

# Police Aviation News

Police Aviation Research

Number 154 February 2009

IPAR



**406Mhz EPIRB goes live**  
**Busiest police helicopter**  
**Euro EMS hits new highs**  
**DA42 makes ground**

**Heli-Expo Preview**

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# Law Enforcement

## BOTSWANA

In 2007 three Eurocopter AS350B3 helicopters were ordered by the Botswana Police Service (BPS), last month saw the official acceptance of two of them, the third is due for delivery later this year. Speaking during the official launch, Commissioner Thebeyame Tsimako revealed that helicopters' envisaged areas of operation would include active involvement in fairly standard police operations such as pursuit and recovery, anti-motor vehicle hijacking patrols, traffic surveillance, monitoring public order operations as well as conducting SAR missions. The police chief admitted that three helicopters were not enough to cover the vastness of Botswana but is hoped that coverage will improve with time.

The helicopters are equipped with a range of state of the art equipment including the Carl Zeiss Optronics LEO-IIA5 Extended Performance (EP) sensor turrets, hoisting and rappelling equipment. The LEO includes the latest generation 640 x 480 high resolution 8-9µm Focal Plane Array (FPA) QWIP thermal imager with three Fields of View, a 3-CCD daylight TV Camera with a powerful zoom lens spatially matched to the thermal imager FOV, wide spectrum Spotter TV Camera with a dual colour and B&W capability providing close-in image magnification (0.35° H), video auto tracker, searchlight slaving kits, and an eye-safe laser pointer which enhances the operational effectiveness by covert marking of points of interest.

Botswana had a long standing recommendation for the establishment of an Air Wing dating back to 1987. More than twenty years ago a review of the BPS undertaken by an Assistant Chief Constable of Royal Ulster Constabulary and a police consultant, S. Stevenson, included a recommendation that air support be created. Having a project is one thing, but other priority held sway and only now has the project come to fruition. The contract was finally signed on September 13, 2007 [featured in the October 2007 PAN].

The project drew upon help from the Botswana Defence Force [formerly called the Police Mobile Unit] who have vast experience in helicopter operations and had hitherto undertaken some police support work. The army was instrumental in making the project successful.

### COVER IMAGE

*Although beset by some production problems relating to its Diesel engines the Diamond DA42 has been quietly impressing a large number of people and has now been selected for a major surveillance task that underwrites its capabilities. See page 26 for the story.*

Two of the BDF members, a pilot [believed to be Major Emmanuel Sedireng Morris] and an engineer, were seconded to the BPS to form part of the Air Support Project Team. Police officers were sent to South Africa and the USA to train as pilots and aircraft maintenance technicians. Now the Police have seven newly qualified pilots who graduated from Starlite Aviation in Durban as well as four officers who have qualified as Aviation Maintenance Technicians with the National Aviation Academy in Florida, USA. Two additional pilots and two engineers remain in training. Six other police officers have recently commenced training as aircraft mechanics with the BDF [The Voice]

*Ed: Back in 2006 when it was intended that four helicopters would be purchased the then Commissioner [Edwin Batshu] said that they would be based in locations such as Gaborone, Lobatse, Francistown and Maun.*

## CANADA

**VANCOUVER:** In one year's time Vancouver will be hosting the Winter Olympics. The 'Games are already causing the circulation of some negative news reports relating to confusion and mishandling of the funding but now a new worry has surfaced relating to event security; a shortage of helicopters.

The newly sworn-in commander of 408 Tactical Helicopter Squadron, Lt.-Col. Jeff Scott, has gone on record highlighting that the predicted security requirements for event will put a big drain on helicopter resources in Afghanistan. The Edmonton based CH-146 Griffon unit is currently building up support, resupply and transport missions in Afghanistan to eight machines. It is suggested that the projected needs of both the war zone and the Olympics cannot be met in full.

Canada has never been a country rich in military resources and plans to deploy around 4,000 troops to help secure the games in Vancouver will be severely compromised if there are insufficient helicopters available to put them where they are needed.

The 2010 Winter Olympics are scheduled to take place in February and March 2010. Beyond the Host City of Vancouver events will be hosted at Richmond, and the Whistler Host Mountain Resort.

**WINNIPEG:** There are moves to introduce a patrol helicopter in the city of Winnipeg. Police Chief Keith McCaskill is said to be taking a serious look at whether it's possible for the police service to take to the skies.

The project is at an early stage and Mr McCaskill hasn't yet approached city hall for funding. In 2002 a public fundraising campaign called Take Flight Winnipeg failed to catch the imagination to find public cash to buy a police helicopter.

The project is not universally popular and already it has been pointed out that Winnipeg is too small to provide enough for a helicopter to do. [Sun]

## CAYMAN ISLANDS

The Cayman Islands government has posted advertisements for the position of Royal Cayman Islands Police Service commissioner.

Acting Police Commissioner James Smith, currently on a six-month temporary contract, has expressed an interest in applying for the post. Applicants also must have experience in different kinds of policing including marine, and air support units.

Cayman has gone through four police commissioners within the past 12 months, one of whom only stayed in the islands for 48 hours and declined to accept the post. [Compass]



### PIRACY

Last month PAN ran items on the international attempts to thwart acts of piracy in the Gulf of Aden and off Somalia.

This publication will revisit this subject from time to time but for those with an ongoing interest in this subject details of all the pirate activity is logged by the International Maritime Bureau and they produce detailed reports that are available through [www.icc-ccs.org/](http://www.icc-ccs.org/)

## CYPRUS

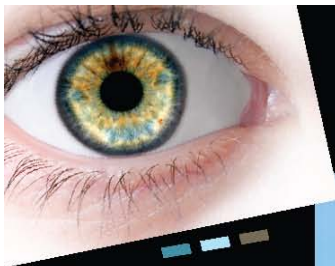
**POLICE AIR WING:** AgustaWestland has announced that the Ministry of Justice of Cyprus has placed an order for two AW139 medium twin engine helicopters. These aircraft will be used to perform law enforcement and search and rescue operations. This success follows on from the contract signed by the Ministry of Defence of Cyprus in December 2008 for three AW139s

## EGYPT

**BORDER GUARD:** Making use of its good connections with the region Germany is to send a team to Egypt to assess ways of enhancing Egyptian anti-smuggling efforts on the border with the Gaza Strip. The recent attacks by Israel on the region have related to an apparent inability to halt the passage of weapons through this 15-km (9 mile) length of border.

The German offer is the first proposal that appears to address Egyptian objections to stationing foreign troops on its border with the recently devastated Gaza Strip. Egyptian attempts to broker a ceasefire in the Gaza Strip became bogged down because of disagreements with Israel over how to secure the border to prevent the Islamist movement Hamas from rearming.

*Ed: Late last year the German Federal Police undertook a joint air operation in Egypt. See December's edition.*



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## INDIA

**COAST GUARD:** The fallout from the late November Mumbai terror attacks is bringing about changes to those departments found wanting in the run up to the attacks on hotels. The Indian Navy and Coast Guard are perceived as having failed to intercept the vessel they were alerted to be the intelligence services prior to the attacks and the government is linking the control rooms each operates in a central national command control communication and intelligence network. The Mumbai attacks highlighted that there was no coordination between the Coast Guard and the Navy. The Coast Guard did not share information with the Western Naval Command, which in turn was kept in the dark by its own Naval Headquarters.

Coast Guard force levels are to be expanded over the next three years with twelve additional Dornier Do228 aircraft being acquired along with 55 new sea vessels to protect the 22,000 vessels that ply its 6,516-km coastline. [India Express]

To avoid delay in moving forces in aid to anti-terror incidents new powers to requisition aircraft have been arranged by National Security Guards (NSG) by the Union Home Ministry. Now the NSG can take up aircraft from any operator registered in India.

Previously, the NSG could commandeer an aircraft for a counter hijack operation, but there was no provision for requisitioning an aircraft from a commercial operator to carry out troop movement for an anti-terrorist operation.

The arrangement comes in the wake of delay in procuring of an aircraft during the Mumbai terror attack where it took many hours to arrange use of an Indian Air Force IL-76 to move people. NSG will now be able to get an aircraft at a short notice for rushing its commandos for anti-terrorist operation anywhere in the country. This new order does however require the agreement of an officer not below the rank of Joint Secretary in Home or Civil Aviation Ministry. [The Hindu]

## MALTA

**AFM:** Despite having allocated it a 2008 series serial the EADS/Eurocopter UH-72 helicopter failed to arrive in the islands last year. Enquiries to the USA where the aircraft was said to be under construction have not elicited an explanation.

Although it has all gone pretty quiet in the news sense an endless trickle of boat people continues to risk their lives to reach the gold paved streets of Europe.

Last month there was an isolated report from Greece on how Navy vessels and a Super Puma rescue helicopter rescued 25 illegal immigrants from a rowing boat between the Dodecanese island of Samos and the Turkish coast. The vessel had appealed for help, as it was being buffeted by strong winds.

Police in the coastal town of Thessaloniki detained six would-be migrants on dry land, three at the railways station as they waited to get a train to Athens and three others hiding in an apartment. As a bonus they also picked up two suspected smugglers, a 40-year-old Greek and a 30-year-old foreign national. The latest wave to hit Malta consisted of a mixed bag of over 260 in a single boat.

## NIGERIA

In December 2008 it was reported that the Inspector General of Police Mike Okiro had publicly complained that a Robinson R44 helicopter donated to the police by the Federal Capital Territory Administration (FCT) for crime prevention sixteen months ago was still not in service.

The helicopter was supposed to provide security flights over Abuja, the modern Capital city located centrally in the country.

A lack of funds is the primary cause, with no funding being assigned by the authorities for

pilotage, engineering support or even fuel.

It is the latter that is perhaps the greatest bone of contention and a Captain Daniel Omale heavily criticized both the Nigerian authorities and the original donors on this point in an article on All Africa.com last month. He pointed out that the FCT had simply purchased the wrong aircraft for the region. The R44 is a piston aircraft requiring access to 100LL fuel and one thing that Nigeria simply does not have is 100LL.

Why he asked did the FCT not take the opinion of a decent aviation consultant before buying its gift? Indeed did they go so far as to ask anyone? The fuel issue is such that no amount of funding can overcome the lack of 100LL supplies in the country, the aircraft should never have been bought and the money would have been better spent on getting all the grounded airframes the police have back into the sky. To that end, writes Captain Omale, the airframe should be sold off rather than having everyone pointlessly wringing their hands over a project that can never succeed in its aims.

Nigeria Police Air Wing was formed in Lagos, the old Capital in 1984. A high turnover of airframe acquisition has not necessarily resulted in the provision of air support over the 356,669 sq ml [913,073 sq km] territories. There have been various reports of people in high places 'urging' the expansion of air support but little evidence of activity. One Bell 206 was in use at the end of January 2004 and later that year the Federal Government approved the purchase of two Bell 427 helicopters at the cost of \$US9.9M. They arrived early in 2005. In October 2006 the police took delivery of two helicopters from Ukrainian government in a ceremony at Abuja but nothing has been heard of any of these resources since.

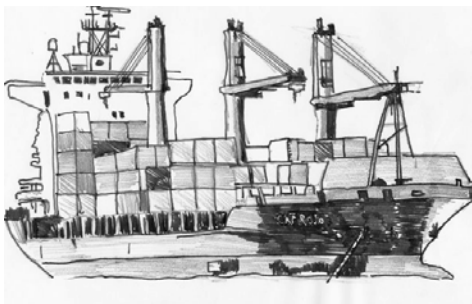
Further to the specifics of the R44 saga, the writer goes on to say that the top management of the police have paid little attention to making the PAW effective. In the 1980s the force was more interested in utilising fixed wing resources to provide transport rather than helicopters for crime patrols. Even in the face of a rising wave of crime among a population facing high levels of unemployment the provision of maintenance has been way down the list of priorities and that is why the PAW flies so little. In contrast the customs and immigration service strives hard to keep their aircraft maintained even if their flying activity is also fairly low.

A tide of sophisticated criminals is embracing technology and it seems that they are as aware as anyone that despite all the hype surrounding its modern equipment the Nigerian PAW has never yet submitted a homemade video of a bank raid in progress. Without an active surveillance helicopter what is the use of the fleet of aircraft. [Abuja/PAR]

## UNITED KINGDOM

ESSEX: There is some ongoing discussion in the UK as to whether there is any call for police officers to be winched from helicopters to undertake their duties. In the main the view is that there is no identified requirement for winching and the only operator with a winch in service [the Metropolitan Police] does not yet need the equipment.

Last year there was an incident that might support a contrary viewpoint. The efforts of a group of Essex police officers called in to assist in a dramatic offshore incident eleven miles off the Suffolk coast in February 2008 were officially recognised late last year.



On the afternoon of February 5, 2008, Suffolk Police received an assistance call from the master of the Cap Rojo, a 16,000 tonne container ship registered in Liberia, 11 miles off the Suffolk coast. A 34 year old male Turkish stowaway had been found on board and had gone berserk. Having initially been compliant, the stowaway had caused damage and was throwing missiles at the crew. The stowaway also threatened to set light to flammable substances being carried on board. The ship had been designated a danger to shipping and could not be moved until the incident had been safely resolved. With

Suffolk Police unable to deal direct the operation was passed to neighbouring Essex Police but due to the hazardous weather conditions, a deployment by their Marine Unit surface

vessels was untenable.

A team of six Essex officers, led by Chief Inspector Jon Dodman, and including two firearms officers armed with Taser's, was flown out of Harwich by an RAF Sea King helicopter operating from Wattisham. Once over the Cap Rojo, the team were winched in 35 knot cross winds, onto the crowded deck of the ship. The pilot then winched them onto the ship safely despite dangerous weather conditions and a two-metre swell.

It was only after they arrived on-deck that it was discovered that the man had climbed up one of the three massive 45 metre cranes and was banging a metal bar against the side of it. The noise disrupted communications but during pauses in the banging, the officers managed to successfully negotiate him down, before arresting him.

Once declared safe, the Cap Rojo was piloted into the container port of Felixstowe where the prisoner was handed to Suffolk officers to deal with the alleged damage and immigration offences. In the event the former was dealt with by way of a caution, he was deported by the Border and Immigration Agency. [Essex]

*Chief Inspector of special operations Jonathan Dodman, Sgt Andrew Ford, Det. Con. Simon Lofting and PCs Shane Burke and Andrew Kemp received Chief Constable's commendations on December 18 in recognition of their bravery. The certificates were presented by Assistant Chief Constable of Essex Police, Sue Harrison.*



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**WEST YORKSHIRE:** West Yorkshire Police are claiming their helicopter to be the busiest in the UK.

The aircraft, an MD902 Explorer G-YPOL achieved its milestone 10,000th flying hour on January 7 as the helicopter scoured Calderdale searching for a missing 88-year old man from the town of Todmorden. He was subsequently found safe and well in the Stretford area of Greater Manchester.

In December 2008 'X-Ray 99' flew out to 480 incidents, logging 136 flight hours and covered over 500 sq. km.

Chief Superintendent Chris Hardern, who is head of West Yorkshire Police's Operations Support Division and Chairman of the Yorkshire and Humber Air Consortium said: 'In reaching 10,000 flight hours, X-Ray 99 is now proven as the busiest police helicopter in the country and for an aircraft of its model, has logged more flying hours than any other in the world.' 'For such a large Metropolitan area as West Yorkshire, the Force helicopter and its crew are an absolutely vital asset, supporting officers on the ground and proving invaluable in helping to search for missing persons or for suspects who have left a crime scene.'

In recognition of the Air Support Unit's achievement, Craig Kitchen, Chief Operating Officer for MD Helicopters Inc passed on his own congratulations: 'MD Helicopters is proud to be a member of the West Yorkshire Police team. It is through the efforts of devoted professionals such as, your flight and maintenance crews, along with the reliability of the MD902 that achievements like this are realised.'

The Explorer, G-YPOL c/n 900-00078, has been in use for eight years now [since February 2001] and replaced an MBB Bolkow BO105DBS4 G-WYPA which had itself been used by

West Yorkshire Police since December 1989. In its eleven years of service it also showed a high rate of utilisation, amassing over 11,000 flight hours before moving on to serve as an air ambulance with Police Aviation Services.

*Ed: Having now moved on from the bad times that the MD product suffered it is clear that the West Yorkshire aircraft suffered far less availability problems than other operators of the same type in the UK. Through this difficult period YPOL maintained – indeed exceeded – the high tempo of operations set by its predecessor.*

*G-YPOL registered late in 2000 is the world lead high time airframe for the Explorer, more than a year after the high time Eurocopter EC135T1 G-NESV registered in April 1999 that reached its 10,000 hours. On January 10 the total flight time for the EC135 G-NESV stood at 11,068hrs. The 135 has been in service for some 116 months and the 902 for 94 months giving the 135 an average of around 95 hours per month with the 902 averaging some 105 hours, an intensity not apparently matched by other airframes in this sector.*

## UNITED STATES

**CALIFORNIA:** After only operating air support for a year the Monterey County Sheriff's Office has suspended its use of two leased helicopters as part of widespread measures to cut costs.

Official sources state that they did not want to halt the operation but were forced to as they face a budget shortfall of about \$3M for the fiscal year ending June 30.

The sheriff began using a helicopter in January 2008 at a monthly cost of \$50,000. Half the annual costs were to be covered by money raised by the Sheriff's Advisory Council and the rest was to be paid with money confiscated in drug operations.

Verticare, the company that provided the sheriff's office with the helicopters, pilots and maintenance service



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has declared the surprise move to be a major blow to the business. From expectations of earning \$3M over five years by contracting with the sheriff, and investing \$750,000 in aircraft he now has no business.

The now closed operation was served by a primary aircraft, a police specification Robinson R44 Raven II N831H, based at Salinas Municipal Airport. The R44 operation was backed up with a Bell 206 JetRanger N3181J.

FLORIDA: The Escambia County Sheriff's Office in Pensacola is to cease operations from March 1. The operation consists of two military surplus Bell OH-58 helicopters, three pilots and three deputies. A fourth pilot is on military active duty. The three pilots will go. Last year it cost nearly \$800,000 to operate the unit, including salaries, benefits, maintenance, supplies, fuel and parts and, against the current trend, Harry Heatly, the unit's chief pilot, predicted it would cost just \$700,000 in 2009 thanks to major maintenance items having already been performed on the helicopters. The Sheriff's Office may have to slash \$6.5M from the department's nearly \$79M budget and that 2008 \$800,000 operating cost for the air unit was too much of an attraction to the bean counters. After March 1, the helicopters, an OH-58A N91EC and an OH-58C N920EC will be stored until the Sheriff's Office decides what to do with them.

The Sheriff's Office went through a process of contacting neighbouring agencies about the unit and studying whether there would be any legal hurdles if the agencies can help with the cost of future operations but in the end it was not enough.

Those approached were never likely to have much, if any, spare cash to help out. Pensacola Police use the helicopter from time to time but have not planned on putting money aside in their existing budget. The Gulf Breeze Police Department was in a similar situation. Over in Milton the Santa Rosa County Sheriff's Office is hoping to get grant money to get its own air operation back into the air. Their OH-58A+ helicopter, donated by St Lucie County in May 2007, has been sitting in storage despite pilots offering to fly it for free.

IDAHO: Even as a number of small operators across the US contemplate the future of their aircraft resources there are those in the Idaho Transportation Department who wonder whether the state can really afford their own meagre aircraft resources. Leaders of the IDT say the state's airplanes are a necessity but it seems that when cost cutting is on the agenda all resources face the axe.

Idaho owns three old aircraft, not an extravagant fleet either, it does not include jets or helicopters - the smallest state fleet in the region. Montana has 18 aircraft; Utah has nine.

Yet the IDT has been asked to justify the very fact that it owns and maintains aircraft, and the agency's response explained the frugality:

The newest aircraft is a 30-year-old US Army surplus version of the King Air 200 twin-engine turboprop capable of carrying 10 passengers. Acquired in 1998 the former military C-12 N121TD is the only all-weather aircraft and the only one closely associated with law enforcement. The other two planes, a 31-year-old five seat Cessna 206 and the oldest of them a 37-year-old four seat Cessna 182, are single engine VFR types. A recent audit assessed that the trio cost the state \$341,456 in 2008. Allowing the use of the fleet by other agencies helps offset costs.

The primary purpose of owning and operating these aircraft is stated to be law enforcement and emergency use but it is known that last year some 25% of use of the larger Beech aircraft related to the transportation of the State Governor Butch Otter or someone from his office.

Idaho is required by law to provide SAR services, including the ability to find downed aircraft locator beacons and two of the aircraft have this capability to allow for maintenance downtime. Overall the three aircraft meet a requirement to meet a round the clock need to pro-

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vide emergency transportation for police, such as SWAT or prison emergency response teams. It is possible the charter commercial aircraft to meet downtime but there are legal difficulties in chartering to transport a SWAT team because the FAA does not allow charter flights to carry such weaponry on short notice and there's no guarantee a plane would be available.

The ITD estimates it costs about \$1,053 per hour to operate its King Air 200, including two pilots. Chartering a comparable airplane costs about \$1,040 per hour, plus extra if a second pilot is needed. The state needs to have around-the-clock emergency transportation; charter plane availability is not guaranteed, unless a plane is kept on retainer, which is expensive.

Based on the expenses faced by a local medical provider, \$36,000 per month to keep an air ambulance and pilot on standby, plus actual flight costs whenever the aircraft is operated, it would cost the state more per year to keep a single charter plane and a pilot on standby - about \$432,000 - than the department's entire budget to operate and maintain three airplanes. Last year the King Air flew 150 times, including 42 flights for the governor's office, in 2007 governor's office use was 30 and 50 times in 2006.

ITD also defended the use of the aircraft by other state employees on the grounds of effectiveness. Paying a state employee to drive from Boise to Coeur d'Alene for a half-day meeting would require at least a one-night stay and several hours lost productivity while on the road. Airlines serve only seven of Idaho's 130 airports, flight schedules are limited and inflexible, potentially leaving the state paying for an overnight stay. Some state-managed land is accessible only from the state's 30 backcountry airstrips. [Idaho Statesman]

**KANSAS:** A National Transportation Safety Board investigation has determined the pilots weren't responsible for causing the April 5 crash of a Topeka Police Department Robinson R44 helicopter at Washburn University. The NTSB report attributed the crash to a mechanical malfunction and an encounter with a light pole during an emergency landing attempted as a result of the malfunction.

Topeka Police has now called in outside help to provide an overview on how the department selects and trains its pilots and whether changes are warranted. This has a background of two officers killed in a June 2000 crash in west Topeka, another pilot was forced to make an emergency landing during a training flight and the April accident.

One of the questions being raised is whether pilot inexperience may have a bearing on the recent accident. The pilot of the department's Robinson R-44 had almost 500 hours of flight time, but the question is whether a pilot with 2,000 hours may have reacted differently. This in turn leads to questions being asked about the department changing its policy of selecting officers from its ranks for pilot training or bringing in ready trained pilots.

The Robinson R-44 hasn't been replaced, the department's other helicopter is an older Schweizer 300C that was being used as a backup. Funding for the helicopter unit was included in the city's 2009 budget, but some of the money was creamed off to another agency, leaving the department short.

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A review of the helicopter operation that was placed in the hands of a consultant was delayed pending the NTSB report on the latest crash. This has now been published but has attracted criticism over some basic errors of fact.

MARYLAND: Just a couple of months ago, in the wake of the hand wringing that was witnessed after the fatal crash last September you could be forgiven for believing that the very idea of replacing the ageing fleet of the Maryland State Police was out of the question. And yet last month the State Governor Martin O'Malley set in train a request for proposals to commence the replacement of the existing fleet of AS365N Dauphin helicopters.

The new helicopters are to replace the state's existing fleet and the first order could be delivered as early as July 1.

The news came as O'Malley unveiled his fiscal 2010 budget including a spending plan that includes \$40M in capital funds to be used for two new helicopters. A request for proposals will be released January 30 and bids are due by March 17. Of the eleven remaining Dauphin's the five oldest were purchased in 1989.

NEW YORK: The US Coast Guard, New York Police and Fire Departments, New York Waterways and Circle Line ferry rescue teams launched a multi-asset response when a US Airways A310 plane ditched onto the Hudson River last month. But it was the ferry operators who won the race to save lives.

A land based USCG CCTV image caught the early part of the rescue sequence in its entirety and showed the aircraft striking the water in a plume of spray in the region of 58<sup>th</sup> Street and, as the occupants exited the floating aircraft amid inflating life rafts and emergency slides standing on the sinking wings awaiting rescue.

The Airbus hit the water at 3-

31pm and drifted at a high rate downriver the first ferry gets to them at 3-35, by which time they had drifted some 10 blocks until opposite the Intrepid Air Museum at [Pier 86, 12th Ave. & 46th Street](#).

Although three Coast Guard helicopters from Air Station Atlantic City, N.J., and one from Air Station Cape Cod, Massachusetts joined New York City Police air assets to provide aerial support the day was the ferry operators. Interesting stuff viewed from New Jersey shore and it confirms that this was primarily a ferry operator's rescue.

Nonetheless air assets played a small but important part and put scuba divers on the wreck to ensure the rescue of the full crew and passenger list of 155 persons.

For many the pre-flight ditching drill has been a joke but this time the conditions were such that the aircraft, disabled by multiple bird strikes, made an perfect engine out landing on the cold waters of the Hudson River and floated long enough for the passengers to get out and either get into life rafts or to stand on the sinking wing awaiting rescue by ferry boat and police launches. Chesley Sullenberger III, the pilot, refused to don a life vest and left the aircraft last.

*The final seconds of a USCG CCTV clip - three minutes into the rescue—show the ferry boats crowded around the still floating Airbus in the Hudson as it drifts past Concorde on the wharf beside the Intrepid air museum*





*An image from earlier in the sequence*

The Airbus A320 had taken off from New York's LaGuardia airport six minutes earlier, just before 3-30pm, bound for Charlotte, North Carolina, when it hit a flock of geese that disabled both engines. It was in the air for only three minutes.

The Police Department Aviation Unit's role was in hoisting two passengers from the waters after the emergency landing in the Hudson River and fast roping scuba divers onto the still floating wreck. The victims were lifted in a basket from the river into one of the Bell helicopters. The scuba divers were just doing their job and the very fact that they appeared in the news footage simply standing on the wing of the sinking aircraft says it all. On this occasion thankfully the Bell helicopters were not called up to undertake every part of the physical rescue task – pulling all 155 to safety in the short time available would have been beyond them – but the very arrival of rescuers always has an uplifting effect on frightened survivors.

The ditching point may have been fortuitous but the fact remains that the ready availability of the emergency services in boat and helicopter helped immensely. This time it was the ferries plying the Hudson that turned disaster into miracle. Many other cities around the world need to look and decide what would happen if a similar ditching took place on the rivers wending their way through their major cities on a Thursday evening. Would similar resources be even available?

The USCG video can be downloaded from their web site – readers should be aware that it is a 10MB download <https://www.piersystem.com/go/doc/802/249211/>

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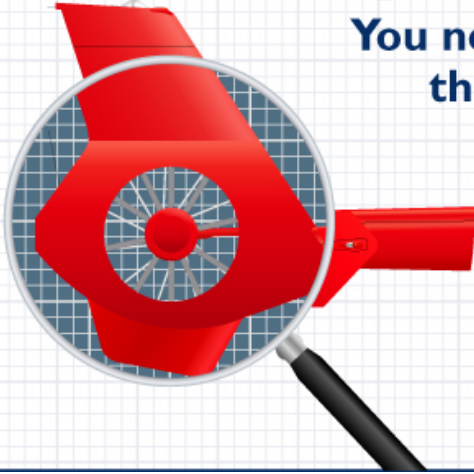
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In a presentation to a local group the New York Aviation Unit gave a run down on last year's operations. They are currently flying three Bell 412 air-sea helicopters and four Agusta A 119 Koala patrol aircraft, the unit made 3,081 flights in 2008, completing 11,268 assignments. That averages 8.5 flights daily.

Besides undertaking dramatic air-sea rescues, the unit also patrols the city's waterways for safety and against terrorism. [Brooklyn Eagle]

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OHIO: In Allen County, in the north west of the state a new sheriff looks likely to balance the books by selling their helicopter. Not for the first time the dollar value of aircraft is tempting those in high places to turn in their chips for short-term gain.

The Allen County sheriff's eye in the sky has been an asset for fifteen years and in its most recent form has relied upon a Schweizer obtained the Schweizer after trading in two government-surplus Huey helicopters.

The county has used the helicopter for 13 years, patrolling for marijuana, backing up deputies, finding lost people, and keeping an eye on retail parking lots during the Christmas holiday shopping season but on average the level of use has only been in the order of once a week.

The new sheriff is eliminating jobs and making other cutbacks that could include the helicopter. He estimates it could bring in \$100,000 towards the \$4M in cuts he needs to find. The helicopter is a 1994 S269C N6136K.

## AIR AMBULANCE

### INTERNATIONAL

AirMed International has partnered with Navigate Health International, an international medical coordination services provider based in Italy to offer medevac memberships at reduced rates. Navigate offers medical coordination services to internationals living in or visiting Italy. Working within the Italian system, speaking the language, and understanding the culture and practices and is able to guide users through the system. As part of the cooperation agreement Navigate's Medical Director, Kevin M. Ban, MD, will serve as a medical consultant for selected AirMed missions originating in Italy. [www.navigate-italy.com](http://www.navigate-italy.com)

AirMed International offers medical care and bedside-to-bedside transportation on a worldwide basis using a fleet of 12 fully customised, fixed-wing aircraft, including the largest medical jet in the US, the Hawker 800. AirMed's five strategic bases of operations in Alabama, Hawaii, Minnesota, Ohio, and internationally in Hong Kong, provide advantageous geographic coverage and rapid dispatch. AirMed has flown over 14,000 missions to more than 150 countries and routinely provides service to Fortune 500 companies, top hospitals and global assistance companies. [www.airmed.com](http://www.airmed.com)

### AUSTRALIA

NEW SOUTH WALES: Officials in the Australian state of New South Wales are seeking larger planes for the flying doctor service, because current aircraft are not large enough to transport obese patients. According to recent global surveys, Australians are among the most obese people in the world. State authorities have put out a tender to assess the costs of two larger planes capable of carrying patients weighing up to 260kg [570 pounds]. The current limit is around half that at 140kg. [Netherlands Radio]

Air ambulance helicopter crews in the state are said to be collapsing with heat exhaustion on rescue flights because temperatures in the non-air-conditioned cabins sometimes hit 50C.

The extreme heat has caused crew to vomit mid-air requiring injections and medication. One doctor was so badly affected he was unable to perform his clinical duties.

In another incident it seems that a window fell out of one of the state's new AW139 ambulance helicopters over Sydney after crew members tried to open it for ventilation. The aircraft was forced to return to base and has been out of action since. One answer to the problem is to fly slower with the doors open.

Canadian company CHC provide the aircraft under a \$270M contract agreed last year but they are not equipped with air-conditioning. Although the problem is expected to exist only

at the height of summer it is made worse by the crew wearing thick fireproof flight suits, boots, gloves, helmets and the aircraft being sat out in the hot sun prior to operations. The NSW ambulance service will now look at ways to lower the heat in the cabin such as an air conditioning retro-fit, more vents in the cabin, or simply parking the helicopter in the shade during the hot summer months. [Daily Telegraph/media]

## EUROPE

Helicopters of the DRF Luftrettung experienced their busiest year ever in 2008. The number of missions rose to 40,602. Compared to the year before this meant a rise of 1,491 more rescue missions being flown.

In Germany alone the red and white helicopters of the DRF Luftrettung flew 32,507 missions. Among the most frequent reasons for these missions were heart attacks and apoplexies (22%), as well as accidents (16%). The rescue helicopters based in Germany, Austria and Italy flew altogether 30,596 rescue missions. In 10,006 cases, patients were transported from clinic to clinic under intensive medical care by helicopter or ambulance aircraft. The 24 hour-helicopters flew 8,427 missions at night. [DRF]



## FRANCE

Late last year the French civil aviation authority DGAC, Eurocopter and the French association of EMS doctors (AFHSH) tested a satnav IFR route between two hospitals, with the goal of easing patient transfer. The next phase in the trials will involve carrying patients in the EC145 with a view to using this route permanently later this year – enhancing all-weather operations.

Twelve flight hours of demonstrations took place between hospitals in Nogent-le-Rotrou and Dreux, in northwest France enabled Eurocopter to explore the operational envelope utilising a Garmin GNS 430 GPS receiver installed in the EC145. The DGAC has set a minimum height of 400 feet. Due to terrain and obstacles, this translates into 670 feet above the ground in the locality of Nogent.

One outstanding question is whether the DGAC will mandate better helipad equipment, such as lighting, when these flights are commonplace. Depending on the helipad's size and level of equipment, such flights can be operated under Category I or II. [AIN]

## NEW ZEALAND

Rescue helicopter operators are fighting an industry crackdown that will ban them flying some patients directly to major hospitals. Following a widespread failure to comply with the requirements in a ban which declares that single engine helicopters cannot fly into from flying in and out of hospital landing pads in built up areas the law is being strictly enforced. Single-engine aircraft are allowed to ignore the ban if it is a case of life or death. Unfortunately it seems it is being flouted.

The CAA says those operators flouting the life or death clause, endanger people living near hospitals. It has held a meeting with rescue helicopter operators, who have been asked to come up with proof they are operating within the law.

Operators of the primarily single-engine rescue fleet have labelled the move ridiculous.



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## UNITED KINGDOM

**EAST ANGLIA:** Scotia UK plc, developer of the Scotia Medical Observation and Simulation System, or smots™, has raised over £5,000 for the East Anglian Air Ambulance (EAAA) at the end of the first year of a unique fundraising scheme.

The smots™ system is already in use in UK hospitals including Papworth, The Essex Cardiothoracic Centre, The Royal London, Guy's and St Thomas', as well as leading hospitals in Europe. It consists of a camera with loudspeaker and microphone that is placed in an operating theatre or simulation centre to enable clinicians to demonstrate procedures to fellow professionals in real-time anywhere in the world.

The highly portable and wireless system also offers an advanced simulation monitoring capability which is proving highly effective as a training tool for clinicians, enabling them to complete an increased number of their required training hours in simulation rather than actual medical emergencies. This allows them to hone their skills in the real but safe environment of a simulation, whether this is, for instance, at the scene of a road traffic accident or of a procedure to be carried out in a simulation operating theatre.

The company makes a donation to the charity for each smots™ unit installed and, at the first anniversary of the scheme, in January 2009, just over £5,000 had been raised. The company intends to continue with its fundraising efforts this year.

Scotia UK is also building a closer relationship with air ambulance services in other countries and has just completed a project with the Finnish simulation centre which supports the country's HEMS (helicopter emergency medical service) training.

**GREAT WESTERN:** North Somerset's newest air ambulance is to move to 7-day working from April. The operation started work as a five-days-a-week operation in June last year using a new generation Eurocopter EC135T2 helicopter [G-SPHU] but was unable to use it on Sundays and Mondays because it is a primary police spare for the Bond Air Services Ltd [BASL] leased fleet [as back-up to South and East Wales and Strathclyde]. It was also unusual in that it retained its blue and yellow police colour rather than the customary red or yellow.

But, as the fundraisers of many start-up operations will testify, another problem with commencing operations with new generation aircraft is that they cost considerably more and unduly test the capabilities of a new fundraising team. At the time BASL were unable to offer a cheaper alternative from their fleet. That situation has now improved and from April Great Western will relinquish the EC135 for a BO105 and operate every day of the week. That move means the charity can save about £300,000 a year and still operate daily. Although the BO105 is smaller and slower it will not adversely affect the overall performance; the crew and stretcher complement will remain the same and the speed advantage in air ambulance work is insignificant. It is hoped that downsizing to the Bolkow for a year will allow the fundraisers time to get fundraising to a level whereby they can again move up to an EC135 on a seven days a week basis.

**NORTH WEST:** That 2009 'Bare in the Air' calendar that supposedly caused so much of a stir and 'hurt feelings' with its scantily clad stars has led to another plus point for the charity.

Television show host and helicopter pilot Noel Edmonds has been helping to boost the fortunes of the NWAA in obtaining a terrestrial back-up for the helicopter during periods of bad weather. A new television programme hosted by Edmonds on Sky TV features the former



DJ and his team of helpers as they inspire viewers to make enduring contributions to life in Britain. In one edition, the work of the air ambulance was highlighted before a £35,000 rapid response Cherokee Jeep and £1,000 in cash was handed over. The cash is for new flying suits and boots.

It is said that NWAAs were chosen above other potential recipient air ambulance operations after TV executives saw the calendar. Another instance where it proves that there is no such thing as bad PR. [Westmorland Gazette]

**SURREY:** The rescue of an injured horse rider was delayed when an air ambulance was ordered off the property of Sheikh Mohammed Al Maktoum, the Prime Minister and leader of Dubai.

The Sheikh, who has an estimated fortune of £9 billion and is married to International Equestrian Federation (FEI) president Princess Haya of Jordan, keeps tight security at his Longcross House Estate in Surrey.

The air ambulance crew had landed and were about to cut through the 6ft security fencing to reach the injured rider on the neighbouring Chobham Common [which they are legally allowed to do], when they were stopped by security guards and told to leave.

A 20 minute delay in the pick-up was caused while the crew took-off, sought another landing site and then made their way to the unconscious rider. The woman was already being attended to by paramedics. [Horse & Hound]

## UNITED STATES

**NATIONAL:** The Association of Air Medical Services (AAMS) has been invited to participate in upcoming National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) hearings that will examine the safety of medical helicopters. The hearings, scheduled for February 3-6 in Washington, DC, are being held in response to an increase in fatal medical helicopter crashes in the past year.

To assist in that effort, AAMS has taken several proactive steps, including coordinating meetings between the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and air medical industry aviation experts, and holding a full-day Safety Summit last July aimed at identifying and incorporating effective cultural and operational safety enhancements.

As part of its continuing investigations into nine helicopter emergency medical services (HEMS) accidents the National Transportation Safety Board opened public dockets on January 15. The nine events are:

1. *December 3, 2007, Eurocopter BK117C1 N141LG, crashed into the ocean about 3 miles east of Whittier, Alaska.*
2. *December 30, 2007, Bell 206L-3, N109AE, crashed while manoeuvring near Cherokee, Alabama.*
3. *February 5, 2008, Eurocopter AS350B2 N911VA, impacted water on Laguna Madre near South Padre Island, Texas.*
4. *May 10, 2008, Eurocopter EC 135 T2+ N135UW, destroyed during an in-flight collision with trees and terrain near La Crosse, Wisconsin.*
5. *June 8, 2008, Bell 407 EMS helicopter, N416PH, destroyed when it impacted a heavily forested area in the Sam Houston National Forest, south of Huntsville, Texas.*
6. *June 29, 2008, Bell 407 N407GA, and Bell 407 N407MJ, collided in mid air while approaching the Flagstaff Medical Center helipad, Flagstaff, Arizona.*
7. *August 31, 2008, Bell 206L-1 N37AE, destroyed during an in-flight collision with terrain and post impact fire near Greensburg, Indiana.*
8. *September 27, 2008, Eurocopter AS365N1, N92MD, impacted trees and terrain in Walker Mill Regional Park, District Heights, Maryland.*
9. *October 15, 2008, Bell 222 helicopter, N992AA, destroyed when it impacted a radio station tower and the ground in Aurora, Illinois.*

The information being released on five of these nine investigations is factual in nature and does not provide any analysis. It will include investigative group factual reports, interview

transcripts, and other documents from the investigation. Additional material will be added to the dockets as it becomes available. The public may view and download the docket contents via the NTSB web site at [www.nts.gov](http://www.nts.gov), under the "FOIA Reading Room" link on the home page. Analysis of the accidents, along with conclusions and a determination of probable cause, will come at a later date when the final reports on the investigations are completed.

Final reports on four of these investigations, including the probable cause, and brief analysis are released. These are 1, 2, 3, and 5 above.

**CALIFORNIA:** In the wake of a recent collision between two EMS Bell 407 helicopters in Arizona the ongoing efforts by the California Association of Air Medical Services, in pressing California hospitals to keep better track of incoming and outgoing flights have been highlighted. Not everyone has been getting the message though and some hospitals remain unaware of the dangers. Some helicopter landing pads can get very busy at peak times and a repeat collision can only be designed out.

Overall, it's very safe but steps need to be taken to make air medical transport even safer. Two areas that need improvement are air-to-air communications and hospital monitoring of helicopter landing sites. Jim Adams, the CEO of operator REACH is worried about the number of public agencies that put helicopters in the air that don't have the same radio equipment, use the same frequencies or answer to the same dispatch systems as private medical helicopters. [Bee]

**FLORIDA:** The somewhat chequered career of the primary air asset of the St. Lucie County Fire District (SLCFD) has resumed with the return to operations of an Agusta A119 Koala helicopter. SLCFD and Omniflight Helicopters announced the return of the Agusta last month following an extensive refurbishment. The helicopter provides a medical emergency capability throughout the counties of St. Lucie, Okeechobee, Martin and Indian River.



Omniflight and SLCFD entered into an agreement for the provision of air medical services in early 2008, at which time, Omniflight purchased the Agusta A-119 from the previous owner St Lucie County Sheriff. Contemporary reports suggest that the sheriff had decided he could no longer provide pilotage and engineering support for the Agusta although they continued to fly Bell helicopters.

A Koala N911SL c/n 14022 was purchased by the police for multi-service operations in May 2002 but they crashed it a month later while lifting off from a hospital pad – the cause was a tail rotor failure and a newer aircraft was swiftly supplied by the manufacturers in April 2003 by a similarly registered machine – the current one c/n 14028. This aircraft was involved in

another contact with the ground on August 4, 2005 and received damage to the tail boom. The extent of the damage is unclear – it does not appear as a recorded NTSB accident – or whether it returned to service but nominally it was flown until 2007 when it was decided to pass the operation over to the arrangement with Omniflight becoming N511SL a year ago. At the change the FAA required a complete mechanical review of the helicopter and certification. The refurbishment was performed to conform to Omniflight's certificate specifications and, despite its relative youth at that time to update the helicopter to feature current technologies.

Notable changes include equipping it with Night Vision Goggle (NVG) instruments, the capacity to increase speed, with the maximum speed of 152 knots/175 mph; and an additional maximum lift capacity, at 6,283 lbs, satellite tracking and communications.

St Lucie County Fire District is the eighth largest Fire-Rescue Department in the State of Florida, serving more than 276,000 residents. Prior to the arrangement with Omniflight, SLCFD and the SLC Sheriff's Office supplied services through funding provided by local taxes. Under the new partnership, the aircraft owned and maintained by Omniflight derives its funding from user-based fees, typically covered by most insurance plans. [NTSB/Media/PAR] *Ed: The Koala gave up its marks N911SL to allow that identity to pass to a 'new' aircraft for St Lucie County Sheriff – a DoD surplus Bell OH-58A [71-20390] - last summer. It is tempting to wonder whether the new Agusta proved too much of a handful for the Sheriff's department to support. The Agusta replaced a Bell 206 and after it arrived they gave away another OH-58, this subsequent further acquisition of a Bell does raise questions.*

GEORGIA: Last month Air Methods Corporation they had entered into a definitive purchase agreement to acquire Omniflight, Inc.'s Rescue Air operations in Atlanta and North Georgia. The transfer of ownership is expected to occur on February 1. The purchase price to be paid is based on a risk-sharing model and is contingent on results of future operations. The consolidation is expected to support the long-term viability of these critical air medical services through realized efficiencies from base combinations.

Effective as of the closing date, the current operating bases of Air Methods and Rescue Air 1 will be consolidated into six, to be located in Covington, Gainesville, Griffin, Kennesaw, Newnan, and a sixth base serving the I-75 and I-575 corridors. Under the transaction agreements, the medical personnel at all six bases will be employed by Air Methods. Three bases will operate under the Emory Flight name currently utilized by Air Methods, and the related pilots and mechanics will be employed by Air Methods. The other three bases will operate under the name Rescue Air, and Air Methods will contract with Omniflight for the aviation services at these three locations. All six bases will operate Eurocopter AS350 single-engine aircraft.

IDAHO: Omniflight Helicopters is introducing a fixed-wing air ambulance to Idaho Falls, Idaho. and will open a new base there this month. The service is being launched to augment the company's current rotor-wing operation in Idaho Falls based at Eastern Idaho Regional Medical Center (EIRMC). Both are to serve patients throughout Idaho, Montana, Wyoming and Utah.

The fixed-wing operation will base a Pilatus PC-12 single-engine aircraft at 1940 International Way in Idaho Falls. The PC-12 has an outstanding safety record and is quickly becoming the aircraft of choice in the air medical industry. It is equipped with a cargo door, which allows for the transport of larger patients and those whose conditions might prevent them from being loaded into a standard aircraft. The PC-12 also boasts a spacious cabin for maximum patient comfort. Omniflight operates spare PC-12's to ensure continuity of service. The fixed-wing aircraft will be the only one in the region dedicated to medical transports, being certified for flight under IFR, the PC-12 can fly even when helicopter service is unavailable. [O]

ILLINOIS: Attorneys for the family of 14-month-old Kirstin Blockinger - the girl killed in the crash of the October 15 medevac helicopter have launched a lawsuit against Air Angels, its parent company Reach Medical Holdings, and the estate of 69-year-old pilot Del Waugh, who also died when the chopper went down.

The lawsuit alleges Air Angels and Reach Medical failed to follow federal recommendations for medical helicopter flights, including the use of a terrain warning and awareness system and a risk assessment program. Attorneys said such provisions, as well as a two-pilot team at the controls, would have prevented the crash.

The lawsuit comes less than three months after the crash that killed Kirstin, Waugh and Air Angels crew members Ron Battiato and William Mann. A preliminary report by the NTSB offers no immediate explanation why the Bell 222 helicopter crashed.

## SEARCH AND RESCUE

### INTERNATIONAL

From today February 1, 2009, the EPIRB (Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon) a fast effective way of distress alerting for any kind of vessel are facing a major change.

Satellite processing of beacons on older model analogue EPIRBs that only transmit on 121.5 or 243 MHz. is ceasing and search and rescue organisations will only receive distress alerts broadcast using digital 406 MHz Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacons.

The 406 EPIRB's signal is 50 times more powerful than the 121.5 beacon's, allowing satellites to better detect its signal and provide a more accurate search area for rescue crews. With 121.5 beacons, an initial position uncertainty can result in a 500 square mile search area, where the digital beacon reduces the initial search area to 25 square miles. A GPS-embedded 406 EPIRB can shrink a search area to about 100 yards and can also pinpoint the position of a distressed mariner within minutes and reduce the number of false alerts.

Satellites are not capable of distinguishing between beacon and non-beacon sources using analogue frequencies, making only about one in five alerts actually coming from a beacon. Many false alert signals come from such diverse sources as ATMs, pizza ovens and stadium scoreboards. Hitherto the only way to determine if an alert is an emergency is to send rescue crews to the area at great cost in time and resources.



### CANADA

SAR: Vector Aerospace Helicopter Services North America (Vector) has received confirmation of contract renewal from Bell Helicopters to provide support to Canadian Department of National Defense CH-146 Griffon [aka Bell 412HP] SAR helicopters. The contract renewal extends the term into March, 2010.

Operating out of 8 Wing, Trenton Ontario, Vector provides flight line servicing on four CH-146 helicopters employed in SAR operations throughout Eastern Canada. Vector has provided this essential service to the DND since taking on the initial contract in June, 2007.

Vector also conducts inspection and maintenance services on Griffon helicopters annually from its facility located in Langley, BCa. As well, Vector provides repair and overhaul for the Canadian CH-124 Sea King fleet (engines, gearboxes, transmissions and dynamic components) from its main repair and overhaul facility in Richmond, BC. [Vector]



## MALAYSIA

AgustaWestland has announced the sale of two AW139 helicopters to the Malaysian Fire and Rescue Department (Bomba). The aircraft will be used to perform fire fighting, search and rescue, land reconnaissance and general support duties. The contract also includes conversion training for aircrew and maintenance staff which will be undertaken prior to delivery of the aircraft in the first half of 2010. The Bomba order for the AW139 follows the order placed by the Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency for three aircraft plus options in October 2008. The AW139s will supplement the two AgustaWestland AW109 Power helicopters that have been successfully operating with the Bomba since 2004.

## UNITED KINGDOM

**SEARCH & RESCUE:** Prince William started his flying training with the Royal Air Force last month. He officially transferred from the British Army into the RAF in the rank of Flight Lieutenant. He will begin training at the Defence Helicopter Flying School (DHFS) at RAF Shawbury which will form part of his training to become an RAF SAR pilot. .

Flight Lieutenant Wales will start his helicopter training on 705 Squadron flying the single-engine AS350 Squirrel helicopter. He will complete an initial period of training to refresh his previously learned skills followed by a package of instruction which will enable him to meet the entry standards of 60 Squadron where he will fly the Bell 412 Griffin. Flight Lieutenant Wales will complete exactly the same syllabus as his fellow course mates. During this time he will also complete some specialist training on the SARTU at RAF Valley. After completing training at Shawbury with DHFS, Flight Lieutenant Wales will continue his training to become a SAR pilot on the Sea King at RAF Valley.



# INDUSTRY BRIEFS

Illinois based **Frasca International** concluded 2008, their 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary year, with record sales, technology advances and growth.

Frasca delivered an average of one simulator per week in 2008 for a total of 54 devices delivered. Eleven Frasca FTDs were qualified in 2008 with more pending. These included three FAA Level 6 helicopter FTDs, the first Level 6 helicopter FTDs under the FAA's new part 60 regulations. Nine FTDs were delivered to the Iraqi Air Force. During 2008, construction began on two Full Flight Simulators at the Frasca factory. For more information on Frasca equipment visit the Frasca website at: [www.frasca.com](http://www.frasca.com)

**Microturbo** has just successfully started up the e-APU on the test bed. These initial tests are a significant step towards completion of the programme, for which the milestones have been completed on schedule. This new auxiliary power unit concept is specially designed to meet the requirements of new generation business aircraft and helicopters which will need more electrical power.

This first start-up marks the beginning of the test campaign which was initiated last December at the Microturbo facility in Toulouse. The core engine, installed on a special bench, reached its nominal speed on December 31, 2008. The analysis of the results of these initial tests confirms the good dynamic behaviour of the machine, in compliance with objectives set during the design phase. This test program will continue throughout 2009 in order to validate the performance of the unit on the ground and at altitude (reaching 51,000 feet in flight with a start-up ceiling of 41,000 feet), and also its mechanical and vibratory performance. The e-APU has already been retained for two programs. Its complete certification and first production deliveries are scheduled for early 2012.



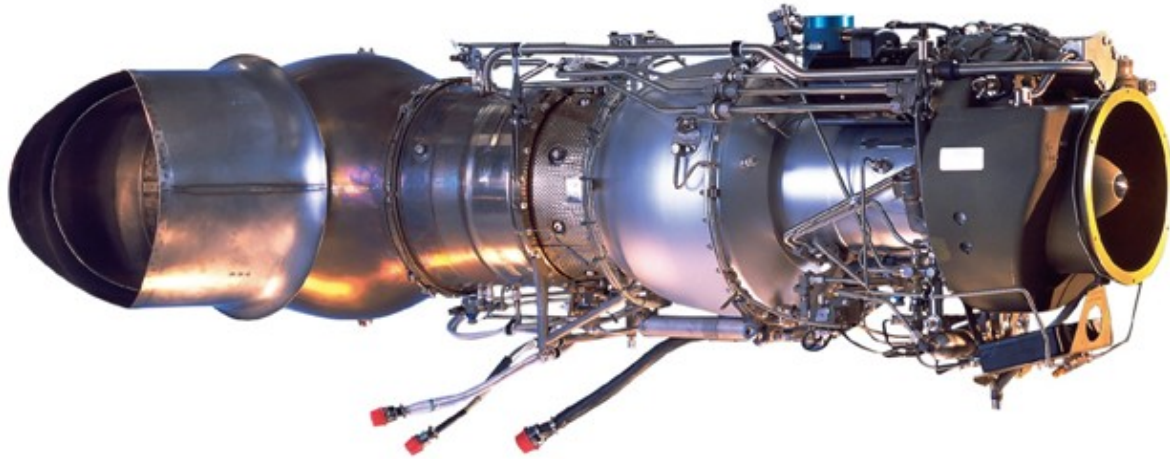
**Vector Aerospace** Helicopter Services North America (Vector) has announced it is now capable of providing complete paint services for operators utilising light to medium helicopters, from its Langley, British Columbia facility.

Having this resource in-house allows Vector to better ensure quality and improve turn-around times; two areas they deem critical in addressing customer requirements. This new capability compliments existing in-house paint capabilities located at Vector's Alabama location. Vector provides repair and overhaul services from state-of-the-art facilities located across North America.

Products supported include: Rolls Royce model 250, Pratt & Whitney PT6T, Turbomeca Arriel 1, General Electric T700 / CT7 and T-58/CT-58 engines; dynamic components for most Bell helicopter models, as well as the Sikorsky S61 and S76 / Eurocopter AS350 and AS355 model helicopters; structures support for Bell, Sikorsky and Eurocopter products, and full-service avionics capability, up to and including glass cockpit installations.

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





In December, **Turbomeca** and the Turkish Ministry of Defence signed a contract for setting up a repair centre for the Turbomeca Makila 1A1 turbo shaft engine [above] equipping the 50 Cougar helicopters operated by the Turkish Army.

This new repair centre is based at Eskişehir, in the Tusas Engine Industries, governmental repair complex. It offers up to level 4 repairs for the Makila 1A1 engines installed on the Turkish Cougar helicopters acquired in the 1990's and significantly reinforces in house capability increasing its autonomy. [Turbomeca]

The **US Coast Guard** exercised contract options valued at \$13.25M to install mission systems aboard two additional **Lockheed HC-130J** aircraft. Once delivered, these aircraft will complete the Coast Guard's planned inventory of six role equipped HC-130Js.

The aircraft's new mission equipment and sensor packages deliver enhanced search, detection and tracking capabilities in maritime search and rescue, law enforcement and homeland security missions. The mission system draws upon technology that was developed for the EADS/CASA CN235 based HC-144A maritime patrol aircraft and its mission system pallet. The aircraft modifications include installation of belly-mounted surface search radar, which provides superior visibility and 360-degree coverage to assist in SAR missions. Modifications also include a nose-mounted EO/IR imaging system, a flight deck mission operator station and a mission integrated communication system.

The Lockheed Martin mission system on the HC-130J is integrated into the flight area, which allows for the operators to directly coordinate with the rest of the flight crew when responding to critical missions. And unlike the HC-144A pallet solution, the HC-130J configuration leaves the cargo space fully useable.

Three years after a contract was signed with Eurocopter, the **IGE+XAO Group** have announced a very significant contract with Airbus. This new agreement covers the supply of the IGE+XAO Group's PLM offer (Product Life-cycle Management) dedicated to Electrical Engineering. This software suite named SEE Electrical Harness PLM, encompasses most of the electrical engineering process, from the definition of electrical equipment to the automatic generation of electrical harnesses and wiring diagrams.

This contract made up of several stages for which deliveries commenced from the 4th quarter 2008 and will run through until the end of 2011. Their value could reach nearly €5M [US\$6M]. This amount includes the SEE Electrical Harness PLM software licences as well as the development and associated services. IGE+XAO are currently working on the first stage which represents an already received purchase order of €1.3 M.

For Alain Di Crescenzo, Chairman and CEO of the IGE+XAO Group: "this new contract emphasizes the relevance and maturity of the Group PLM offer in the aeronautics and space markets. Thus, IGE+XAO appears more and more as a worldwide leader in the fields of Computer-Aided Design and PLM dedicated to Electrical Engineering." [www.ige-xao.com](http://www.ige-xao.com)

In its own small way the mini-UAV continues to make inroads into air support of the emergency services across the UK.

The latest moves within the industry include confirmation that the West Midlands Fire Service has now adopted the Microdrone MD4-200, which they refer to as ISIS, on a permanent basis.

Elsewhere the Health and Safety Executive have recently upgraded their **Microdrone MD4-200** system to include Waypoint Navigation with fully and semi autonomous flight modes. They are especially interested in the 'teach function', which operates in the semi-autonomous mode so they can repeat previous routes exactly with different sensors including an Air Sampler that is in development.



MW Power, the UK agents for the system are to show a new man portable 'military' spec MD4-200 at CX2009 the 13<sup>th</sup> Specialist Security Technical Show, Charing Cross Hotel, London, UK early this month. Besides being man portable the military spec system is configured to extend flight time with increased wind, range and communications capabilities. A few later the same system will be at Terror Expo in London, shown in conjunction with Earle International, with whom MW Power now export to customers in the Middle East, and Chemsafe/Hazmat 2009. More details are on the NEWS pages of [www.mwpower.co.uk](http://www.mwpower.co.uk) Compared with the level of take-up in the UK this technology remains muted by regulations in the US but if anything freer in many other parts of the world.

And it seems that even as others in the law enforcement world falter in the use of these small craft criminals may already be ahead of the game..

Staff at **Her Majesty's Prison** [HMP] Elmley in Sheerness, Kent, were surprised to see a tiny aircraft flying over the walls late at night just before Christmas. A small package strapped to the underside is thought to have been carrying contraband such as drugs or possibly a mobile phone into the category C jail.

Officers picked out the distinctive outline of the toy helicopter during a routine CCTV sweep but failed to find it in a subsequent search. The Prison Service confirmed that the incident had taken place but offered no explanation.

*Ed: Well, we do not know whether this was an actual operation or just a trial run, but it's good to know that there are no restrictions on criminal classes flying these mere toys regularly so that they can build up their skill levels to a point where they can contemplate such a mission!*

*In the USA the paranoia is such that it has been declared that if a law enforcement official were to undertake similar ad-hoc training it would be deemed an illegal activity.*

And so the sophistication of these 'toys' grows. The latest a model helicopter is barely a toy but its price is toy-like.. The 4-channel offering from **DigiTronics** flies 2,000 feet high and up to a mile away, transmits streaming video to your laptop, runs 20 minutes on a battery charge, even has infrared night vision capability, and it was selling for just \$299 during a recent event [CES] but is now available from their website at an equally low \$499.



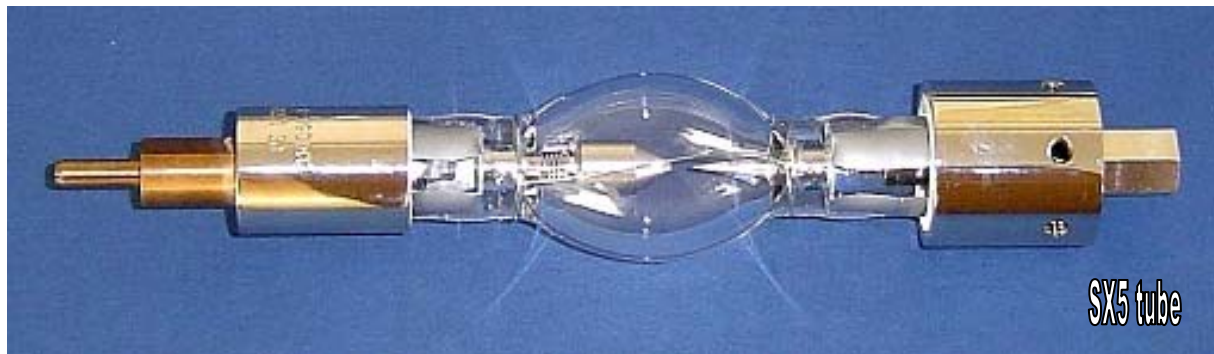
One reviewer of this 365 gram [12 ounces] craft – which looks like an MD520 with twin contra-rotating main rotors - reckons this toy flies like helicopters costing far more and it has automatic flight features that let it hover without any input from the operator.

<http://www.digitronics.com/ProductDetail.asp?ProductID=544>

Beyond that, **Taiyo Co. Ltd**, a company in Japan is offering a helicopter that responds to voice commands. Sales are to start in late March.

The company is aiming for sales in the region of 100,000 units, targeting middle-aged men who would play with the toy with their children. It responds to both Japanese and English. Unlike the DigiTronics machine this craft is envisaged to be operating very close to the operator – not much more than 10 metres (33 feet).

During the period August to December last year 57 **Agusta** helicopters were added to the market. In the equivalent period in 2007 there were just 12 Agusta's added to the market. This 375 percent increase is a significant change in the market that will undoubtedly be adversely affected by the recent 'Credit Crunch' downturn.



California based **Universal Light Source, Inc.** Of 1553 Folsom St. San Francisco, [ULS] has been supplying replacement bulbs for the popular Spectrolab SX series searchlights worldwide but has experienced great difficulty breaking into the European market, especially the UK. ULS have a replacement for the Nightsun 2 and although it is less expensive than that sourced from the manufacturer it will not solve the inherent issues with the equipment or software.

ULS supplied PAN with examples of what they can do for potential customers. The OEM typically charges around US\$1,400 for an SX-16 lamp and the comparable ULS price for the end user is \$1,050. The smaller SX5 lamp is \$1,220 from the OEM and \$975 from ULS. Bryan Ascher from the company told PAN 'We have had terrific feedback, repeat orders at a less expensive price with a slightly better warranty. Mr. Ascher says "we understand that agencies like to have a spare on hand so when a lamp goes out they do not have to wait for a purchase order to be authorised, hope that the OEM has lamps in stock and pay expedited freight charges to lessen the down time for that aircraft. With that in mind we have structured our warranty so it does not begin until the lamp is installed on the aircraft. This allows them to have the lamp when they need it most without eating up valuable warranty time".

If you want to know more you can browse their web site at [www.ulsi.net](http://www.ulsi.net) or contact Brian direct on +1 415.279.7205 E-mail [bascher@ulsi.net](mailto:bascher@ulsi.net)



Following the contract signed between **Eurocopter** and the Brazilian Army and Navy for 50 EC 725 helicopters to be delivered between 2010 and 2016, Turbomeca do Brasil will be the partner of the local military forces, providing notably support for the Makila 2A engines.

The Makila 2A engines, powering the twin engine EC 725 helicopter, will be assembled, tested and overhauled at Turbomeca do Brasil, Rio de Janeiro.

The first Makila 2A engine, assembled and tested in Turbomeca do Brasil, is intended to be delivered in June 2010.

Created in 2002, the Turbomeca do Brasil repair center overhauls and repairs the Arrius, Arriel and Makila engines that equip the majority of the Eurocopter Ecureuil, EC 135, Super Puma and Dauphin helicopters.

Despite the current uncertainties in the markets and tumbling sales figures **Cessna Aircraft** continues to move forward on new product development projects including the Citation Columbus, the Citation CJ4 and the Model 162 SkyCatcher. Cessna remain committed to investing in these projects, aircraft development, facility construction and human resources to meet schedules.

The Citation Columbus was formally launched about one year ago and is planned to enter service with customers in 2014. The Citation CJ4, the newest member of the popular CJ series of light business jets, is well into certification testing and is expected to enter service early next year. The SkyCatcher Light Sport Aircraft is nearing final ASTM compliance certification and deliveries are planned to begin later this year.



In recent months the Royal Air Force has been conducting surveillance operations with Airborne Sensing's DA42MPP [Multi-Purpose Platform] in the UK and other parts of the world. In excess of 1,000 hours has already been completed with these aircraft.

The Austrian produced **Diamond** DA42MPP is a modern composite low maintenance aircraft, powered by two turbocharged JETA1 fuel engines, with a total fuel flow of 4.4 US gallons per hour. It has already been offered as a police and Homeland Security platform but this UK military requirement for Afghanistan is taking the lead.

The aircraft has the de-icing option enabling flight in known icing conditions, an oxygen system rated to 18,000ft, TCAS and a passive surveillance kit. The latter lowers aircraft noise, thermal signature and daylight recognition to a stealth level, allowing the DA42 to operate in a very wide range of flight and weather conditions.

When operating in the surveillance role the DA42 can offer an loiter endurance of up to 13 hours, or a range of 1,200nm.

No detail of the exact RAF aircraft role fit has been released, however the MPP is designed to carry a gyro-stabilized daylight and thermal video camera including the L3 Wescam MX15i, the FSI Star Safire III or the Polytech Ultra Force 350 transmitting images via a line-of-sight downlink system. A variety of radio fits is available.

After the success of the four months of operational trials in all-weather conditions the RAF



	<b>PRAGUE 2009</b> 22-24 May incorporating HELI EXPO EUROPE
<a href="http://www.expo.aero/prague">www.expo.aero/prague</a> or <a href="http://www.expo.aero/london">www.expo.aero/london</a>	
	<b>LONDON 2009</b> 12-14 June incorporating HELI EXPO EUROPE

has purchased two aircraft Diamond Airborne Sensing expects to receive a follow-up order for six surveillance systems for operational use by 39 Squadron supplementing their UAV's and are also expected to take over some spy tasks from RAF Nimrods.

As the number of fixed wing overt UK police operations dwindles and the existing BN Islander/Defenders reduce in number it is the DA42 that is being proposed to them for the future. There are a number of now entrenched reasons why they might not return to fixed wing but the local dealership James Aviation feels that this massive endorsement for the type RAF should go some way towards persuading the doubters. [Cover Story]

**Dart Aerospace**, has received the updates to both the FAA and EASA certifications of its revolutionary Round-I-Beam™ Skidtube for the Eurocopter EC135 P2+/T2+. Previous issues of the FAA and EASA STC's listed EC 135P1/P2/T1/T2 models only. The Dart Round -I-Beam™ Skidtube has long been a staple in the rotary wing industry and has received recognition around the globe for providing a high quality, easy to install and durable skid tube solution. In recent years, The Round-I-Beam™ Skidtube technology is available on a variety of Bell and Eurocopter aircraft.

The EC 135 skidtube is up to 10 times more resistant to damage when compared to conventional tubes and comes complete with full length stainless steel wearplates that are installed with a protective rubber membrane that virtually eliminates any corrosion associated with the wearplates and the skidtubes. It is compatible with standard low and float landing gear and is pre-drilled and adaptable for compatibility with Apical Floats. The design also offers LH/RH inter-changeability.

In the two months since the 2008 Shephard **Police Aviation Conference** in London there have been a number of major changes in how the Shephard Group operates and they currently have no plans to operate a 2009 Police Aviation Conference [PAC]. It was originally intended that a PAC would travel to Eastern Europe to again sit alongside the Heli-Power Conference in Prague but barely a month after that was announced the plan was quietly dropped.

Another group, including the Editor, is looking to set up a replacement conference in 2009. It is hoped that this will be in Eastern Europe but all options are being looked at. Shephard has declared that this is only a temporary deletion of this conference theme. Although both versions of this event will still be termed as a Police Aviation Conference [PAC] the non-Shephard version will for clarity be termed as PAVCon.

		<b>ACPO-APA 2009</b> <b>Summer Conference &amp; International Policing Exhibition</b>
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[www.acpo-apa.co.uk/](http://www.acpo-apa.co.uk/) Manchester UK

DART affiliate partner, **John Cameron Aviation** has received Brazilian approval of their Auxiliary Side Locker Fuel Tank for AS350 series helicopters, adding to the Australian CASA and Transport Canada approvals already received.

The innovative design provides up to 25% of additional range allowing you to go direct to your destination. The Auxiliary Side Locker Fuel Tank easily installs into the left-hand side locker with minimal modification to the aircraft structure. The installation kit comes complete with its own electrical gauge and pump and can be swapped between helicopters within your fleet if required.

The Auxiliary Side Locker Fuel Tank has a capacity of 34 US gallons/ 129 litres of usable fuel and is fully approved for all flight roles; it can be easily installed or removed to meet the operational requirements of the helicopter.



Scott Bakker in who operates **Guardians from Above** a Cessna O-2 based SAR air operation in Brookings, Oregon is marketing two new Nationally recognised tools for SAR and Homeland Security missions. The newcomers are a public address system for air and ground assets that can be heard twice the distance as any other system on the market and an airborne data link to send pictures and email from aircraft. Contact Scott for details [www.guardiansfromabove.com/](http://www.guardiansfromabove.com/)

**L & D Helicopters**, near neighbours of the Greater Manchester Police Air Support at City Airport Manchester [aka Barton, Eccles] are offering for sale a former police helicopter. The 28-year old Eurocopter/MBB/Bolkow BO105DB4 G-BTKL is on offer for £299,000 with a C of A that runs out next month. Despite its length of service – working with police aircraft that regularly notched up around 1,000 hours pa this 105 has a total time of just 7,963hrs and the engines have similar times. The Bolkow has only had one owner since arriving in the UK 16 years ago. That one owner has operated the helicopter from Cardiff Heliport in South Wales primarily in support of AS355 police operations of the South & East Wales consortium [South Wales Police and Gwent Police] but also saw brief service in sup-



port of a number of other operations including British Transport Police through Railtrack. Although the days of the 105 in UK air support are now long past it is being offered complete with its original LEO2 stabilised dual sensor police specification camera pod and other role specific equipment [searchlight, stretcher kit and load hook].

S422 arrived at Bond Rotortech in the UK in May 1991 as D-HDMU. It was first noted in police use with the Central Counties AOU in August 1991 initially used as a stand by aircraft via Veritair/British International then it became the prime aircraft from 1993 to 1996 when replaced by the new AS355F. It regularly operated with South & East Wales [1996-2000] and British Transport Police in the years since. Attempts have been made to sell it on since 2000.

L & D Helicopters is to produce a free monthly on-line magazine shortly. The magazine will be sent to all airfields in the north-west area of the UK and will take low cost advertising. The magazine will feature sales, spares, service items. [www.ldhelicopters.co.uk](http://www.ldhelicopters.co.uk)

When **Skyquest** Aviation Ltd, specialists in the integration of a range of specialist airborne surveillance equipment wanted a new film to promote their service they demanded that the end product exhibited no less than BBC quality. So they turned to Beeston Media. Director Hamish Beeston [right] is a veteran of popular UK TV shows such as Life of Grime and Vets in Practice. His company's mission is to make the primetime television 'look' readily available to industry.

"We only use top broadcast equipment and techniques," says Hamish. "And we're careful to balance information with entertainment. There's no reason for corporate video to be dry."

Indeed, watching the new Skyquest film feels like sitting down to an episode of a high-energy police documentary drama. It features a live mission with the Greater Manchester Police Air Support Unit, yet still packs in vital information about the Video Management System (VMS) that it's promoting.

Geoff Turner, Skyquest's Marketing Director has fully embraced the power of video:

"Why risk sending a room to sleep with a lecture when you can entertain them with a film?" says Geoff. "It does the selling for you, leaving you to answer specific questions at the end."

Commissioning a film is now surprisingly cost-effective, and can be cheaper than a run of glossy brochures. It can also be turned around incredibly fast.

The film has proved a real hit, and has been viewed everywhere from the U.S to Malaysia. You can watch the new Skyquest VMS film on the producers website at:

[www.beestonmedia.com/screeningroom/play.php?name=SkyGMPfinal](http://www.beestonmedia.com/screeningroom/play.php?name=SkyGMPfinal)



# ACCIDENTS & INCIDENTS

**15 November 2008 Eurocopter EC135P2 N534LN.** Air ambulance of Air Methods Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky operated by Air Methods. During the routine aircraft check a smokey odor was noted by the pilot while the aircraft was shut down on the helipad. It was found that the approved 1 TOUCH heater appeared to have a heat damaged connection. This had subsequently tripped the breaker from the earth line. The heater was set at 900W and the a/c outlet was rated at 1200W. Aircraft inspected and placed back in service. [Concern]

**4 December 2008 Cessna 406 Caravan 2 G-MAFB.** Directflight. Whilst operating from Humberside *low propeller RPM resulted in a rejected take-off.* Max torque was applied at the beginning of the take-off roll but acceleration was slower than normal and was accompanied by a propeller beating noise. The take-off was rejected and the a/c taxied clear of the runway. A propeller overspeed test was carried out, during which the propeller failed to attain 1900 RPM. The a/c was shut down, then restarted and the tests performed again with satisfactory results. The a/c then departed and the flight proceeded without further incident. Subsequent investigation revealed an issue with the propeller overspeed governor test switch. [CAA]

**4 December 2008 Eurocopter EC135T1 G-CCAU.** Central Counties Air Operations. When landing and with collective lowered, a loud bang with severe tail rotor vibration and continued banging was noted. It was subsequently found that the scissor/driving link had detached. [CAA]

**30 December 2008 Eurocopter AS350B2 N546AM.** Air ambulance of Air Methods Kentucky, Lexington, KY. Helicopter at the hospital helipad at Hazard ARH with the crew just having loaded a patient and preparing for takeoff. Upon initiation of startup the PIC found that the aircraft would not start. Troubleshooting techniques still left the aircraft unable to start. Another aircraft completed the patient mission. The fault was cleared on site and the aircraft flown to the primary base helipad in Hazard where the switch and starter generator were replaced. [Concern]

**5 January 2009 Bell 206L N401PH.** Air ambulance of Hendricks Regional Health PHI Air Medical Helicopter with four aboard made an emergency landing in a vacant lot off US 231 South and State Road 28 in Romney, in Tippecanoe County, Indiana. It was undertaking a transfer picked up at St. Clare Medical Center in Crawfordsville and was headed to St. Elizabeth Medical Center in Lafayette. [Concern]

**12 January 2009 Eurocopter BK117 N117NC.** Air ambulance of UNC Carolina Air Care, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, operated by Air Methods. Returning cruise flight from outlying hospital heard a bump. Suspected bird strike to lower right skid area as pilot and Flight Nurse saw a dark object briefly pass off right lower side of aircraft. Bird remains found adhered to top of the tail boom, just below the anti-collision light. Two dents found at this point. [Concern]

**17 January 2009 Eurocopter AS350 N350BH.** Air ambulance. Baptist Hospital, Little Rock, Arkansas. The helicopter en-route from Memphis to Little Rock made an emergency landing in an intersection near Widener/Forest City following a bird strike. No patients were on board. The pilot suffered minor injuries and two other crew members were uninjured. The aircraft suffered a smashed r/h screen and the large bird was impaled in a substantial hole punched in the nose. [Media]

**19 January 2009 Eurocopter BK117 N.** Air ambulance of Mayo Clinic. The weather forced the helicopter to make an emergency landing in an Eau Claire County field just off County Highway II in Eau Claire. The helicopter was transporting a patient from Luther-Midelfort to Rochester, Minnesota. [Media]

**20 January 2009 MDHI MD369E N369PD.** Atlanta Police Department. While on landing pad on the ground in Atlanta the main rotor blade struck the tail boom. [FAA]

**24 January 2009 AgustaWestland AW139 VH-???** Air ambulance. Whilst en-route to an incident and overflying Liverpool, Sydney, a crew member attempted to open a window to

provide ventilation. The window fell out, the flight was cancelled and returned to base. The aircraft was grounded. [DT]

**25 January 2009 Eurocopter BK117 N.** Air ambulance PennStar medical helicopter was grounded all day Sunday in the parking lot in front of a Sears Store in the Towamencin Village Shopping Center, Lansdale, Pennsylvania. The helicopter had just taken off with patient injured in a two vehicle crash at Derstine Road and Kimberly Way when it experienced a mechanical problem with its main rotor and returned safely to the landing zone. [Media]

## PEOPLE

Becker Avionics Inc., has announced that **Markus Schmitz** has joined the Becker team as Vice President of Strategy and Business Development. Markus will be responsible for developing and implementing corporate business strategies and partnerships for the North and South American aviation markets.

Prior to joining the Becker Avionics Team, Markus consulted for several Aviation clients and held management positions with Eurocopter in Europe and the US. With a Masters in Engineering and Business and over 10 years of international aviation management experience Markus brings strong process, organizational and management expertise to the Becker Avionics organization. [www.beckerusa.com](http://www.beckerusa.com)

**Jon Ker**, a Great North Air Ambulance paramedic suffered severe injuries in a microlight aircraft crash one year ago and is only now getting somewhere near fit to return to flying with the HEMS operation. The latest blow is to learn that his employers have sacked him. Jon was a passenger to pilot Jim Martin and pilot with the same operation, the difference is that the pilot is employed by PDG Helicopters and not the air ambulance charity. Both were badly injured in the accident.

While Jim was laid-off as long ago as last March in a personal visit from his bosses Jon was sacked by letter last week by the Great North Air Ambulance on the verge of his return. The air ambulance kept Mr Ker's job open for a year before sacking him. They were unable to find a doctor willing to declare him fit to work. [Cumberland]

**Nancy Bird** the first woman in Australia to gain a CPL died in Sydney last month at the age of 93. Charles Kingsford Smith didn't approve of women flying, and most Australian men and women didn't expect women to fly but that did not stop the aspirations of Nancy Bird to fly and she became one of Kingsford Smith's first students way back in 1933, when she was 17. She became the first woman pilot in Australia with a licence to carry passengers. Seventy-five years later Qantas named the airline's first A380 super-jumbo after Nancy-Bird, as she became widely and fondly known.

Nancy-Bird's name is synonymous with Australia's aviation history. Her achievements on the ground and in the air have inspired generations of women. She had been a trailblazer for women pilots, after undertaking joyrides at country fairs and race meetings she was hired by the Far West Children's Health Scheme to fly nurses to the bush and patients to hospitals. She carried out some of the first medical evacuations in regional NSW.

The Chairman of the last three Shephard Police Aviation Conferences in London and Den Haag, **Gareth Davies**, has joined the L3 Wescam marketing team as their Director Business Development, Central and Eastern Europe. Those who have met him will know that he is a 'one-off' rare mixture of a bi-lingual Englishman with a very Welsh name currently occupying Germany and Austria. When he is not trading the ski-slopes in Austria [where he is

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an instructor] Gareth will be operating from Weidenerstrasse 5, 81737 Munich, Germany. You can contact him via Tel: +49 89 201 81 904 Fax: +49 89 201 81 093 Cell:+49 (0) 151 212 34 217 E-Mail: [Gareth.G.Davies@L-3com.com](mailto:Gareth.G.Davies@L-3com.com) Web: [www.wescam.com](http://www.wescam.com) but if you have an imaging need in Europe you can also expect to find him with the rest of the L3 team on the Wescam booth in Anaheim later this month.

## FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Repeating information carried in the January edition, readers should note that in late December the NBAA announced that economic conditions have led to the cancellation of the Asian Business Aviation Conference & Exhibition (ABACE) in 2009. The event was scheduled to take place in Hong Kong on February 11 and 12.

To add to that negative news late last month the **NBAA** announced that the programming and other elements from the anticipated 2009 Light Business Airplane Conference (LBA2009) will now be incorporated into the Association's 62<sup>nd</sup> Annual Meeting & Convention in Orlando, FL, scheduled for October 20 to 22, 2009.

The LBA event was originally scheduled to take place in San Diego next month but the state of the economy has caused NBAA to make adjustments that it believes will ensure maximum value for Attendees and Exhibitors.

### HAI 2009

Its time for the annual Helicopter Association International Heli-Expo later this month and a number of other 'plug-in' events have been added to the pre-event line-up to make use of the migration to the show. This year the event is being held in Anaheim south of Los Angeles opposite the gates of the original Walt Disney attraction.

**19-21 February 2009 Goodrich Hoist & Winch 2009 Users Conference.** Sheraton Park Hotel at the Anaheim Resort Goodrich Hoist and Winch Users Conference will focus on the users' operational experience with our 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 21, 2009.

**19-20 February 2009 Aerial Firefighting USA Conference** to take place in Anaheim, CA at the Crowne Plaza Hotel. The event is supported by UN-ISDR and the Global Fire Monitoring Center, and sponsored by Bombardier. Conference & Exhibition incorporating Fixed & Rotary Wing Aircraft and Unmanned Air Vehicles. Organised by Tangent Link. [www.tangentlink.com](http://www.tangentlink.com)

**20-21 February 2009 Honeywell Helicopter Operators Conference.** A mix of operators and press PR being held in the Anaheim Marriott, 700 W. Convention Way, Anaheim, CA 92802, USA

Preparation for **HELI-EXPO 2009** in Anaheim, California is well underway. Exhibitor registration has been open for more than three months and attendee registration for one month. All indicators point to another successful convention and exposition. This is the original and the world's largest helicopter gathering. Last year it was Houston, this year the venue is the Anaheim Convention Center in Anaheim, California, February 22 – 24.

HELI-EXPO is the world's largest event dedicated to the international helicopter community. Last year 17,373 aviation professionals, including more than 565 exhibiting companies, attended the show. Sixty-five helicopters shared the showroom floor, which featured avionics, accessories, components, and other related products.

A 'Full Registration' package includes entrance to the exhibit hall for all three days; admission to all forums, symposia, and workshops; access to all manufacturers' technical briefings; a one-year subscription to ROTOR magazine; a ticket to the Awards Banquet; and a canvas tote bag, compliments of Rolls-Royce. [www.heliexpo.com/register](http://www.heliexpo.com/register)



**Sikorsky Aircraft Corp.** will be exhibiting within what they claim is an exciting new booth design. They will announce a variety of news from across the company. Sikorsky and its subsidiaries will be located at Booth #1740, Hall B.

**DART Aerospace Ltd.**, Will be exhibiting a wide range of equipment on their vast booth area this year and much of it has appeared in the pages of PAN over the year. They will have their recently Canadian certified Comfort Seat for the Bell 205/212/214 series aircraft which eliminates the lumbar support and increases the comfort of the seat. The kit consists of a durable aerospace grade formed plastic seat bucket and covered seat cushions. The installation requires no permanent modification to the seat and uses the existing seat (Bell p/n 205-070-798-011/-101 or equivalent).

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All to be found at Booth #866 or on line at [www.darthelicopterservices.com](http://www.darthelicopterservices.com)

**Aerospace Filtration Systems, Inc. (AFS)** anticipates that the FAA will certify their Inlet Barrier Filter (IBF) system for the AgustaWestland AW139 helicopter shortly. With this new IBF solution from AFS, AW139 operators will enjoy reduced operating costs coupled with the best-engineered inlet protection available. Company officials anticipate STC certification in a matter of months with production kits available shortly thereafter. In conjunction with the AFS STC effort, AgustaWestland is also conducting a Type Certificate (TC) effort for the new filter system, making a TC option available on new production helicopters in the future.

The new IBF system for the AW139 features low-drag con-formal fairings with dual filter assemblies, mounted on the existing engine doors to create a sealed intake plenum. The system includes an alternate inlet air bypass system – a feature that is lacking in most traditional sand filters and particle separators. A simple compact cockpit switch, common with existing AFS certified systems, allows indication and activation of the bypass system and an integral Filter Maintenance Aid allows for on-condition inspections pre- and post-flight.

AFS manufactures certified IBF solutions for the AgustaWestland AW119 Koala, AW119Ke; Bell 205A1, 206B, 407, 206L-3/4, 206L-1(C30); Eurocopter EC130, AS350 B/BA/B1/B2/B3, AS350's with Soloy or Heli-Lynx Honeywell engine conversions; MD Helicopters MD 369H Series, MD 500D/E/F and MD 900/902. IBF systems for the AgustaWestland AW109 Power and Grand, Bell 430 and Bell 206L are also in development. [www.AFSfilters.com](http://www.AFSfilters.com)

**Bell Helicopter**, expected to have their press conference the day before the HAI show opens but no doubt ready with a line up of on booth events to promote their products, have been talking to their local news media [Star Telegram] in the meantime about how the downturn is affecting them.

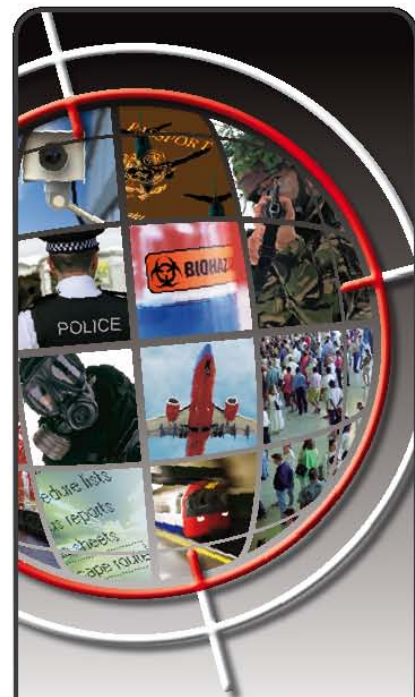
Bell Helicopter has always been the smaller, less profitable and less glamorous of Textron's two big aviation subsidiaries, but so far it's weathering the economic storm better than its sibling, Cessna Aircraft.

Orders for new helicopters from civil customers slowed in the fourth quarter of last year, and Bell has taken steps to further slow production but they have not seen a precipitous plunge in business since the meltdown on Wall Street.

**Eurocopter** remained the world's leading helicopter manufacturer in 2008, having fully met its 2008 objectives for helicopter sales and deliveries.

The company reported orders for 715 new helicopters in 2008, the bulk of which (340) were for the AS350/355 Ecureuil/Fennec/EC130 family, but also includes 123 EC135 models, and 12 new orders for the NH90 multi-role military helicopter. Deliveries in the year amounted to 588 civil and military helicopters, leaving an order backlog worth over \$18 billion.

The company is predicting that the current financial situation will inevitably lead to a dampening of demand and the potential for cancellations. Eurocopter traditionally gives a more detailed state of the company and its US subsidiary during



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

the first morning of the Heli-Expo Show. [www.eurocopter.com](http://www.eurocopter.com)

It may be worth your while to call by at the booth of **NAASCO** as they will be running a prize draw – entries are simply a case of offering up your business card in exchange for the chance to own a GPS.

In 2008 NAASCO was able to announce the accumulation of over one million combined flight hours of its "Mercury Mod" configured Starter Generators on Eurocopter products that include the AS350, AS355, AS365, EC120, EC130, EC135 and the EC145 Helicopters. Meanwhile the company has surpassed the 2.5 million flight hour mark on Bell Helicopter products with the ETR-20 and ETR-25 "Mercury Mod" configured Starter Generators.

2008 also brought on a 30% increase in maintenance technicians along with added office support staff and an additional engineer in the R & D division.

Each year NAASCO grows stronger, adding new capabilities and maintenance programs to support an ever growing client list. The web site [www.naasco.com](http://www.naasco.com) has been redesigned and contains a lot of details on product lines. 2009, will be NAASCO's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary and they hope another fantastic year.

Also upbeat is the **Robinson Helicopter** Company which continues to be the world's leading manufacture of civilian helicopters. Robinson again broke its own record producing 893 civil helicopters in 2008 surpassing a prior record of 823 set in 2007.

The R44 is the reason for Robinson's continuing success and record-breaking numbers. Introduced in 2002, the Raven II, a more powerful version of the original R44 now accounts for 60% of the company's aircraft sales. The original R44, later designated the Raven I, accounts for roughly 20% of aircraft sales. The R22 still maintains its niche in an increasingly competitive market.

#### DIARY

4-5 March 2009 Border Security 2009 Marriot Hotel, Warsaw, Poland. will examine the latest polices and procedures from international border security agencies, nations and border police. Assess their latest policies and discuss how new technologies and initiatives are helping to improve security at all levels.

Includes a half day interactive workshop in the form of a dynamic simulation exercise involving air, sea and land borders and relevant responding agencies in Eutopia - a fictitious European country. Delegates will receive intelligence about emerging potential threats, then commission analyses, formulate response tactics, allocate resources and make other key decisions in real time.

This is an event for security professionals who want to network with major international speakers and attendees dealing with land, air and maritime border security. Organised by the SMi Group Ltd., [www.smi-online.co.uk](http://www.smi-online.co.uk)

**SAFETY TRAINING Summit 2009**  
Tangible Equipment and Training Initiatives

April 27-28, 2009  
Denver, Colorado  
Hyatt Regency Tech Center

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

The 2009 Safety and Training Summit, hosted by Rotor & Wing, presents tangible safety solutions by focusing on Best-Practices of a broad range of major operators from around the world, combined with practical, hands-on vendor solutions you can implement right now. Walk away with new training and equipment ideas that will make a real difference in your operations, while keeping an eye on the bottom-line.

**Sessions Will Include:**

- Hiring the Best Pilots and Employees in the First Place – How do you Know? Practical Tools and Ideas from HR Managers of Major Helicopter Operations
- Training and Economic Realities – Balancing Sim Time vs Aircraft Time
- We Lived. You Might Not be so Fortunate – Discussion of Real-World Mistakes and the Invaluable Lessons Learned
- Training at Your Home Base – Programs and Equipment That Make a Difference
- FAA Part 60 - What the new revisions can mean to your bottom line for both safety and profit
- Night Operations – The Economic Realities of Going NVG

Each session will be presented in round-table discussion format with a different panel of professionals from a broad spectrum of helicopter operations, and extensive opportunities for questions and answers from the audience, plus...

- 7 Minute Demos – Safety and Training Vendors Give you a Quick Overview of What They Each Have to Offer. See Something Interesting? Visit that Vendor Later at Their Booth or Table-Top Display in a Unique Environment Dedicated to Practical, Hands-on Safety and Training Demonstrations

**Register by February 24th for the Early-Bird Discount.**

Contact Randy Jones at [rjones@accessintel.com](mailto:rjones@accessintel.com) for full sponsorship package details and rates.