing charity money would be affected.

[This is Wiltshire]



YORKSHIRE: The Yorkshire Air Ambulance is undertake a number of changes in its offices and bases in the coming months.

The aircraft is to move from its base at Leeds-Bradford Airport to a quieter North Yorkshire

airfield later this year. The helicopter, which has been based in West Yorkshire since the service began six years ago, is expected to get a new home at Tockwith airfield between Wetherby and York. This airfield, the former RAF Marston Moor [1941-45], is located to the west of York and promises to better serve the region from its new location, which benefits from clearer weather than Leeds-Bradford.

The air ambulance will be quitting its current Dean Clough, Halifax offices to join the original aircraft at Tockwith in new offices. Although the move is a considerable distance the YAA hope to retain all their current staff. On arrival the recently announced additional helicopter will be based at Tankersley, Barnsley.

UNITED STATES

HAWAII: The threat of the withdrawal of military Sikorsky Blackhawk helicopters for service in Iraq has brought into stark contrast the amount that the civil community in the islands rely on them for HEMS work.

Trying to find other Blackhawk's and crews has been a recent game of musical chairs. The 25th Infantry, who had flown the medical missions for years, was sent to Iraq last March. The Hawaii National Guard took over with five Blackhawk's and 45 crew members. But the unit recently received a similar call for duty in Iraq and a unit from Alaska will take its place. As part of a long-term solution, military and state leaders are looking at using a private company to provide flights. It's the first time ever in state history and the search is underway.

IOWA: A man was killed last month when the tractor he was using to remove snow fell from a helicopter landing pad at the 81-bed Grinnell Regional Medical Center.

The man was operating a small lawn tractor with a snow blade to clear snow from the 50-by-70-foot helipad when it drove off the edge, missed the safety net and fell some 17 feet.

[Des Moines Register]

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MISSISSIPPI: North Mississippi Medical Center's [NMMC] aeromedical service, which covers some two-dozen counties, has a new helicopter to bring critically ill patients to the hospital here.

They are now flying a new Eurocopter AS350 A-Star on the Careflight operation. The new helicopter arrived late last year - in time for NMMC to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the service. The NMMC crew logged more than 8,500 flights in its first 20 years of service. In 2006, they averaged 57 flights a month.

The A-Star replaces similar AS350D helicopter N350RM lost on January 5 2005 in an accident that also claimed the life of pilot James Archer of Wren.

WISCONSIN: The Milwaukee Regional Medical Center's (MRMC) Flight For Life air medical program has ordered two EC145 helicopters from American Eurocopter. Due for delivery in 2008, the two EC145s will take over from Flight For Life's current pair of Eurocopter BK117 helicopters. These are currently based in two locations; one at MRMC's campus in Milwaukee, and the other at the Centegra Northern Illinois Medical Center campus in McHenry, Illinois.

SEARCH AND RESCUE

CANADA

Canada is preparing to spend about C\$3 billion on a search-and-rescue aircraft contract, and it appears that the decision has already been made on which type is to be selected.

The Italian Spartan C27J aircraft is the only aircraft apparently now in favour to replace the DHC Buffalo and C-130 Hercules aircraft currently in use. The Spartan is made by a joint venture company backed by Finmeccanica, L-3 and Boeing.

Some media disquiet has been expressed that selection of the Spartan is yet another instance where the Canadian Government has signed a multibillion-dollar deal without accepting competing bids. Meanwhile EADS, the builders of the rival C295 aircraft, is lobbying to get elements of the requirement altered in the hope of qualifying for the competition.

Last month Alenia Aeronautica the Italian manufacturers of the aircraft delivered the first of twelve C-27J airlifters to the Italian Air Force, replacing a fleet of earlier Fiat G.222 aircraft.

The aircraft will be used for troops, cargo, paratroopers and cargo drops, for civil protection and fire-fighting operations, deliveries being completed in 2008.

Ed: Unlike the EADS product this is the first public domain mention of the Spartan aircraft in relation to this type of mission.



INDONESIA

Indonesia has denied there has been discrimination in the rescue efforts pertaining to two transport mishaps in the republic recently.

Indonesian Vice-President Jusuf Kalla said the authorities had worked hard to search for and rescue passengers of a ferry, KN Senopati Nusantara, that sank in Central Java waters and an Adam Air aircraft that went missing in the air space over the Sulawesi islands.

The search for passengers of the ferry from December 30 was on a large scale, involving 19 vessels and nine helicopters and planes. More than 370 passengers were missing out of the over 600 passengers and crew on the Senopati when it sank on a trip from Central Kalimantan to Semarang in Central Java but small pockets of them were still turning up days later as they drifted from the original sinking zone.

The search efforts to locate potential survivors of the Boeing 737-400 of budget carrier Adam Air carrying 102 passenger and crew that went missing on January 1 while on a flight from Java to Manado in Sulawesi were more concentrated. [Bernama]



Image An undated picture shows the ferry Senopati Nusantara which sank in Indonesia December 30, 2006. At least 200 people survived the sinking of the Senopati Nusantara, the health ministry said on Monday, even as body bags were being prepared for victims and more than 400 remained unaccounted for. (Indonesian Department of Transportation/Reuters)

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

DUBAI: As announced in the Dubai Helishow Special Edition in December Dubai Civil Defence has formed a special team for early intervention in case of fires at high-rise buildings using former air force Bell helicopters.

Brigadier Rashid Thani Al Matroushi, Director of Dubai Civil Defence, said the team is carrying out continuous field drills at high-rise buildings surrounded by fire and thick smoke and rescue operations.

In sharp contrast to the static display at the Helishow Dubai Civil Defence were scheduled to give live demonstrations of emergency rescue and fire fighting skills on the first day of the Intersec exhibition on January 21.

The event was held at the Dubai International Exhibition and Convention Centre, with the demonstrations being staged in the car park area in front of the Centre. Crowds of 16,000 visitors were predicted. Dubai Civil Defence also held a conference at Burj Al Arab on January 23.

UNITED KINGDOM

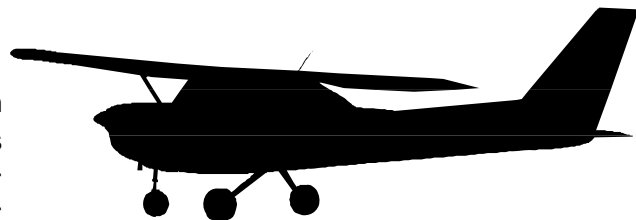
SKYWATCH: Growing public interest in the work being done for local communities by Sky Watch is helping build better understanding between the aviation and countryside communities.

Orchestrated protests by the increasing number of ³Escape to the Country² second homers is putting pressure on existing airstrips and blocking new ones.

Media reports about Sky Watch finding stolen horse boxes and farm equipment, looking for missing livestock, watching for horse accidents, moorland fires and other mishaps in remote countryside is helping to change things.

Sky Watch has also put the message across that aviation is a good business opportunity for farmers - a grass strip with hangars adds substantial income

to any farm. The organisation plans further publicity in such non aerospace publications as Farmers Weekly, Horse & Hound, Dalesman etc., in a positive effort to build pro-private flying goodwill.



UNITED STATES

FEDERAL: The first EADS CASA HC-144A maritime patrol and surveillance aircraft has arrived at a US Coast Guard aviation facility in North Carolina.

The first HC-144A was formally transferred to Coast Guard ownership in December and was flown by a USCG crew from the EADS CASA production center in Seville, Spain to the Coast Guard's Aircraft Repair and Supply Center (AR&SC) at Elizabeth City, North Carolina.

The HC-144A is a derivative of EADS CASA's CN-235/C-295 family, and is the first all-new aircraft developed for the Coast Guard's Integrated Deepwater System modernisation program. EADS CASA is supplying the aircraft under contract to the Integrated Coast Guard Systems (ICGS) a joint venture of Lockheed Martin and Northrop Grumman, with three HC-144As currently under contract. The Deepwater implementation plan calls for production and system integration of 36 aircraft by 2017. Operations on missions including SAR, illegal drug and immigrant interdiction, marine environmental protection, military readiness operations and international ice patrol missions, cargo and personnel transport commence later this year.

The HC-144A is fitted with a FLIR sensor, a daylight charge-coupled device (CCD) camera and daylight spotter scope, and a multi-mode radar. A roll-on/roll-off palletized mission system composed of a C4ISR pallet with two operator consoles will be integrated by Lockheed Martin.



INDUSTRY NOTES

Bell Helicopter celebrated the 40th anniversary of its 206 model helicopter last month. More than 4,800 206B's and 1,700 206L's have been produced since the introduction of the 206A JetRanger on January 13th, 1967, when the first two production aircraft were delivered to customers at a HAI convention.

Since then, Bell has delivered five different generations of commercial 206's with its 206A/B JetRangers and 206L/L1/L3/L4 LongRangers, making the 206 aircraft the most popular turbine helicopter ever built.

The Bell 206 fleet has recorded over 55M flight hours in more than 60 different countries. Its missions are diverse: utility, corporate, EMS and Homeland Security. The JetRanger also is commonly used as a training helicopter with hundreds of NTH's delivered to the U.S. Navy and Army as well as other international militaries.

Bell 206 aircraft are currently produced at Bell Helicopter's facility in Mirabel, Canada, and have had a steady demand over the past 40 years.



The three fishery protection vessels operated by the **Royal Navy** will patrol UK waters for another five years under a £52M lease-contract extension awarded by the Ministry of De-

fence (MoD) to VT Group Plc.

Portsmouth-based HMS Tyne, HMS Severn and HMS Mersey carry out fishery protection duties on behalf of the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), with crews of each vessel boarding up to ten commercial ships a day, monitoring net quotas and type. As Royal Navy vessels they also police the UK's territorial waters on home defence and anti-terrorist tasks. [MoD]

Aerospace Filtration Systems, Inc. (AFS) has received a Supplemental Type Certificate (STC) and Parts Manufacturing Authority (PMA) from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) for an Inlet Barrier Filter (IBF) system for Bell 205A1/UH-1H series helicopters. This first-ever certified high performance filter for the Bell 205A1 allows operators to maximize engine protection while reaping performance and maintenance benefits utilizing proven technology.

This new IBF features interchangeable filters and a new, sealed engine intake plenum engineered to replace the lower performance inertial particle separators or FOD screens.

AFS say that barrier filter technology applied to turbine engine inlets provides a substantial return on investment (ROI) for operators. In most cases, turbine engine components are life-limited parts, but seldom reach their design lives. With a barrier filter installed, these expensive components are able to survive multiple overhauls.

AFS will display its IBF systems at Heli-Expo, Booth 609, March 1-3, 2007 in Orlando, Florida. www.afsfilters.com

Ronald Garlick and two aircraft companies associated with him were indicted in late November on charges arising from the sale of helicopter parts that were allegedly falsely identified as being in better condition than they actually were.

It is the second time Garlick and one of the corporate defendants, **Garlick Helicopters, Inc.**, based in Montana have faced charges arising out of the sale or alleged sale of falsely described helicopter parts. The other corporate defendant is Double "R" Flying Service.

The allegations relate to instances dating back to 2003, two were the sale and fitting of what were represented to be new condition surplus rotor blades subsequently found to be non-repairable scrap and another surrounds the level of authorisation and paperwork for a swash plate support assembly.

A familiar face at US exhibitions FAA certified Garlick Helicopter is seen as a major Bell Helicopter retro-fit organisation serving the airborne emergency services, agricultural, commercial and private sectors.

With a previous conviction against him on similar charges this time Garlick faces a possible 15 year prison term and a substantial fine. The defendants have pleaded not guilty on all counts.

In order to enable its emergency responders to carry out life saving treatment for sudden cardiac arrest, M&L Ambulance Service, one of the largest private ambulance services in the UK, has purchased six new HeartStart MRx defibrillators for use on board its front line road vehicles. Using innovative technology, this latest defibrillator from **Laerdal Medical** combines high quality monitor and defibrillator in one machine, making it ideal for use by professional medical responders.

M&L Ambulance Service, based in East London, is contracted to ten major NHS trusts and has a service agreement with twenty-five other NHS hospitals as well as many private hospitals and healthcare establishments throughout the UK. This level of service requires the company to transport over 350,000 patients per year. In addition, M&L provides emergency medical cover at major public events and offers an established first aid training service.

For more information on Laerdal's range of Heartstart defibrillators, please visit www.laerdal.co.uk

Cessna Aircraft Company will construct a new Citation Service Center at the Williams

Gateway Airport in Mesa, Arizona, and relocate tooling and employees from the company's Long Beach, California service centre. The new facility will open in a phased transition by the first quarter of 2009.

Cessna will build a 100,000 square-foot facility – more than twice as large as its Long Beach facility – on part of its 15-acre tract adjacent to three 10,000-foot runways. Cessna will also have a 124,800-square foot aircraft ramp, more than 10 times the size of its current Long Beach ramp.

The Cessna Citation Service Center network consists of 10 company owned centres in the US (including Long Beach) and Europe, and more than two dozen authorized service centers around the world. Cessna's customer service group is consistently ranked as an industry leader in a number of independent surveys.

Williams Gateway is a former Air Force base that closed in 1993 and was redeveloped to provide aerospace, education, research and training facilities as well as a relief airport for Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport. Cessna join a number of aerospace companies such as Boeing, Pratt & Whitney, Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University and Chandler-Gilbert Community College.



Artists rendition of the new Mesa Citation Service Center:

Scotty Group PLC and **Diamond Airborne Sensing GmbH**, a wholly owned subsidiary of Diamond Aircraft Industries GmbH, announce that they have signed an exclusive agreement to deliver their equipment together with Diamond aeroplanes. Diamond Airborne Sensing specializes in multi-purpose platform aircraft that serve as aerial sensor carriers.

Diamond Aircraft Industries is a worldwide operating composite aircraft manufacturer with offices in major centres across North America, Europe, Asia and Australia. Diamond Aircraft has over 1200 employees worldwide and has sold more than 3,500 aircraft.

After successful trials and integration of Scotty SATCOM equipment into a DA42 Multi-Purpose Platform (MPP) aircraft, Diamond Airborne Sensing has decided to sign an exclu-

sive agreement with Scotty. Diamond Sensing is equipping the world's second largest manufacturer of light aeroplanes with communication equipment.

The Scotty equipment will be installed on planes for Diamond customers in the security, surveillance and government business. This is a fast growing business area within Diamond Aircraft which produces at the moment around 600 planes yearly.

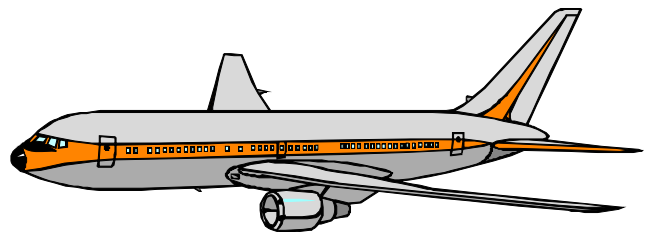


The **CPS Partnership** based in Hastings, East Sussex has introduced a new large wheeled trunk case to its range of watertight unbreakable polypropylene cases. The base 14kg [30.8lbs] AMRE2800W is now the largest in the range of the Italian manufactured cases and is available in black orange or yellow. CPS act as agents for both the HPRC Amabelia and Seahorse ranges in the UK Ireland and Scandinavia. www.cpscasses.com

The latest entrant to the business class only London – New York market, **SilverJet**, has been launched using an all silver painted Boeing 767 wide bodied jet. SilverJet operations are from London [Luton] Airport and the inaugural flight between Luton and Newark airports took place late last month.

Silverjet is offering Newark in New Jersey as its New York terminus, rather than the more popular Kennedy. The airline is directly competing with Eos and Maxjet out of Stansted to JFK and the business class offerings of American Airlines, British Airways and Virgin Atlantic at Heathrow.

Silverjet will operate a twin aisle 100-seat Boeing 767 with specially designed 75-inch (191 cm) flat bed seats. Presently fares start from £799 (\$1574) inclusive – well under half the Gatwick and Heathrow cost with the main line carriers.



Continental Airlines has introduced an eight-minute shuttle between New Jersey's Newark Liberty International Airport and the downtown Manhattan Heliport at Wall Street. The eight-passenger Sikorsky S-76 helicopter service replicates one already successfully introduced from JFK.

Continental customers arriving at Newark Liberty International Airport and travelling on US Helicopter's service to Manhattan will proceed to US Helicopter's departure gate 71 at Terminal C. A one-way ticket costs \$159, plus security fees. [ABTN]

ACROHELIPRO Global Services, Inc are to build a new, 60,000 plus square-foot state-of-the-art helicopter maintenance, repair and overall facility at the Langley Airport.

The facility will replace four shops currently operated by the company, and enables ACROHELIPRO to increase capacity within its avionics, airframe and structures and fabrication operations. It is expected that the current workforce of 90 will expand to a figure in excess of 140.

The **Bell Helicopter** plant at Mirabel, north of Montreal, Canada, has been forced to reassign 24 employees to bring it in line with US security measures.

The factory is completing an \$849M order for 368 Bell 407 helicopters commissioned by the US Army. Security considerations prevent citizens of some countries from being involved in

the construction of American strategic military weapons.

Bell Helicopter identified 24 employees who are from the targeted countries, they then asked for an exemption from the regulations but this was not allowed.

The **Turbomeca** Arrius 1A1 engine, with a take-off power of 463 shp, has been certified by the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA).

The Arrius 1A1 will power the Eurocopter AS355 NP helicopter. The first production engines at the certification standard are scheduled for delivery in early this year with some thirty engines being delivered this year.

On this new version, a new HP turbine has been integrated in order to increase emergency power for improved OEI (One Engine Inoperative) performance: the FADEC-controlled 1A1 has a higher thermodynamic OEI rating which means the helicopter can retain Category A performance hotter, higher or heavier.

For this new variant Turbomeca proposes a higher TBO (Time Between Overhaul) for the mature engine, with direct effect on operating and maintenance costs, thereby making the aircraft highly cost-effective.

A pilot position currently being offered by the **Hernando County** Sheriff's Office in Brooksville, Florida offers the opportunity to earn between \$39,338 and \$56,995 but requires that candidates for employment shall not use any tobacco products. Tobacco products include cigarettes, cigars, pipes and smokeless tobacco (chewing tobacco and snuff). Candidates shall sign an agreement stating they do not now, and will not in the future, use any tobacco products. This stipulation was introduced on January 1, 2004.

In an obscure press release from **Mediac**, the organisers of the recent Dubai Helishow, it was announced that the in hall exhibitor with the highest profile – British based Action Aviation – has placed a larger than life order for thirty MD helicopters.

Action Aviation claims to be one of the world's largest **MD Helicopter** distributors with an exclusive distribution territory covering the UAE, Indian Sub Continent and Scandinavia but no announcement on this order was made at the show.

The mid-January Mediac, the organisers of the Dubai Helishow, ran a post show event announcement [more than a month after the show] that included an obscure statement that Action Aviation were to purchase twenty MD Explorers and ten assorted single engine types. The announced market area was given as VIP, police, fire fighting, EMS and military services. No announcement was made by MD or Action Aviation at the Helishow in early December.

A quick check with MD in Mesa confirmed the order but also confirmed that MD had not and did not intend to issue a press release on this the biggest ever single order for the MD Explorer helicopter. The largest previous order for ten dates back over a decade to the first announced by McDonnell Douglas and PAS in the UK – primarily for emergency services customers.

Industry sources have since confirmed that Action Aviation has placed paid deposits on the 30 helicopters. These are to be delivered over the eight years that they have been appointed to cover several territories in the Middle East including the United Arab Emirates, the Indian Sub Continent and Scandinavia.

Action Aviation have confirmed the sale of two new-build Explorers for unnamed Middle Eastern VIP customers, with delivery planned for the end of 2007. These will feature the new Chelton glass single-pilot IFR cockpit, itself due for certification around the same time. Action Aviation is also the distributor of the Sino Swearingen SJ30 business jet in 66 European and Middle Eastern countries. www.actionaviation.com

In recent weeks, two MD Explorer helicopters have been sold into India, the first two ever to fly in the subcontinent.

The first of these is an ex-corporate UK-based aircraft which was shipped out late 2006, but the second is a sale of a demo-hours-only helicopter by Action Aviation, involving ex-"white

tail" serial #87, an ex-demonstrator one time intended for the now-cancelled Dutch Police contract.

Ed: A strange state of affairs. Most companies would give their eye teeth to be able to make an sales announcement of the size that Action pushed out so quietly. To add to the mystery surrounding this announcement, after Rotorhub ran the initial story not one word was uttered among the usual industry comment on Pprune! Its as if it never happened!



Just a year ago PAN carried news of the remarketing of the **Optica** aircraft by a company operating from Waco, Texas. The latest on that project is that they expected to get the certification through by this summer, Now Flight International has carried a story suggesting that the similarly configured Australian **Seeker** aircraft is also being pushed into the US Border Patrol market and has similar plans to manufacture the airframe in the USA.

Air Methods have received FAA Supplemental Type Certification for their Martin-Baker EC135 Side Facing Utility Seat Installation. The seat, displayed in an Air Methods LifeNet EC135 aircraft at the 2006 Air Medical Transport Conference in Phoenix, is mounted on the right side wall of the aircraft and can be folded up or removed from the aircraft quickly, without the use of tools.

The seat can be used in multiple applications where configuration flexibility is critical. Air Methods Emergency Medical Interiors are available with this seat to provide a location for a third attendant that can be quickly converted to a secondary patient position by folding up or removing the seat.

Air Methods Designated Alteration Station (DAS) organization issued the FAA STC for the installation. In addition Air Methods Engineering group performed the dynamic testing in a test facility in Burlington, WI to demonstrate compliance with the crashworthiness requirements of FAR Part 27 and 29.

Innovative Solutions & Support, Inc. has entered into an agreement with Cessna Aircraft Company to provide Flat Panel Display Systems on legacy Cessna Citation aircraft. Flat Panel Display Systems will replace existing round dials and displays and will be distributed and installed through thirty-four Service Centers world wide.

Innovative design, manufacture and markets flat-panel display systems, flight information computers and advanced monitoring systems that measure and display critical flight information. This includes data relative to aircraft separation, airspeed and altitude as well as engine and fuel data measurements.

In the UK last month **CAE** officially opened a four bay extension to its Burgess Hill Training Centre.

After a long period without sales **Kaman** have sold another K-Max helicopter into the oil and gas exploration industry.

EuroSafety International, LLC was created in an effort to provide superior training and aircraft services to the rotor wing community. In an age when operational safety and pilot proficiency play a crucial role in the survival of any operations, EuroSafety provides your company with the resources needed to operate at the highest level.

now offers AS350FX2 Differences Training. This course is designed for pilots who are current in the AStar model of helicopter and are transitioning to the Heli-Lynx FX2 conversion.

www.eurosafetyinternational.com

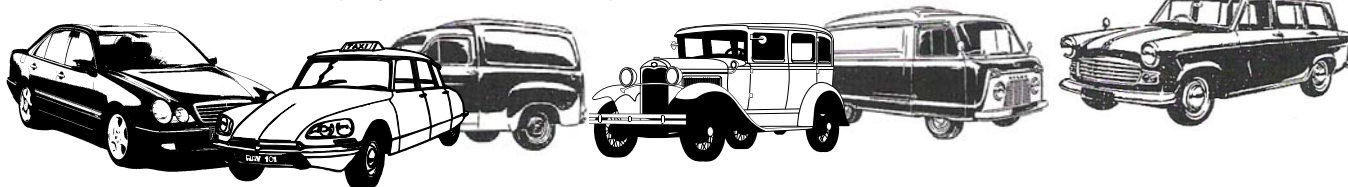


WHAT'S IT LOOK LIKE?

'We were flying along the other day and the dispatcher broadcast a call of an autotheft that just occurred. I don't remember what kind of vehicle it was, but neither of us in the cockpit knew what to look for. We didn't know if we were looking for an SUV or a moped. And Lord knows that lots of vehicles look the same, with only minor differences.'

So ran a query from a US reader on a law enforcement aviators web chat site recently.

It is a growing problem but is the answer out there? Is anyone aware of an easily accessible existing database that would allow a crew to type in the year, make and model of a vehicle, which could then be displayed on an in-cockpit screen?



Reed Exhibitions has announced the acquisition of six events previously organised UK Media & Events. The acquired exhibitions serve the Aerospace industry, a sector which Reed Exhibitions views as significant for strategic development, and in which it has already achieved a global presence through events such as Asian Aerospace International Expo and Congress, Helitech and Aviation Expo Latin America. The co-location of Aircraft Interiors Asia Expo with Asian Aerospace in Hong Kong in September 2007 offers an exciting opportunity for customers to access the world's fastest growing market for civil aviation.

UK Media & Events are to deliver the 2007 spring events – Aircraft Interiors Expo and Aerospace Testing Expo – on behalf of Reed Exhibitions.

The shows that have been acquired are:

Aerospace Testing Expo

Aircraft Interiors Expo

Aircraft Interiors Asia Expo

Aerospace Design Expo

Aerospace Testing North America

March

April

September

November

November

Munich, Germany

Hamburg, Germany

Hong Kong

Anaheim, California, USA

Anaheim, California, USA

Helitech:07

www.helitech.co.uk
sue.bradshaw@helitech.co.uk

100% Helicopters

2nd – 4th October 2007 Imperial War Museum Duxford Cambridge, UK

Hillsboro Aviation, Inc. has announced a record-setting year for their aircraft sales division. In 2006, Hillsboro Aviation sold a total of 67 new and used aircraft, including over \$41M worth of new Bell helicopters. Combined with previous year sales, Hillsboro Aviation now has over \$63M of new Bell's on order including 4 of the new twin-engine Bell 429s, 6 Bell 407s, 4 Bell 206L4s and 13 of the new Bell 417.

The **Pilatus PC-12** distributor for the UK, Ireland and Spain has opened the first sales and marketing office dedicated to the promotion of the much sought after versatile executive turboprop. Aleida Restrepo, the distributor's Director of Sales Spain, who has 5 years experience of PC-12 sales, will be based at the office at the historic Sabadell Airport near Barcelona. Sabadell is also the base for the first Pilatus Satellite Service centre in the country that has been appointed to Futurhangars SL, who are well known in the Mediterranean as a main Pratt and Whitney engine maintenance facility.

The UK (based at Bournemouth International Airport) and Spanish PC-12 centres are Europe's top selling distributors of the PC-12. Information on the new centre can be found on www.pilatus-spain.com



(From left) PC-12 Centre's Aleida Restrepo and Bob Berry with Miguel Angel González Morcillo, Toni Sánchez and Josep Quera at Sabadell.

2007
BAPCO
The Public Safety Communications and IT Event

The BAPCO Annual International Conference and Exhibition

25 - 26 APRIL 2007, BUSINESS DESIGN CENTRE, ISLINGTON LONDON, UK

ACCIDENTS & INCIDENTS

7 December 2006 Agusta 109E Power N. Air ambulance of LifeFlight, Toledo, Ohio [CJ Systems]. Aircraft flew into a flock of seagulls and suffered a double birdstrike to the front plexiglass which shattered. The nurse sitting in the co-pilots seat was struck but was wearing a helmet with visor down and no injuries were reported. No patient. [Concern]

12 December 2006 Sikorsky S-76 N. Air ambulance PennSTAR Flight Team based in Philadelphia. At approximately 2300 hours, PennCOMM was notified via telephone by another flight operators dispatch center that one of their aircraft was inbound with an interfacility patient to the University of Pennsylvania Medical Center helipad with an ETA of five minutes. The inbound aircraft's communication center was informed that the helipad was occupied by a aircraft which had just completed a mission, and that the inbound aircraft would need to wait for its departure. Before the helicopter was able to leave from the darkened pad the incoming aircraft attempted a landing. Perimeter helipad lighting and rotating beacons were operational however flood lighting on the pad was turned-off to preserve night vision.

The departing aircraft had one engine running and the second winding up with a crew member outside on the pad and had all strobes and anti-collision lights illuminated. Despite arm waving by the crew member, ground lighting flashing and radio calls it was the incoming aircraft sighting the crew members reflective patches that led to the go-around. No damage or injuries caused. [Concern]

23 December 2006 Bell 407 N408LS Air ambulance of Texas LifeStar - Southwest Helicopters, Inc. Greenville, Texas. While returning from Presbyterian Hospital in Dallas to the Greenville base, the pilot reported an engine chip light and initiated a precautionary landing to the Garland heliport. During the descent, the engine oil pressure indication was lost and the pilot executed an autorotation to a parking with no injuries or damage to the aircraft.

24 December 2006 Eurocopter EC135P2 328. Air ambulance of the Romanian Emergency Mobile Service for Resuscitation and Extrication (SMURD). The helicopter was reported to have crashed but we have no details on the incident.

30 December 2006 de Havilland DHC-5 5Y-SRK. Relief aircraft. Sky Relief Services operated for the International Red Cross. Crashed shortly after takeoff from Jomo Kenyatta International Airport, Nairobi, Kenya on a flight to Somalia. The three crewmembers received minor injuries. The aircraft was destroyed by fire. [NTSB]

2 January 2007 Bell UH-1 Huey. California National Guard. The 1973 vintage helicopter carrying five Border Patrol agents and four National Guard members crashed in the Otay Mountain area about 20 miles southeast of San Diego close to the border with Mexico. The crash, believed due to a wire strike, occurred shortly after the machine left Brown Field. The aircraft came to rest upright with the main rotor snapped and the tail boom detached. [Media]

2 January 2007 Sikorsky S-76A N311LF. Air ambulance. Life Flight based Danville, Pennsylvania, operated by Keystone Helicopter. While in cruise flight at night during a near full moon phase the aircraft apparently hit a large bird. A loud "thump" was noted by the PIC and med crew. There was no noticeable loss of control or change in rotor dynamics. The crew aborted the flight and returned uneventfully back to the departure airport in St College, PA. The post flight inspection revealed significant damage and debonding to the leading edge of one of the MRBs eight feet from the hub. There was also minor damage to the horizontal stabilizer with a position and strobe light missing. [Concern]

3 January 2007 Helicopter Security in Kenya. Gunmen shot at a security helicopter patrolling near the border with Somalia. The helicopter was flying above the southeastern Kenyan border town of Hulugho. There are no reports of damage or injuries. It is believed that the gunmen were firing from the region of Ras Kamboni, at Somalia's southernmost tip.

Kenya has increased patrols along its 675-kilometer (400-mile) border with Somalia since troops of Somalia's transitional government, backed by Ethiopian forces, routed Islamic militiamen who had controlled most of southern Somalia. [Media]

4 January 2007 Schweizer S333 N. San Antonio PD, Texas. The helicopter made an emergency landing in the Alamodome parking lot after a red tail-rotor gearbox warning indicator alerted the pilot. A mechanic was called to the scene to make repairs and a short time later it was back in service. There was no damage.

9 January 2007 LearJet Air ambulance of British Columbia Ambulance Services. There were no injuries and no apparent damage when the medivac Learjet ran off the end of the runway at Prince George into soft snow. The aircraft was bringing a transferred patient from Nanaimo, B.C., to Prince George for a patient transfer. There was no observable damage to the plane or airport infrastructure, but both would be carefully inspected. The five people aboard the plane - two pilots, two flight paramedics and the patient - were also reportedly fine.

15 January 2007 Aero Commander N290PF. Air ambulance. Aero Air aircraft operating for the Life Flight Network, Legacy Emanuel Hospital and Health Center, Portland, Oregon.

With a crew of four and one patient flying an IMC approach into Hillsboro airport the pilot encountered trouble with the starboard engine FCU and was unable to reduce horsepower for the descent and landing. The approach clearance was cancelled, and after engineering advice and attempts at a remedy the captain shut down the engine and diverted to Portland International. The flight landed without further incident. [Concern]

19 January 2007 Bell 206B JetRanger N185BC. Public use. California Fish & Game. Crashed into trees and came to rest inverted. The three persons on board only suffered minor injuries. [FAA]

22 January 2007 Bolkow BO105LS HZ-SRC1 or 2. Air ambulance of the Saudi Red Crescent Society (SRCS). Crashed outside Madinah that killed its three crew members whilst returning from Madinah to Jeddah. The copter's Bosnian pilot Najat Dastog and Syrian doctors Abdussalam Al-Sheikh and Mahmoud Al-Howail died in the air crash. [www]

24 January 2007 Cessna 550 Citation II N492AT Air ambulance of Air Trek Air Ambulance based at Punta Gorda, Florida. In light snow, and fog the aircraft landed on a snow covered runway at Butler County Airport with less than reported braking action. After the plane hit a patch of snow and skidded it went off the end of the runway striking the localizer equipment.

Pilot Stephen White, 62, copilot Angela Amon, 42, flight nurse Vicki Carr, 50, and therapist Kerry Dudley, 43, all from Virginia, were taken to Butler Memorial Hospital to be checked out.

24 January 2007 Eurocopter BK117C-1 N117SU. Air ambulance Stanford Life Flight, Stanford, California. During cruise flight, twenty miles from destination, the master caution and HYD 2 segment light illuminated. The gauge on the overhead panel indicated zero pressure. No loss of control authority was experienced and the pilot elected to land at the nearest airport. The mechanic found an electrical connection common to both the pressure indicator and the low-pressure warning light to be the problem.

25 January 2007 Westland Sea King Search & Rescue helicopter. Royal Air Force. The Sea King was struck by what is thought to be part of a helipad light, which flew up into the rotor blades and was deflected on to the windscreen at Ninewells Hospital, Tayside. The crew had just picked up two people from the hills near Loch Leven. Three panes of glass were cracked, grounding the aircraft until check and repair.

www.policeaviationnews.com



PEOPLE

Bell Helicopter has a new chief executive for the third time in less than six years. Textron, the parent of Fort Worth-based Bell, announced late Thursday that **Mike Redenbaugh** had resigned as president and CEO and was being replaced by Richard Millman, currently president of Textron Systems.

Other sources – including Flight International – worded the story along the lines that Textron had removed Redenbaugh.

Redenbaugh took over as CEO of Bell in late May 2003 and had led an apparent turnaround in the company, both in production of military aircraft like the V-22 Osprey and its commercial helicopters.

But, even as it launched new commercial products like the much lauded 417, had struggled to meet commitments to produce remanufactured helicopters for the Marine Corps.”

This year's **HAI awards** – to be presented in Orlando, Florida in March include the following from the airborne emergency services: -

Igor I. Sikorsky Award for Humanitarian Service: Crew of Helicopter ER-MHH (Alexey Ostapenko, Oleg Pazynitch, Alexander Ivlev, Senior Constable Barry Shepherd, and John Funnell), Heli Harvest Ltd., Howick, Auckland, New Zealand

Agusta Community Service Award: New York City Police Department Aviation Unit, Brooklyn, New York

Eurocopter Golden Hour Award: Crew of HH-65C CG6553 (Lieutenant Brian S. Waring, Lieutenant Patrick M. Lineberry, AET2 David S. Fanelli, AST1 John D. Isbell), United States Coast Guard Air Station Savannah, Savannah, Georgia

MD Helicopters Law Enforcement Award: Monica McIntyre; Law Enforcement Pilot (retired), SkyKnight Program, City of Lakewood, California and Sheriff's Department, Huntington Beach, California

Robert E. Trimble Memorial Award: Mr. Ken Eichner, the founder of TEMSCO Helicopters (Timber, Exploration, Mining, Survey, Cargo Operations).

The UK Department for Transport has announced the appointment of **Peter Cardy** as the new Chief Executive of the Maritime and Coastguard Agency [MCA]. He will succeed John Astbury who retires from his post as Acting Chief Executive of the Agency in May 2007.

Peter Cardy's appointment follows an open competition. He joins the Agency following five years as Chief Executive of Macmillan Cancer Support, and brings to the job over 30 years of experience in senior executive positions.

The MCA is responsible for implementing the Government's maritime safety policy throughout the UK, which includes round-the-clock co-ordination of SAR at sea through Her Majesty's Coastguard, and checking that ships meet UK and international safety rules. It works to prevent the loss of lives at the coast and at sea, to ensure that ships are safe, and to prevent coastal pollution. www.mcga.gov.uk.

EVENTS

Garmin Europe is joining Cirrus Design as sponsors of AeroExpo 2007. Their enthusiastic, friendly and professional staff will be on Stand # A36 to answer enquiries and questions about their range of product. Garmin is a world leading supplier of avionic products and systems for the general aviation market. A vast range of Integrated Systems, such as: All-Glass cockpits, Panel Mounts that show you the big picture, Remote state-of-the-art avionics, and Portables that can even help crazy disoriented people like Paddy our Show Director, find his way around.

To find your nearest Garmin Dealer go to www.garmin.com/dealers

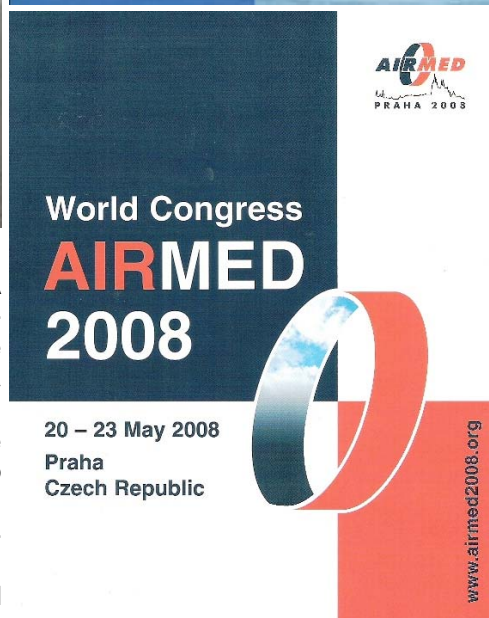
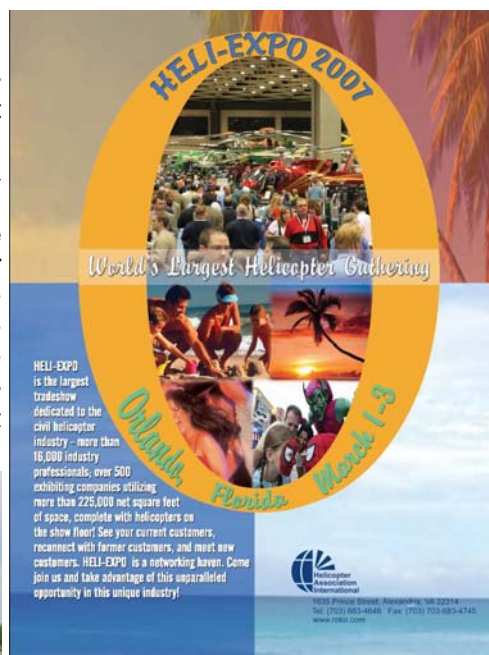
AeroExpo 2007, is growing steadily to be the biggest GA event ever in the UK. It will be held from June 8-10, 2007 at Wycombe Air Park.

DIARY

- 6-8 February 2007 VideoForum 2007. Earls Court 2, London 10.00 - 17.00 (Closes 16.00 Thursday) Details at www.videoforum.co.uk
- 15 February 2007. New aircraft launch for the Dorset & Somerset Air Ambulance. The charity are hosting a Royal Visit from Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal at The Fleet Air Arm Museum RNAS Yeovilton to launch their new generation Eurocopter EC135T2 G-DORS. The Dorset and Somerset Air Ambulance has been busily fundraising for the last 2 years to enable them to upgrade the existing Bolkow 105DBS4 helicopter to the new generation aircraft. For more information visit our website at www.dorsetandsomersetairambulance.co.uk



- 16 February 2007: Essex Air Ambulance Valentines Ball with BAA Stansted. The first Ball of the year in aid of EAA is being held at the Radisson SAS Hotel, London Stansted and is a opportunity to wine and dine. There will be champagne on arrival and a 3 course meal followed by a disco. For further information call 01279 664019
- 23 February 2007 The Support and Aquisition of Police and Public-Sector Helicopters in the UK - 1 day workshop to be held in Oxfordshire. Details at www.helimetrics.com
- 26-28 February 2007 Goodrich Hoist & Winch 2007 Users Conference at the Orange County Convention Center, International Drive, Orlando, Florida. Goodrich Hoist and Winch Users Conference will focus on the users operational experience with the products. To this end, both operational and technical forums will be held for the purpose of exchanging information, observations, concerns and lessons learned. In addition to the conference, hoist maintenance training will take place on February 26, 2007. These dates and the venue were chosen to coincide with the Helicopter Association International (HAI) Heli-Expo from March 1-3, 2007. www.hoistandwinch.com
- 1-3 March 2007 Heli-Expo 2007. Orange County Convention Center, International Drive, Orlando, Connections Housing will be coordinating the housing for HELI-EXPO 2007. The Rosen Centre is the headquarters hotel. Reservations should be made quickly as their rooms will sell out very quickly! Go to www.heliexpo.com and click on Housing.
- 7-8 March 2007 5th Avionics Exhibition & Conferences in Amsterdam – This is the only event in Europe to focus





purely on core electronic technologies, essentially based within the cockpit. As well as an established exhibition the 5th show, sponsored by Airbus, now features; 1. Civil Avionics Conference; 2. Military Avionics Conference; 3. New COTS/Embedded feature. The Simply Group Ltd abroad-bent@simplygrouppltd.com www.avionics-event.com

- 7-8 March 2007 5th Annual Aero Engine Parts: Repair or Replace? Conference. Crowne Plaza Dublin Airport Hotel, Dublin, Ireland. Online booking is now available for this Conference. For more information, to register your place and book on-line, visit <http://www.aviationindustrygroup.com/index.cfm?pg=228&archive=false&offset=1> There are free places available at this conference for representatives of non-service provider airlines' engineering and maintenance / powerplant departments (those airlines not offering third party maintenance or aircraft / engine leasing services). If you think you are eligible for a free place, please contact the organisers directly for a promotional on-line booking code. Aviation Industry Conferences, Main Tel: +44 207 931 7072, Fax: 7186 Email: ruthm@aviation-industry.com
- 27-29 March 2007 Global Security Asia is the leading Homeland Security Conference and Exhibition covering the Asia Pacific / ASEAN region to be held in Singapore. The event is hosted by the Singaporean Ministry of Home Affairs, together with 10 supporting agencies such as the Singapore Police Force, Civil Defence Force, Internal Security Department and Australian Trade Commission. Global Security Asia 2005 attracted 5,321 visitors from 48 Countries, more than 400 conference delegates from 24 Countries, 188 exhibitors from 18 Countries and 44 VIP delegates from 20 Countries. For further information please log on to: www.globalsecasia.com.
- 2 - 3 April 2007, Ritz Carlton, Tysons Corner, Washington DC, USA. SAR 2007 will take an international approach to the truly global issue of saving the lives of those in distress, regardless of location or circumstance. Make a date in your diary now and don't miss out on this most successful and beneficial event. www.shephard.co.uk/sar



- 19-22 April 2007 Aero 2007 the International Trade Exhibition for General Aviation. Neue Messe, Friedrichshafen, Germany. www.aer-friedrichshafen.com
- 22-24 April 2007. IACP European Executive Policing Conference 2007 The 24th European Executive Policing Conference 2007 is being held at the Krasnapolsky Hotel. This 5-star hotel is located on historic Dam Square, in Amsterdam, The Netherlands. The theme of the conference is "Future Challenges in Policing" and will focus on the role of modern technology in traditional police work, what it takes to be a police officer in today's world, and what the future holds for police work. It does not include a specific aviation element. For registration, lodging, and conference information, please visit: <http://www.iacp-amsterdam2007.nl/main.html> Contact Paul Santiago on santiago@theiacp.org
- 27-29 April 2007 Euro-Avia Cannes. Taking place at the Cannes-Mandelieu Airport. A GA event covering private and leisure aircraft. New and Second hand sales – Equipment Accessories Services - Insurances - Financing. The aim of this event is to bring together the leaders in GA to display the latest innovations. Entry is restricted to industry professionals, pilots, clients and potential buyers. www.eur-avia.com



The International Exhibition for General & Sport Aviation
June 8-10, 2007 - Wycombe Air Park, UK