

# Police Aviation News

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Number 153 January 2009

IPAR



**ANOTHER DEPARTURE:**  
*SA330J Puma ends  
Federal Police service*

**PLUS:**  
*Latest updates on EC135T1  
in the UK and Cayman Is.*

PAN – [POLICE AVIATION NEWS](#) is published monthly by  
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*COVER STORY: The final day of the SA330J Puma in German Federal Police service flypast involved a formation of two of the SA330J Puma (D-HAXA & D-HAXG), with a single AS332 L1 Super Puma (D-HEGW) and three EC120 Colibri training helicopters. [Story on page 6—images by Michael Balter/MBAviation Images]*

## EDITORIAL

Only a year ago Britain was riding on the crest of an exchange rate bonanza with the average Brit able to visit the USA and Europe safe in the knowledge that the UK Pound Sterling was 'strong.' But now that bubble has burst and the sham of it all has been highlighted. Tough times in UK air support are around. Running costs are climbing in the commodity that every nation holds up as the primary cost for air support – DOC's.

Fortunately fuel costs have now receded and that takes some of the sting out of the pain to come but the main concerns for UK operators is that engine and airframe maintenance contracts [PBH etc] are priced not in Sterling but in either US Dollars or Euros.

But is it really as dire as it seems?

Well perhaps not, as ever it's all about pulling the wool over eyes of the politicians really. You can regularly see it in the US when a small unit will be threatened with closure after fuel costs temporarily rise by a few cents and frighten the legislators out of their wits.

As often as not no-one has truthfully told those same politicians what really costs the money in air support. Its the people running the operation, whether they fly or just administer, they are the expensive item. That is why every so often the penny drops and someone somewhere tries to 'civilianise' the air operation.

I well remember a visit to Alabama where the operation joyously claimed it could fly each of its Bell OH-58s for just \$10 an hour all in. Great PR but far off the truth.

The costs of air operations in Sterling land are sure to rise in the wake of the sharp turnaround in the fortunes of the currency but, although it may be a short-term shock, for Dollar market costs it is only returning true operating costs to a level they were calculated at just one and half years ago. The Euro, well that is more of a problem and it will likely have repercussions.

*Happy New Year*

*Bryn Elliott*



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# LAW ENFORCEMENT

## INTERNATIONAL

The International effort against piracy in the Gulf Region and off Africa continues to rumble on with the Indian presence seemingly resulting in the greatest effect. The Indian warship Mysore patrolling in the region launched its helicopter with commandos on board to capture nearly two dozen Somali and Yemeni pirates in two boats that were trying to hijack MV Gibe an Ethiopian flagged merchant vessel. The Indian commandos also captured a large quantity of arms.

Last month it was reported that India is now stationing a naval surveillance aircraft at Djibouti in the Gulf of Aden to boost its anti-piracy efforts but no details of the type involved have been forthcoming.

Pirates have carried out around 100 attacks in the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean since the start of last year and still hold at least 14 foreign vessels and more than 300 crew members. On the whole local resources are unable to handle incidents beyond their own shorelines so that other nations are patrolling off Somalia and other otherwise lawless coasts.

The wider problem is even stirring China into thinking of sending vessels into the region to bolster those from the EU and USA. Historically it is the Chinese that make up many of the crews and the latest ideas were provoked after elements of the international anti-piracy force thwarted the attempted takeover of a Chinese cargo ship off the Somali coast by sending in attack helicopters that fired on the bandits and forced them to abandon the ship they had boarded.

The ship, Zhenhua 4 registered in Saint Vincent and crewed by thirty Chinese mariners, was attacked by pirates hours after China said it was considering sending naval ships to the waters off the Somali coast.

The warship and one of the helicopters that responded were Malaysian and the other helicopter was part of the Combined Task Force-150, which includes the United States, Denmark, Germany, France, the Netherlands, Britain, Pakistan and Canada. Malaysia cooperates with the task force.

On Christmas Day a German Navy Lynx helicopter rescued an Egyptian grain ship, the Wadi-al-Arab, that was attacked by Somali armed pirates in a speedboat as it passed through the Gulf of Aden. Another ship notified the International Maritime Bureau in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, who then requested assistance from a multinational naval coalition force in the area. The helicopter flew off from the frigate Karlsruhe [F212], driving away the pirates. One person aboard the Wadi al-Arab was shot and wounded in the attack. [Media]

## AUSTRALIA

**BORDER PROTECTION:** A vessel with 44 passengers and 3 crew on board was intercepted by Border Protection Command near Broome in Western Australia after an earlier sighting by an Air Force Lockheed Orion P3 surveillance aircraft.

After the vessel was identified some distance from the Australian mainland, Border Protection Command maintained surveillance of the vessel and responded when it reached the Australian waters.

HMAS Maryborough under the control of Border Protection Command apprehended the vessel and transferred the occupants to Christmas Island where they will be detained and processed.

Also last month the Government announced plans to follow the line taken by a number of nations in recent years in strengthening border security arrangements with the creation of the Australian Customs and Border Protection Service.

The move will see the provision of an additional Navy vessel and surveillance aircraft to protect Australia's offshore maritime areas from illegal activity, including people smuggling.

Border Protection Command's twelve aircraft fly more than 2,400 missions annually and the new vessel takes the combined Navy and Customs fleet to seventeen of which eight are from the RAN.

In a later incident last month RAN ship HMAS Bathurst, under the control of Border Protection Command intercepted a suspect vessel about 110 nautical miles north-east of Darwin after being directed to it by a Customs DASH-8 surveillance aircraft. There were thirty-seven people on board.

They too were transferred to Christmas Island for detention and processing. [AG]



STATE POLICE: On December 21 the Helicopter Museum based in the UK at Weston-super-Mare took delivery of a rare two seat McCulloch J-2 autogyro that was originally delivered to the Bahrain government for police duties in 1971. Designed by Drago Jovanich and first flown as the Jovair J-2 in Culver City, California in June 1962 the aircraft was intended to meet the demand for a private run-about that could be flown from the average suburban driveway, but failed to live up to expectations. Nevertheless 96 were eventually built by the McCulloch Corporation before production ceased in 1972.

The example acquired by the museum was operated by the Bahrain Public Security Force as BSP-3, but was later sold in the UK and re-registered as G-ORBV. However it was flown very little before being sold again to a buyer in Yorkshire for restoration as G-HEKY. After a period in storage, the aircraft was offered to The Helicopter Museum last November and purchased with the aid of a grant from the Museum, Libraries and Archives PRISM fund.

Chairman of The Helicopter Museum Trustees Elfan Ap Rees said 'We are delighted to add this rare aircraft to our collection, especially as it is the only example of the J-2 in the UK.' [IHM]

*Ed: At the time the J-2 was in service the Bahrain State Police were also operating two Westland Scout helicopters.*

## BULGARIA

The Bulgarian Police has signed a contract for one AgustaWestland AW109 Power light twin helicopter which will be delivered in 2010. This aircraft will be used for law enforcement and border patrol missions.

This contract marks the entrance of the AW109 Power in the Bulgarian helicopter market and adds to the large number of operator who selected the AW109 Power for law enforcement, homeland security and public service duties worldwide.

The known police aviation operations in the country have centred on the limited use of Soviet era Mil helicopters. [AW]

## CAYMAN ISLANDS

The bad news coming out of the Cayman's continues. In the past month there have been no major changes in the public domain except that they are now talking about former Commissioner of Police Stuart Kernohan following him being officially sacked in November. It all goes to indicate that getting it wrong with helicopters can bring into play powerful forces. Currently the man-in-charge is James Smith, former Deputy Chief Constable of the UK's Civil Nuclear Constabulary, as new Acting Royal Cayman Islands Police Service (RCIPS) Commissioner. Mr Smith started a six-month contract on December 1. He has 35 years experience in the UK, largely in Scotland, and was a commander with London's Metropolitan Police.



The decision on what to do next was scheduled for December 12<sup>th</sup> and a decision was expected by December 19<sup>th</sup>. That decision is also expected to coincide with the expected selection of a new Unit Executive Officer from a number of candidates who stepped up to drink from this poisoned chalice some weeks back. Although a full list is not known most were or are already involved in UK police air operations.

The Auditor General estimates that converting the existing airframe to a usable configuration [low skids SPIFR] would cost around \$665,000, a figure that fitted in with UK expert sourced information E-mailed to the former Chief Constable in March 2007 when the numbers were given as 'about £500,000.' It was pointed out more than a year ago that the UK EC135T1 operators had faced that very same question of whether it was worth rebuilding the craft to something resembling T2 standard and the answer had been a very firm no.

The reported reaction from the legislature in the Cayman Islands to the confirmation of this position has been hostile and as another ex-UK police officer the new UEO must be facing a degree of that hostility on his arrival to add to what will in any case be a fairly difficult task. [Cayman News/PAR]

## CENTRAL AMERICA

In the first stage of the multi-year Merida Initiative, the US is providing \$400M to Mexico and \$65M to Central America to fight drug gangs. Among a range of support measures the US will pay for helicopters and surveillance aircraft to support interdiction and rapid responses by law enforcement. In addition ground units will get a boost to training, inspection equipment, scanners and canine units for customs, federal police and the military.

## ESTONIA

**BORDER GUARD:** AgustaWestland announced that the Government of Estonia approved the sale of a third AW139 for the Ministry of the Interior. This aircraft will be delivered in the last quarter 2010 and operated by the Border Guard to perform SAR, EMS and border patrol duties. This third AW139 will be based at Kuressaare Airport (Saaremaa Is-

land), from 2011 when a new base will be opened, that will allow faster coverage in the Western area of Estonia. Meanwhile the second AW139 was delivered in early December and is based in Tallinn together with the first aircraft. [AW]

## FRANCE

In France the Ministry of Defence, Police Nationale and the Sécurité Interieur have awarded a five month study contract to Netherlands based UVS International to report on the potential use of UAVs up to a weight of 150kg [330 pounds] by the French Homeland Security forces.

The study will include an analysis of how such craft might fit into the existing legal framework in France and propose the options that with allow UAVs to operate in France.

## GERMANY

FEDERAL: After 35 years of service the last two Eurocopter SA330J Puma helicopters were withdrawn from service with the German Federal Police last month.

One of the final flights pair (D-HAXG) was painted up with special commemorative markings illustrating all the units which flew the Puma in service since 1973.

The Federal Police – and the BGS Border Guard before them operated a total of 23 of the type over the 35 years and 108,000 Flight Hours. Many of the type have already been withdrawn from service and a handful passed to such operators as HELOG in Switzerland to work on in the World. Later AS332 Super Puma’s have progressively replaced their former role with the Federal Police.

The final flypast involved a formation of two of the SA330J Puma (D-HAXA & D-HAXG), with a single example of the AS332 L1 Super Puma (D-HEGW) that replaces it and three of the EC120 Colibri training helicopters.

Although being replaced by the younger helicopters the venerable pair put on a ‘stunning and impressive’ fly-by and low approaches in front of guests and unit personnel gathered for the event. They may be leaving but they remain capable and still very agile craft.

Currently fifteen of the replacement AS332L1 Super Puma’s are in service, with another five scheduled to join and boost the fleet up to twenty in 2009. [Michael Balter/ MBAviation Images]




*The types 35 years of service have seen it operating across Europe and in many countries beside. In September and October 1979 three of the SA330J were assisting the Garda in Eire at the time The Pope was visiting the country [above PAR Collection]*

*Below, the first of the breed, D-HAXA c/n 1201 in the hangar at St Augustin, Bonn, in December 2007 when the Alouette II fleet was stood down [PAN]*




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## ITALY

**FORESTRY:** In Italy the forestry department [Corpo Forestale dello Stato] has transferred its fleet of aircraft off the civil register and has now commenced identifying new arrivals as military aircraft. The mixed fleet is almost exclusively comprised of Italian licence built types including the Agusta Bell 412 and the Breda Nardi NH500D version of the MD500, all nominally law enforcement aircraft. They also operate Sikorsky S-64 water bombers and Avanti fixed wing.

One example, an NH500D was I-CFSN but is now identified as CFS13SN and carrying CFS-13.

The latest AB412 deliveries and an Agusta AW109N carry military serials in the MM range.

*Ed: Until this year the Italian authorities were happy to place their forestry fleet on the civil register but, after decades of this being fine, no more. A suspicious soul might make a link between the increased pressure being place upon the Italians by the European Union to tow the line on acquiring new aircraft by open tender rather than just go straight to the door of the Italian manufacturers - Agusta. Military aircraft are exempt from this requirement.*

*In other areas of Italian law enforcement such as the Carabinieri are military registered and always have been but the fire and police carry civil identities. For how long I wonder?*

## PERU

**DRUG WARS:** A report recently released by the CIA claims that fifteen small civilian planes were shot down between 1995 and 2001 as part of the CIA backed 'Airbridge Denial Program.'

Most of the aircraft brought down crashed in the jungle, precluding a subsequent inspection of the wreckage and confirmation that drugs were being carried.

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In 2001 the potential for mistakes to be made was underlined when a Cessna light aircraft being flown by a missionary called Bowers was shot down killing Bowers wife and child. The family might have passed into obscurity had it not been for the aircraft crashing in a river and Bowers surviving. Shoot down orders were rescinded in the wake of the incident.

Questions have been raised whether that aircraft was the only mistake made in these shoot down incidents. In most cases aircraft were shot down without being properly identified, without being given the required warnings to land, and without being given time to respond to such warnings as were given to land. Seven years on the new CIA report directly contradicts a State Department report of 2001.



## UNITED KINGDOM

**NATIONAL:** Worldwide it may be the subject of the most regular and popular 'trafficking' but according to one British newspaper last month there is cause for concern over the money changing hands in exchange for car chase video footage – some of which will be air to ground footage.

According to the news hounds there is no consistency in the policy UK police forces direct at selling off clips of car chases. Some forces give away footage free but others are charging up to £555 for each minute released for use, thereby earning thousands of pounds each year in supplying popular entertainment series including Police, Camera, Action and Road Wars.

The Association of Chief police Officers [ACPO] approves of selling the footage to the commercial companies and reportedly takes a 10% cut of payments to some companies, so perhaps they would have a positive attitude in that direction. The official reason for the ACPO involvement is that the footage conveys a message of road safety although others wonder whether young people viewing the vehicles whizzing along at high speed in exciting chases might equally be tempted to steal a car for themselves to get personally involved.

Among the highest earners is the Derbyshire Constabulary, a partner in the North Midlands air operation with Nottinghamshire. Derbyshire raked in £31,662 in the first six months of this year from Police, Camera, Action! for some 57 minutes of footage. That works out at £555 for every minute broadcast. Other high earners singled out were Gloucestershire [part of the Western Counties air operation] they earned £12,950 and Dorset took in £10,815.

Among those forces that do not disclose their earnings are Thames Valley Police [Chiltern ASU], who support the footage in the Road Wars series, Merseyside, Hampshire, South Yorkshire and Durham [North East] and the London Metropolitan Police. Sometimes it is difficult to quantify these earnings as they are simply little more than new televisions and other equipment for crew rooms.

The newspaper claims that a number of others, including Essex and Wiltshire provide footage free and Avon and Somerset, Humberside and Northumbria refuse to sell clips. Two of the latter categories are in consortiums where there is a potential conflict of interest over the availability of air-to-ground footage; Avon and Somerset work with Gloucestershire in Western Counties and Northumbria with Durham in North East. [News of the Word/IPAR]

**CHILTERN:** In the wake of PAN's report setting out the outline of the new EC135P2 helicopters for the UK Police the Thames Valley Police issued a press release on the subject



albeit primarily related to their own airframe.

The new Chiltern helicopter is due to be delivered in 2010 following approval from the police authorities of the three forces that comprise the Chiltern Air Support Unit (Thames Valley Police, Bedfordshire Police and Hertfordshire Constabulary); a new Eurocopter EC135P2 will replace the current Eurocopter EC135T1, currently based at RAF Benson in Oxfordshire.

The project to acquire a new aircraft was undertaken in a joint purchase arrangement with four other police air operations units from around the country.

This multi-buy approach delivered a discount of approximately £0.3m per aircraft, price stability in the relevant currencies throughout the whole programme to the end of 2010, guaranteed part-exchange prices for the EC135T1 aircraft being replaced and a profit share programme in respect of any excess proceeds of sale.

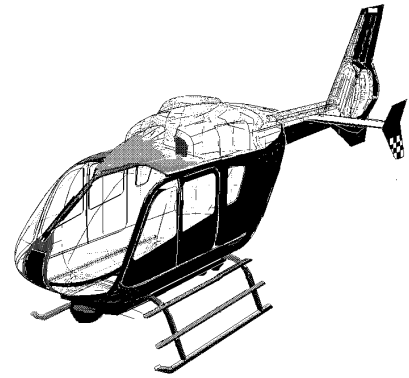
When placing the order, permission was granted by the police authorities to fix the sterling cost of the aircraft at £4.614m. Had the currency lock not been applied at time of ordering, the aircraft would now cost £4.997m, based on current exchange rates.

The Home Office are providing 40% of the cost from central funds. When this is taken into account, the net cost of replacing the aircraft is approximately £1.75m which is then divided between the Thames Valley, Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire police forces.

Last year the two aircraft attended 5,634 incidents, was involved in 868 arrests, helped in the recovery of £2,006,370 worth of property and air-lifted 39 people to hospital.

The Chiltern Air Support Unit has two bases, one at RAF Benson, near to Wallingford, Oxfordshire and the second at RAF Henlow, in Bedfordshire. The Benson base is staffed by officers from Thames Valley Police, while officers from Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire staff the RAF Henlow base. In overall charge is a Thames Valley Unit Executive Officer, with a Sergeant at each base who takes care of day to day running. In addition there are three pilots at each base. [TVP]

*Ed: Four other aircraft were contracted at the same time as part of the 'identical specification' bulk buy and attracting the same discounts. The other identified operators involved being Suffolk [aircraft 1], Central Counties, Cheshire and finally North Wales. Of the four one, fixed wing operator Cheshire, will not gain access to the highly attractive guaranteed part exchange facility for the EC135T1s in the deal. Their piston engine Islander is expected to attract a significantly lower residual return on disposal. It is known that this has placed a significant additional burden on the force and a certain amount of as yet to be resolved heart searching.*



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## UNITED STATES

**FEDERAL:** After fifteen months of planning a General Atomics Predator UAV has landed at the Grand Forks Air Force Base in preparation for its use by the US Customs and Border Protection for surveillance along the border. With its cameras and sensors, it can detect a moving person from seven miles away.

Tail number 104 Predator made a 6½-hour journey from Sierra Vista, Arizona where it has been undertaking border surveillance in the south west of the USA accompanied by a Cessna Citation. The Predator had been handed over to Grand Forks based pilots sixty miles before it arrived to land at the base.

The new arrival marks a new start for the base, which has lost planes and people in large numbers in recent years. The Predator allows the base to continue, albeit in a reduced capacity to support an expected UAV support role for some twenty of the remotely piloted craft. The USAF will have six of the larger Global Hawks on site by early 2011 and the North Dakota Air National Guard will operate armed Predators over the Middle East. [Grand Forks Herald]

**ARIZONA:** The long standing police helicopter serving Mesa has had its flight hours cut in the wake of rising costs. The 50% cut see flight hours reduced from ten hours per shift to just five. In 2007, the unit flew about 3,900 hours flown by three single engine helicopters and a single Cessna 172.

The two unions representing the officers in Mesa have warned that cutting the number of hours the department's helicopters spend in the air could endanger the public and officers on the ground.

Chief George Gascón announced the cuts to the department in November. Along with other savings the cuts are scheduled to save the department \$15M over the next 18 months.

Mesa has a population of around 500,000 served by 800 sworn officers.

**CALIFORNIA:** Redlands Police Department [RPD], operating a small volunteer air operation using a single Cessna 172 has been working with Cloud Cap Technology in the final development of their new T2 gimbal. Cloud Cap has announced the production release of the T2 stabilised camera gimbal with the first units being delivered in December. The unit



increases payload volume and enhances stabilisation performance. Designed for airborne law enforcement, search and rescue, aerial mapping, and fire observation missions it is for use in manned and unmanned aircraft.

The current payload configuration includes a Sony 26 X optical zoom daylight camera, the FLIR Photon 640 LWIR camera, and an NVG Wavelength IR Pointer.

In October and November, Cloud Cap participated in two manned aircraft test exercises using two of their gimbals. The Department of Justice (DoJ) tested the TASE Duo on a Light Sport Aircraft, the Tecnam Eaglet and Redlands Police Department tested the T2.

In both cases the TASE gimbals were mounted on the wing support strut of the aircraft using a Cloud Cap developed mount.

The RPD team completed three day flights and two night flights including air support missions. Cloud Cap and RPD will continue to work together in developing a complete air support solution, which can be rolled out to police departments across the country. [CC]



FLORIDA: On December 8 the Miami-Dade Police Department's (MDPD) Aviation Unit took delivery of a new Eurocopter AS350B3 N806MP c/n 4504. The helicopter is the first of four AStar helicopters ordered to join a fleet of rotary and fixed wing aircraft in the Special Patrol Bureau's Aviation Unit. The MDPD will receive the remaining three helicopters at a rate of one a year for the next three years.

'Our mission platform is evolving and we needed a more modern helicopter and updated technology,' explains Sergeant Tom Turpin, pilot with the Special Patrol Bureau's Aviation Unit. 'The AS350B3 and its advanced technology will allow us to carry out our evolving mission base and complete the necessary law enforcement and security missions.'

The MDPD has traditionally operated Bell helicopters and Cessna fixed wing. [AEC]

FLORIDA: Tampa Police Department have bought a new Bell LongRanger 4 helicopter financed by the sale of an earlier Model 407. The reason given for the 'downward' swap is that the new arrival represents a more fuel-efficient helicopter that is predicted to cost the Tampa Police Department \$100 less an hour to operate than its predecessor.

The department bought the helicopter using the \$2.1M profit from the sale of the Bell 407. The Bell was approaching a 5,000 hour inspection that would have cost the city \$400,000.

TPD has also altered its operating profile to reflect the results of crime analysis and fly when crimes are most likely to occur. This move has cut daily flight patrol time to 7 hours and increased the likelihood that it will be airborne at times when pursuits are most likely to take place.

KANSAS: When Kansas City police received an additional Hughes OH-6 surplus helicopter from the US Department of Defense in October, they hoped to be flying it operationally by the end of last year but two months on the forty-years old remains idle in a hangar partially dismantled. Increasingly the craft is being parted out to provide parts for the other Kansas City helicopter fleet. The tail rotor gearbox is already removed and keeping another craft airborne and it is expected the engine will soon join it.

Police did not intend to use the new helicopter for spare parts. They wanted to add the new aircraft to its fleet, giving it four similar helicopters but the new OH-6 needs a lot of expensive work before it can enter service in its own right to serve Kansas City police; a figure of



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\$1M has been mentioned. As time moves on parts for 1968 helicopters are getting harder and more expensive to source as they increase in rarity.

Increasingly the choices being made sway between accepting and breaking the surplus machines rather than holding out hopes of upgrading and placing into service a complete airframe. It is somewhat easier in the case of the similar vintage Bell OH-58 Kiowa because it is based upon the Model 206 which is [just about] in production with the original manufacturer but the Hughes comes from a company that is two owners removed and has a smaller production base.

For many the only real option is moving to either a new or used commercial helicopter, an option that might – if correctly judged – offer lower operating costs but require at least a \$3M capital investment.

Kansas City police have used donated turbine-powered military helicopters in the mid 1990s, replacing an earlier fleet of piston-powered Schweizer 300Cs. These were slower and less capable in that their payload precluded the carriage of increasingly important role equipment. What was intended as a short-term, 6-month, trial and stop-gap measure just never went away. Overall eight of the 'free' helicopters and thirty-one engines have been consumed in maintaining the service.

The relatively short life each DoD surplus engine can offer the programme – 1,000 hours each – has brought about the high turnover in free engines to a level that has forced the police to switch to a commercial version that can offer the option of being overhauled. Two recent purchases of pre-used engines cost just over \$200,000 which compares well with a new engine cost of about \$350,000 each.

There must be a time when even Kansas City will have to bite the bullet and buy into commercially sourced airframes but for the time being they are surviving on their ancient mounts and building up an enviable reputation for police air support and life-saving that should make their continued existence a requirement that the bean counters must maintain.



NEBRASKA: United Rotorcraft Solutions (URS) delivered the second new Bell 206B-3 [N176PD c/n 4658] to the Omaha Police Department on December 10, 2008. The first helicopter [N106PD c/n 4649] was delivered in October, joining an existing fleet consisting of 1970s vintage Bell OH-58A Kiowa helicopters accepted from the DoD in the mid-1990s.

URS customised the aircraft with the specified mission equipment to include the Spectrolab SX16 Nightsun, the L-3/Wescam 12DS200 Camera, both on Meeker mounts, rappelling Kit, Paravion monitor and mount and the Aerocomputers moving map and digital recorder. Integration of the Garmin avionics and communication suite along with the Technisonic TDFM-7000 FM Transceiver was also completed. A Paravion air conditioner was installed and the exterior paint scheme was completed to the customer requirements.

The Omaha PD launched their helicopter operation as 'Able-1' in 1997. The helicopter is considered by the City to be an extremely valuable tool in the fight against crime and these new aircraft will increase the operational fleet to four.

NEW MEXICO: A law enforcement operation has become the victim of non-delivery of an aircraft as a result of a manufacturer bankruptcy.

New Mexico's State Police had ordered a new A500 aircraft from Adam Aircraft and took

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delivery of it a year ago but the start-up aircraft company collapsed in the following month leaving the aircraft as an orphan with no warranty and no factory to easily supply spare parts. Adam Aircraft based in Englewood, Colorado closed its doors and filed for bankruptcy after failing to secure financing and the company's assets have since been liquidated. The police aircraft was the last of only five aircraft completed and delivered.

The police still fly the white A500 N607SP for reconnaissance and surveillance, as well as search and rescue and traffic patrols as a Public Use operation that permits the state to fly without meeting many of the regulations imposed by the FAA on general aviation aircraft. The state also has its own technician certified to service the plane. Factory training was part of the \$1.2M purchase package. The handful of civil operators do not have that option which makes their future use of the A500 that much more difficult.

A legislative committee has questioned the contracting procedures for the plane and issued a report faulting the state's procurement agency for inadequate research on the manufacturer's finances. The police are perfectly happy with the plane and its capabilities; it is well suited for low-altitude flights in turbulent mountainous terrain where it sees its greatest use.

TEXAS: Last month PAN reported on a new AS350 delivery to the Texas Department of Public Safety and listed a fleet including an EC145. This turns out to have been a slight 'jump the gun' moment for the helicopter was not actually delivered until a week later on December 8, 2008.

At a ceremony held in their Grand Prairie, Texas Delivery Center American Eurocopter delivered the EC145 to the DPS. It is the first EC145 for the department and it complements a fleet of AS350 AStar helicopters.

The EC145 will provide the Texas DPS with a larger, faster and more powerful helicopter that will allow them to expand the support of their aerial unit. The aircraft is expected to perform a variety of missions including law enforcement, search and rescue, fire suppression, public safety as well as support during tactical operations.



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Meanwhile the EC145 continues its success story in the USA. EADS North America has received a contract from the US Army for 39 additional UH-72A Lakota Light Utility Helicopters, extending production under contract of the twin-engine rotary-wing aircraft through 2010. This latest acquisition brings the total number of UH-72As ordered by the Army to 123 with a stated intention of acquiring 345 in the next seven years with missions ranging from homeland security to drug interdiction, support and logistics flights.

Lakota's first entered service in 2007, marking one of the most rapid introductions of a new aircraft in the U.S. Army's history. Forty-nine UH-72As have been delivered to Army and National Guard units and are in service with units in California, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi, New York, North Carolina, Virginia and Pennsylvania.

WASHINGTON: As part of Spokane County's budget cuts, the sheriff says he'll slash the department's helicopter operation to save money.

The helicopter costs the department \$430 an hour to run, plus additional costs covering maintenance and inspection. And already the pilots are volunteers, and the officers who fly have other duties.

After many years without air support SCSO restarted it in September 2006. It was a classic case of one Sheriff ordering the DoD Surplus machine during his term of office and it arriving when someone else had taken over. The new incumbent was far less happy with the idea than his predecessor. When introduced the quoted costs were about \$250 per hour for 500 hours each year but the stated increased hourly rate has clearly hardened opposition to continued use.

## AIR AMBULANCE

### AUSTRALIA

WESTERN AUSTRALIA: The Royal Flying Doctor Service will receive the entire \$68.5M needed to survive, thanks to the Nationals' Royalties for Regions commitment. The extra \$29.9M of State Government funds provides the regional medical service with enough money to replace five of its ageing aircraft and purchase three additional planes.

The extra funding will bring the total State Government funding for the RFDS to more than \$171M over five years.

### SAUDI ARABIA

THE HAJ: One of the world's major annual events The Haj is increasingly calling upon technology to ensure improved security and safety for the many thousands involved in its Pilgrimages to Mecca. In a recent issue reporting from Dubai mention was made of the spe-

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cific difficulties facing HEMS in the region.

The number of 'illegal pilgrims' at The Haj' has been reduced considerably this year thanks to the Royal Saudi Air Force is keeping a 24-hour surveillance on all the roads that lead to the holy sites. The problem may be isolated but it is dealt with in the same terms as the wider problem of human traffickers and draws upon the knowledge the air force has built up over Haj management during the past 35 years.

The preparation for the Haj operation starts seven months in advance and involves the flying of regular sorties before the event. The number of helicopters directly involved in the operation has not been disclosed but other sources suggest that it is at least five.

Although the ground traffic is almost exclusively of pedestrians the operation resembles traffic control. They keep a constant watch on pilgrims' movement from Mecca to Mina then their trek to Arafat and back. When congestion is spotted in any street the information is passed to ground personnel, who take immediate necessary steps to avoid any unpleasant incident. The air force's fully equipped air ambulance is also available 24 hours a day to provide immediate medical care to ailing pilgrims and to respond to any eventualities. There is a specialist doctor in attendance

The Civil Defence helicopter squadron plays a significant role in SAR operations besides looking out for accidents on expressways in collaboration with the Traffic Police and the Saudi Red Crescent during Haj season.

The eight strong rotary wing resources can offer fire fighting at locations where surface vehicles have limited access, rescuing victims and stranded or trapped people during accidents or natural calamities. The helicopters also make surveillance flights above the roads during the Haj season.

Its assignments during the Haj season are to keep a close watch on the movement of pilgrims in the holy sites, helping in fighting fire and rescue operations in the holy sites in addition to helping police and other government organisations whenever the situations demand.

[Arab News]

## SOUTH AFRICA

RED CROSS: Use of the Metro Red Cross Air Mercy Service (AMS) helicopter, which has responded to more than 400 call-outs in a year, was being restricted and "greater scrutiny" placed on emergency calls because of possible over-expenditure in the programme.

It is predicted that the helicopter will now respond only to critically injured patients and will not be able to help in searching for missing or injured hikers as previously but the Health Department refutes this.

The cutting back of the AMS helicopter is adding to the workload of emergency personnel already having to do without a Cape Town based surf rescue helicopter which previously helped with sea rescues.

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# SWITZERLAND



REGA: The Swiss air rescue operator may be awaiting the promised additional capability of the upgraded AgustaWestland AW109 Grand but it has not turned its back on the Eurocopter EC145. Five years on from its last delivery of the type, in late November a new example c/n 9215 was registered HB-ZRF for the operator [Schweiz.Luft-Ambulanz AG]. This is the 6<sup>th</sup> EC145 in the REGA fleet. [SH]

## UNITED KINGDOM

AAA: As recently reported a new organisation representing the interests of Air Ambulance Services throughout the UK was launched in Redditch in November 2008. The 'Association of Air Ambulances' (AAA) will be jointly operated by Air Ambulance charities and the Ambulance Trusts that deploy the air ambulance helicopters.

Peter Aldrick, Chief Executive of the Lincolnshire & Nottinghamshire Air Ambulance [Lincs & Notts], and the first elected Chairman of the AAA, commented that "this is a very welcome development for the Air Ambulance Service. It marks a formal recognition of the part that is played by the air ambulance services in the overall medical service provision within the UK. The success of the air ambulance services in providing a rapid response to life-threatening situations has been clearly established. The importance of close collaboration between ambulance services and their local air ambulance operations is paramount in ensuring that patient well-being is the number one priority when responding to an incident. The Association will endeavour to build on existing relationships to develop a continually improving emergency response network."

Peter Aldrick took early retirement from a senior management position with Kodak Limited in 1998, joining the Lincs & Notts Air Ambulance as Chief Executive in late 1999. Over the intervening nine years he has also involved with the previous organisations NAAAS and the AAF that were also set up to try to establish some form of representative body for Air Ambulances within the UK. These fell by the wayside but the AAA would appear to have a better chance of survival.

Peter was the Vice-Chairman of the Association of Air Ambulance Charities, under the leadership of David Philpott from Kent Air Ambulance, which has eventually led to the formation of this new Association. The Vice-Chairman of the AAA is Hayden Newton the Chief Executive of the East of England Ambulance Service and this reflects the joint approach to activi-

ties that the AAA intends to develop in the future. Where the NAAAS, AAF and CHAS failed before all of the air ambulance services in England and Wales and all ambulance services are members. The recently published 'Framework for a High Performing Air Ambulance Service 2008' will be the working document that we will be using to broadly develop future strategy. The website of the new organisation is [www.airambulanceassociation.co.uk](http://www.airambulanceassociation.co.uk)

Peter Aldrick takes up the reins [from David Philpott] at a time of potentially falling revenues thanks to the developing world credit crunch and it is perhaps too early yet to finally judge how well charity air ambulance fundraising in the UK is surviving the loss of industry money. That said Peter and his predecessor are currently fairly upbeat about the current levels of income in their own regions but there may be local fundraising difficulties that have yet to surface in the New Year. Based on the predictions the industry currently assumes that there will be a fall-off in giving and to that end there will be as much need to rally the fundraisers as any.

When the tsunami hit many charities were saying that their donations had fallen away but that reaction was not typical and in general air ambulance donations still held up pretty well and were far less affected than some other different charities. The ongoing financial tsunami may have a different outcome and to that end the AAA is awaiting its meeting in February before taking stock in the light of reality rather than projections.

David Philpott told *Police Aviation News*:

'We in Kent, Surrey and Sussex have so far weathered the Credit Crunch storm well, and are doing better than expected against budget. This is partly down to the fact that we have had some very good legacies in during the first half of this year. On the basis that experts tell us that on average a death occurs 7 years after a will is made, I suspect that many air ambulance charities are now begging to see legacy income increasing as the charities have been around for a while now.

'The charity press seems to be indicating that some charities might see a significant drop in income, especially those charities which fundraise for the arts. Medical and Health charities, it is postulated, will not be so badly affected. We are currently preparing our 2009/10 budget on the basis of a 10% drop in income in Kent, but growth in Surrey and Sussex, where we launched new appeals in 2005 and where we remain relatively new and unknown. In other words, we feel that by re-focusing some of our fundraising effort into these new territories we may be able to stand still, by running fast, if you see what I mean.'

**EAST ANGLIA:** Since last month the East Anglian Air Ambulance (EAAA) helicopter Anglia Two serving Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire became operational seven days a week.

Anglia Two, one of two Eurocopter BK117C1 helicopters providing EMS services in the UK took to the skies in August 2007 but, until now was limited by the levels of funding to five-days-a-week availability. Despite the difficult economic climate, the EAAA says that its supporters have dug deep and, as a result, Anglia Two can now move to full operational service.

The emergency medical charity Magpas has sourced additional volunteer doctors to serve aboard. In addition to the doctors, the East of England Ambulance Service NHS Trust provides paramedics who work alongside the doctors to form an Emergency Medical Team or EMT. These paramedics have received additional training from Magpas.

Since it began operations last year, Anglia Two has attended serious incidents in Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire more than 400 times despite being operational only five days a week. Based on these figures, the EAAA and Magpas believe that moving the helicopter up to seven day a week operations will enable it to attend an additional 150 patients a year.



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Picture shows:

Left to right: Daren Fowler (paramedic), Jeremy Maugher (Anaesthetist West Suffolk Hospital), EAAA pilot Neil Waller, Roger and Kate Bennington of Stratton Motor Company. They are presenting a cheque of the proceeds from the event and the crew are presenting a signed framed print of the helicopters in acknowledgement of their fantastic fundraising activities. The two cars are the Aston Martin DBS from Casino Royale and the Aston Martin DB5 from Golden Eye.

Media Creative is to develop a new look, fully manageable, website for East Anglian Air Ambulance free of charge.

Media Creative has started development on the new East Anglian Air Ambulance website. Working closely with Vivien Winders, Marketing and Communications Manager, it is hoped that the new look and feel Web 2 website will be completed in the early part of 2009.

The site will be much more user friendly, making navigation simple and easy to use. Behind the site will be a bespoke content management system, enabling EAAA to update all aspects of the site and not to have to rely on external resources to update on a regular basis. Media Creative offered the development free of charge to the charity, which has been gratefully accepted.

For more information, please contact the East Anglian Air Ambulance on 0845 066 9999 or check out [www.eaaa.org.uk](http://www.eaaa.org.uk).

**KENT, SURREY & SUSSEX:** As reported last summer from the Airmed 2008 in Prague the Kent, Surrey and Sussex Air Ambulance are hosting the forthcoming 2011 Airmed World Congress in Brighton.

The organisers have now produced a publicity video for the venue and the event and this is now available for viewing via the event website at [www.airmed2011.com](http://www.airmed2011.com)

Click on to the You Tube link at the bottom of the centre circle, to see the short DVD about the vibrant and exciting city of Brighton – the home of Airmed 2011.

**LONDON:** Northrop Grumman Corporation has been selected to provide a new computer-aided dispatch (CAD) system for the London Ambulance Service to handle emergency calls and ambulance movements. Northrop Grumman will design, develop and implement the new system, which will be introduced in 2010. It will improve the effectiveness of the dispatch process while allowing for future growth and expanded capabilities.

The system will be fully operational to support the London Ambulance Service during the 2012 London Olympics.

**WILTSHIRE:** The joint Wiltshire police and air ambulance operation is set fair for another handful of years with the signing of the contracts between the parties directly involved.

The discussions had been taking place over the last year between the police, officials at Great Western Ambulance Service [GWAS] and Specialist Aviation the aircraft contractor in Staverton.

The board of GWAS, the sole trustee of the Wiltshire Air Ambulance Appeal, was initially reluctant to sign up to a five year contract but during a campaign led by a local newspaper [the Gazette] and a petition to save the air ambulance signed by almost 20,000 people, GWAS was pushed into changing its stance.

In the background a number of interested parties from as far away as London were on one hand pressuring a local resolution and on another providing a final solution of money from way outside the area in case the local pressures failed. Other sources speak of creating a regional police helicopter in case negotiations with GWAS were not successful but that was in many ways a much weaker option.

The Wiltshire Air Ambulance was launched in April 1990 sharing with the police helicopter to provide a helicopter operation flying 19 hours a day seven days a week. Although it brings to the air ambulance community an air ambulance able to fly at night its weakness is that it like a number of other nearby police areas is a low crime area and that severely reduces the anti-crime argument in favour of the helicopter in the first instance. .

Hitherto charity funding has been relatively low key thanks to the police currently paying 75% of the running cost of the leased MD902 Explorer helicopter [G-WPAS] which is over £1M million a year while the Wiltshire Air Ambulance Appeal has to raise just £350,000 a year. Most HEMS operations fund the whole sum from donations by the public.

## UNITED STATES

**MARYLAND:** The chief of Maryland's air ambulance system has acknowledged that the helicopter fleet is overused and should shrink. The executive director of the Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services told a panel of lawmakers that the air operation has been guilty of using air transportation too readily where less-costly -- and possibly safer -- trips by road ambulance would suffice.



A study to consider a smaller fleet was one of several recommendations made in the wake of a fatal air ambulance crash in September. Officials are evaluating how many of the eleven Eurocopter AS365N operated by the state could be dropped from the fleet. That alone jeopardises existing plans to purchase three new helicopters a year to upgrade the fleet.

**NEW YORK STATE:** The construction of a permanent hangar for Suffolk County medevac helicopters at Gabreski Airport in Westhampton have been placed on hold by a budget crisis. The construction of a new Medevac hangar at Gabreski Airport has been in the planning stages at the county level since 2002.

New York State and Suffolk County had previously agreed to split the \$1.5M cost of constructing the hangar that would house the helicopters used by the Suffolk County Police Department's Aviation Section.

The state pulled their \$750,000 contribution first and as a result Suffolk County felt obliged to pull the project even though trees on the new site had already been cleared and constructor's steel delivered in preparation for the build to start.

Meanwhile helicopters utilised by the Suffolk County Police Department's Aviation Section will remain in a privately owned hangar located on the north side of the airport paying \$8,000 per month, plus utilities.

Suffolk County Police Department keep at least one of the department's four helicopters stationed at the Westhampton hangar. The police department fleet includes two twin engine helicopters [EC145/MD902] and two with single-engines [AS350]. [Southampton]



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# FIRE

## UNITED KINGDOM

ESSEX: European Business Aviation News [EBAN], ran a story last month that stated that UK fire-fighters may work in partnership with police to deploy by helicopter and beat traffic jams

The UK's Essex County Fire and Rescue Service may acquire a helicopter within two years, to beat the growing traffic jams that hinder deploying fire fighters at the fire scene where they are most needed.

The service says it is studying the feasibility of working in operational partnership with the London Metropolitan Police base at Lippitts Hill, Loughton on the basis that this solution would "represent the most cost-effective option."

The service spends around £400,000 every year moving personnel between stations to cover for absences. If confirmed, the plan would result in one of the newer innovative roles suggested for helicopters, whose crews can suffer dangers ranging from injury in actual fire fighting to assault. [EBAN]

*Ed: Although the fire brigade and the police have been talking for some time the current state of this project remains pretty much at the level carried in this EBAN story. The industry – McAlpine Helicopters, now Eurocopter UK - has been a prime mover on the project and has injected a significant amount of time and trouble into moving the 'fire helicopter' forward over the last ten years. Witness the various BK117B and C helicopters operated in the fire role a decade ago, the colours carried by the briefly operated 'red' EC145 demonstrator and the spasmodic involvement of the police EC145's in demonstrations at the Fire College in the past 12 months. No other manufacturer has put any time into this UK project.*

*All this time the problem has avoided upsetting 'The Unions' who have remained steadfastly anti helicopter even on a meaningful long-term trial because it might see their members facing redundancy - regardless of any potential efficiency or safety improvements. The assumption has always been that the police helicopter could be called in to provide visual or downlinked image information and that now is being added to with the use of small UAV's even though they are not a true 24/7 resource. The true worth of the existing resources may only be tested under an overload situation.*

*The Metropolitan Police tend to be at the centre of current interest because they operate the most favoured helicopter type and are well placed for both Essex County and any future plans that might be hatched to integrate a fire helicopter into 2012 Olympic planning. All in all very much a moveable feast that may never happen.*

*If an EC145 were purchased there would be options for maintenance, basing and training at Lippitts Hill but other than assisting where they can in providing ready access to the EC145 in operational service the official line of the police is that they do not have a view or anything to say at this time.*

## UNITED STATES

Barricade, a revolutionary fire blocking gel developed by a veteran Florida fire-fighter, has been awarded 'Champion' recognition by the US Environmental Protection Agency for protecting the environment by using a surfactant that is free from nonylphenol ethoxylates (NPEs).

NPEs, common in fire suppressants, are hazardous because they inhibit the reproductive capabilities of fish. Barricade Fire Gel, which has been used most recently to combat wild-fires in California, is an NPE-free formulation that is easily mixed in small percentages with water for aerial application.

Barricade is the only fire gel to receive a 'Champion' designation, the highest level of recognition from the EPA as part of its Safer Detergents Stewardship Initiative in its Design for

the Environment program. EPA Administrator Stephen Johnson presented the award to Barricade at a ceremony November 19 in Washington DC.

The U.S. Forest Service includes Barricade on its Qualified Products List. Barricade can be used in aerial application from helicopter buckets and single and multi-engine air tankers. The product is available from Barricade International, Inc. at [www.firegel.com](http://www.firegel.com) or from its distributor Northwest Barricade at [www.getfiregel.com](http://www.getfiregel.com). Barricade also is available for government purchase through the GSA Schedule. [HAI]

## SEARCH AND RESCUE

### CANADA

**SAR FORCE:** The Canadian Government has decided that it will not invoke the up to \$36M in penalties due for late delivery of the Sikorsky built S92 Cyclone replacement for the Sea King fleet despite the airframe currently being two years late.

The penalties were put in place when the contract was signed in 2004 as a way to ensure the aircraft would arrive on time. The original contract called for the first helicopter to be delivered to Canada last November but that has slipped to November 2010.

AgustaWestland, Sikorsky's rival in the original helicopter contest with their EH101, predicted in 2004 that the firm would not be able to meet its timetable since the S92 was still in development at the time. [Ottawa Citizen]

### CYPRUS

**MILITARY:** The Ministry of Defence of Cyprus has placed an order for three AW139 medium twin engine helicopters. The Cyprus MoD's AW139s will be used to perform search and rescue and utility-EMS duties, covering the Cyprus Flight Information Region (FIR). The Ministry of Defence is the first customer for the AW139 in the country and further underlines the effect that this type is having on this market sector. In Cyprus the police and RAF currently operate the Bell 412 in the SAR role. [AW/IPAR]

### UNITED KINGDOM

**COASTGUARD:** In its first year of use by the United Kingdom Maritime and Coastguard Agency and under the operation of CHC Helicopter Corp., Sikorsky Aircraft's Search-and-Rescue (SAR)-configured S-92<sup>®</sup> helicopter logged 279 rescues and is operating at availability levels of more than 98 percent.

CHC operates the SAR S-92 helicopters from two bases covering territory in the North Atlantic and the North Sea. In Stornoway, Western Isles, Scotland, the fleet has conducted 174 rescue missions, while missions flown out of Sumburgh, Shetland Isles, Scotland, have totalled 102 to date. Aircraft technical availability at Stornoway has been 98.35%; availability at Sumburgh, 100% according to CHC.

The Maritime and Coastguard Agency has seen a 20% increase in rescue missions at its bases, which is attributed to the increase in speed and capability that the S-92 helicopter offers.

Sikorsky initially developed the S-92 helicopter for over-water SAR in demanding and challenging environments such as the North Sea and North Atlantic, where the MCA serves.

The S-92 is the first helicopter in the world certified to the latest US FAA and EASA airworthiness safety standards. The S-92 features a Rotor Ice Protection System (RIPS), which allows the aircraft to operate in known icing conditions. RIPS has been certified by both North American and European aviation authorities and is available on S-92 military variants as well as commercial aircraft. EASA certification was issued in April for an IAFS equipped aircraft, which is currently in commercial operation.

## INDUSTRY BRIEFS

**Vizada**, a leading provider of global satellite communications, and Eclipse, an IT & telecoms provider to civil and military organisations, have signed an agreement to jointly cater for the mobile satellite communications needs of the aeronautical community. The two partners have begun providing services to the French Navy, including the activation of the SwiftBroadband service on its Dassault Falcon 50M maritime surveillance aircraft.

As part of their deal with the French Navy, Eclipse and Vizada supply each aircraft with a complete package of aero mobile EMS Satcom satellite equipment, onboard solutions, air-time and support.

The deal is part of the French Navy Aeronavale Aviasat programme and brings Inmarsat SwiftBroadband capabilities for voice, data and video to Dassault Falcon 50M and Dassault Atlantique 2 maritime surveillance aircrafts.

SwiftBroadband is an IP-based, high-speed data mobile satcom service offering broadband in-flight connectivity including both cockpit communications and cabin applications. Following the launch of Inmarsat's third I-4 satellite in August 2008, the service will become global beginning 2009.

Eclipse, located in Paris, is a satellite communications company specializing notably in the civil and military aeronautical communications. It has been a provider of Inmarsat and Iridium aero solutions to government and military customers for six years.

Vizada is a provider of global satellite communications, with more than \$640M revenue in 2007, and claims more market share on more satellite networks than any other satellite communications provider.

**Vector Aerospace** Helicopter Services (Vector) hosted the *Grand Opening* of its newest, 38,000 square-foot, state-of-the-art helicopter repair and overhaul facility; Vector Aerospace-Andalusia, on December 3 at the South Alabama Regional Airport (SARA).

Vector Aerospace Hangar (South Alabama Regional Airport & Industrial Park), Andalusia, Alabama, USA. [www.vectoraerospace.com](http://www.vectoraerospace.com)

Now that the FAA TSO has been awarded for the NIVISYS NVAG-6 Night Vision Aviator Goggles, **United Rotorcraft Solutions** (URS), as the preferred distributor, has these goggles ready for immediate delivery.

The only goggles to obtain this certification, the NVAG-6 goggle uses AN-VIS 9 tubes and optics and are still available at the 2008 price. The goggle set includes the goggles, mount, low profile battery pack, carrying case and lens covers. The price of these goggles will increase in 2009.

United Rotorcraft Solutions (URS) delivered a Eurocopter EC135 and a

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BK117 with their STC'd night vision modifications to Air Methods Corporation (AMC). The helicopters also received customized exterior paint finishing.

Both FAA approved modifications incorporated the design utilising filters that are externally mounted reducing installation time and cost. The external filters allow the modified component to remain generic thus retaining the advantages of local repair and/or overhaul. The filter material used greatly improves day light readability.

As AMC's Preferred Completion Center, URS continues to provide products and services to Air Methods, the largest provider of air medical emergency transport services and systems in the United States.

**American Eurocopter** has announced that the first full motion EC135/EC145 flight training device (FTD) is operational at the company's training facility in Grand Prairie, Texas The first operation of the simulator occurred during the first week of December with the training of US Army Aviators on the EC145.

The FTD has the OEM simulation data package on a full-scale replica of the EC135. The cockpit utilises interchangeable panels to achieve a high degree of similarity between the FTD and the actual aircrafts.

American Eurocopter's EC135/EC145 FTD is a full-motion system with six degrees of freedom with a visual system field of view of 170 degrees horizontal and 80 degrees of vertical. The FTD has day, night, IFR and NVG capabilities and offers customers a safe and effective way to achieve a variety of training including advanced mission-based training scenarios.

As part of the Light Utility Helicopter contract that was awarded to EADS North America in 2006, U.S. Army aviator training for the UH-72A is augmented by additional hours on the FTD at American Eurocopter's training centre in Grand Prairie.

The company plans to achieve certification of the EC135 FTD in February 2009 and this will open up the simulator to Eurocopter's EC135 and EC145 customers [image next page].





**Diamond Aircraft Industries** recently launched an Engine Care Program for all new MPP aircraft.

The engine programme incorporates the possibility to retrofit an Austro Engine in place of a Thielert engine. The TAE engineering Team, lead by Prof. Dr. Kappler is continually implementing improvements to the Centurion 2.0 engine. This activities aim to encourage MPP clients to operate the complex sensor equipment in all areas of the world.

Diamond Airborne Sensing, a business entity of the Diamond Aircraft Group, is a proven partner for all matters concerning sensor technology. The innovative company is worldwide unique in providing holistic solutions for reconnaissance, surveillance, and aerial safety directly from a single source – the aircraft manufacturer.

For further details please contact Diamond Airborne Sensing at [info@airborne-sensing.com](mailto:info@airborne-sensing.com).

Ranger Aerospace & Aeronautics, Inc., a private equity consolidator currently specialising in investments in the rotorcraft services industry, has changed its corporate name for better branding purposes to **Ranger Rotorcraft Group, Inc.**

Ranger's Texas operations are pure rotorcraft technical services and the revised corporate name for that holding company says more accurately what they do.

The rotorcraft services holdings of Ranger today include:

Texas Aviation Services, Inc. - a large depot-sized helicopter service centre that specialises in completions, avionics, interiors, paint, MRO, re-wiring, and mission retrofits for civilian and military helicopters

Integrated Flight Systems, Inc. - specializes in helicopter air conditioners and video systems, and is adding new STC's for other helicopter specialty products

Ranger AeroDesign - an engineering unit that provides aeronautical engineering services to Ranger's subsidiaries and to outside clients.

Platinum Aviation Group, Inc. - holder of numerous STC's and an unlimited repair station license, in which special projects can be accomplished. Newly teamed with Pegasus Helicopters PLC, for prototyping and manufacturing pressure-jet helicopter kits.

Ranger Rotorcraft Group, Inc. presently has all of its operations at Meacham Field in Fort Worth, Texas. The Ranger Aerospace LLC headquarters remains in Irving, Texas with no change to its shareholder structure or staffing.

Additional Information can be found on the web at:-

<http://www.asig.com/> <http://www.heli-x.com/> <http://www.integratedflightsys.com/> <http://www.keystonehelicopter.com/> <http://www.rangeraerospace.com/> <http://www.texasaviationservices.com/>

**Bond Aviation Group**, which has a specialist helicopter operating division based at Staverton Airport, has been holding talks with key shareholders Cheltenham Borough and Gloucester City councils with a view to putting in a bid to purchase the airport.

Although these negotiations have a long way to go Gloucester City Council has been told that the move represents a serious approach.

Gloucestershire Airport is valued at more than £20M, but the true value of its 400 acres of land is unknown.

Bond Air Services Limited [BASL] currently operates from 15 sites across the UK including at Staverton where it specialises in a variety of roles including emergency services and marine support, aerial work, corporate and media services. [Gloucestershire Echo]

**Eurocopter UK** has announced that BASL has placed the first UK order for a wind farm maintenance helicopter in the UK by ordering a new EC135 for maintenance work at the Greater Gabbard offshore wind farm starting end of 2009.

The EC135 will be used for maintenance operations, including delivery of personnel and complex equipment by winch at the Greater Gabbard wind farm located approx 20 miles of the East Anglia Coast from end of 2009 onwards.

Bond Air Services is the largest UK operator of EC135 helicopters, providing support for marine activities, including transport, maintenance and monitoring missions, emergency medical services, police aerial support operations, media and executive charter services.

The Greater Gabbard offshore wind farm will consist of 140 3.6MW wind turbines and will be located around two sand banks known as Inner Gabbard and The Galloper in the North Sea, off the Suffolk Coast. When the project is completed, by the end of 2010, it is expected to be the largest wind farm in the world.

Fed up with trying to stash the helicopter doors out of harms way during maintenance and doors-off flights? Well it is claimed that the **BagaDoor** is a lightweight door bag that will protect the helicopter door from scratches and scrapes.

The bag is made of a strong padded nylon and with the 3 sided zip, it is easy to quickly fit the door, ready for safe stowage in car, truck, hangar or picnic table.

The "R" series bags will accommodate all Robinson R22 or 44 doors, front, rear and bubble versions. MD500 and AStar versions also available.

The bag has carry handles that will also provide for hook hanging and a convenient ID tag window. The bags are easily foldable for under seat stowage.

For more information on BagaDoor call Americopter +1 818 557 0903 or visit [www.americopter.com](http://www.americopter.com)



**Alenia** and the Italian Defence Ministry have reached an agreement for the supply of four ATR72 Maritime Patrol aircraft. The medium-range, twin-engine turbine airplanes will be delivered to the Italian Air Force starting from 2012, to be used for the maritime patrolling with mixed crews with the Italian Navy.

The aircraft is a version of the regional turboprop ATR72, developed ad-hoc by Alenia Aeronautica and offers a greater autonomy as compared to the ATR42MPs already in service with the Guardia di Finanza (Customs Police) and the Coast Guard, which have already in service 7 units for maritime patrol roles such as surveillance of national sea, maritime routes and economic exclusive zone patrol and to counter smuggling and clandestine immigration.

The ATR72MPs will be equipped with the SELEX Galileo, a Finmeccanica company, ATOS mission system, which integrates the Seaspray, electronic-scan surveillance radar and the

EOST, electro-optical multi-sensor turret, for the identification of boats and persons in any weather condition.

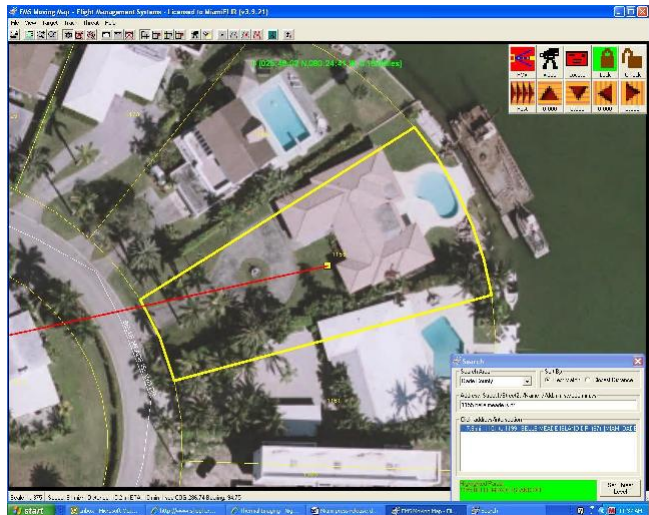
The aircraft will also be equipped with last-generation communication systems and, through a data link system, will be able to transmit information in real time to the ground command and control centres and other platforms, both in flight and on sea, for the coordination and maximum effectiveness of the operations.

**Flight Management Systems [FMS]** have announced that they can now offer customers of their moving map system a true slaving system between FLIR, map and searchlight.

The Miami Police Department has accepted delivery of their first completely coupled mapping system using a FLIR Ultra 8000 gimbal. [see page 11]

The flight tests of the equipment were flown with the customer in Miami with test sorties flown at 500 Feet AGL, 60 Knots, within 400 feet of the target address. FMS was able to keep the gimbal within a 125 foot radius at all times, hands free. In a standard orbit with the FLIR zoomed in so only 3 houses are on screen, the target house stays on the screen without operator input.

FMS has achieved an accurate, map driven slave for a range of gimbals mostly associated with the US market including FLIR Systems Ultra 7000, 7500, 8000, 8500, and Sea FLIR II; the Taman POP 200 and 300 series, as well as the Wescam 14. [FMS]



**United Rotorcraft Solutions (URS)** has designed and fabricated an extended instrument panel for the Bell 407.

This panel can be built to any customer's specifications. URS will cut, paint and silk screen the panel so it goes out as a finished product. The only thing left to the customer is installation and final fitting of the bonnet and glare shield.

The extended panel allows for installation of special mission avionics and communications systems.



St. Louis, Missouri-based **Aerospace Filtration Systems, Inc. (AFS)** announced proceeds of \$7,000 from its second annual AFS Charity Golf Tournament, held earlier in the year to benefit the St. Louis Metro Airborne Law Enforcement Foundation.

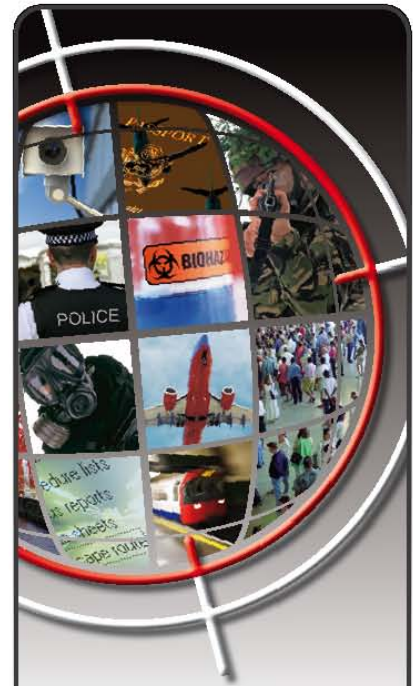
**Riley Aviation** has been granted FAA certification to operate as an air ambulance service. The company will serve as a fixed-wing, air ambulance designed to transport medical patients to and from the United States, Mexico, Canada and the Caribbean. The Riley ambulance aircraft will not compete with local air ambulance providers which generally operate helicopter transports.

Private charter operations will continue as usual for most of the Riley fleet, but Riley equipped two of its Cessna Citation light jets with LifePort, Inc. medical equipment which features a single-patient system that has advanced life support (ALS) services fully contained in its modular base. It also features a stretcher loading system that allows easy patient loading through a standard aircraft door. In order to qualify as an air ambulance, aircraft must be equipped with at least medical oxygen, suction and a stretcher, isolette or other approved patient restraint/containment device. Each flight must also have at least two medical personnel that may be a combination of Critical Care Registered Nurses (RN), Paramedics and/or Respiratory Therapists.

For more information about Riley Aviation visit: [www.FlyRiley.com](http://www.FlyRiley.com) or call +1 800.247.2834.

Moline, Illinois **Elliott Aviation** has completed a custom air ambulance interior in a Beech King Air B200 for Intermountain Life Flight, a division of Salt Lake City-based Intermountain Healthcare.

The completion, performed at Elliott Aviation headquarters at Quad Cities International Airport (MLI) in Moline, included the installation of a two-place divan on the left side of the cabin, a Spectrum medical bed, Spectrum Overhead Servoplex, patient entertainment system, new cabin flooring, and Raisbeck crown wing lockers, as well as re-upholstering



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of the interior. The aircraft also received numerous avionics modifications and paint restriping.

Elliott Aviation has performed numerous custom air ambulance interiors since opening its Completion Center in 2003. In September, the company earned STC for a custom-designed medical stretcher base as part of an air ambulance interior the company installed in a Beechjet 400A aircraft exclusively for AirMed International.

Last month **Eurocopter** and the UK Ministry of Defence signed a contract for the through-life support (TLS) of the Royal Air Force fleet of all Puma and Gazelle helicopters up to end of March 2013.

It replaces several former contracts between the MoD and Eurocopter for the support of RAF Puma HC1 and British Army Gazelle AH1 helicopters and includes firm commitments on equipment availability. This integrated package also paves the way for the projected Puma life extension programme (Puma HC2) due to be launched this year.



Both **Cessna** and **Bell Helicopter** have announced the cutting of workforce numbers in the region of 5% of their joint 42,000 strong workforce in 2009.

South Korea will purchase four **CN235-110** aircraft from Indonesia by 2011 in efforts to strengthen its maritime patrol operations to deter illegal fishing activities by mainly Chinese vessels.

In the wake of a competitive tender which attracted four bids a contract was signed last month with PT Digantara Indonesia. The unit price of each of the CN235s is about \$23M. The Korea Coast Guard commissioned the procurement programme early this year. The coast guard, which now has 15 helicopters but only one patrol plane, will use the Indonesian aircraft in conducting maritime surveillance, search-and-rescue operations, anti-terror missions and other roles.

The CN235-110 is equipped with advanced radar detection and TI systems, has a cruising radius of 1,100 nautical miles and can carry more than eight people. It is capable of detecting around 100 targets at a range of 200 miles, day or night. [Korea Times]

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## ACCIDENTS & INCIDENTS

**20 November 2008 Eurocopter BK117B2 N164AM.** Air ambulance of Vanderbilt Life-Flight operated by Air Methods. While responding to an interfacility transport at cruise flight of 2000ft MSL, an extremely loud explosion was heard. No change in aircraft control with no Master Warning light and all instruments were normal. With further assessment the pilot's greenhouse was shattered and at the top of the pilot's helmet was covered with the bird remains. Aircraft had just past over a rural uncontrolled airport and aborted flight to land at the airport. Aircraft was put out of service to be inspected by maintenance. [Concern]

**24 November 2008 BN2T Defender G-GMPB.** Greater Manchester Police aircraft. Whilst operating over Manchester flames were noted from the left hand engine. PAN called, returned to land at base with no further problems. [CAA]

**9 December 2008 Bell 407 N905A** Air ambulance of Hall Critical Care Transport, Bakersfield, California. Operated by Air Methods. The Bell departed Meadows Field for a scene call to the Northwest. During the flight there were two incidents reportable as airmis. The first was about 4 miles from airport with a fixed-wing aircraft at the 12 o'clock position, same altitude, 1/4 mile away, and on a head-on course. After taking evasive action to avoid a head-on collision, pilot contacted the tower and confirmed that they were in communication with the other aircraft. As the flight continued the pilot spotted a twin-engine Cessna at the 2 o'clock position, approximately 100' below, and less than 1/4 mile away. Again, the pilot took evasive action to avoid the second aircraft. [Concern]

**11 December 2008 Eurocopter BK117 N8765J** Air ambulance of Midwest Medflight, Ypsilanti, Michigan operated by PHI. While on final approach for an interfacility transport, the Sunnex Series 740 high intensity halogen light assembly failed (high intensity light for patient care), which caused internal overheating. This in turn melted the internal portions of the light assembly causing a large amount of smoke in the aircraft. The flight nurse in the back of the aircraft notified the pilot who landed the aircraft safely at the intended destination. The aircraft was put out of service whilst the unit was changed. [Concern]

**11 December 2008 Eurocopter EC130B4 N2?LB.** Long Beach Police Department helicopter in maintenance was damaged after a contract employee working on door locks at the airport hangar that holds the police department's helicopters accidentally triggered the building's fire system, filling the 100,000-square foot facility with flame retardant foam. The foam is salt-water based and considered caustic but not toxic. It was unknown how the foam would affect the one helicopter that was inside the hangar, although most speculated the chopper will not be operational for quite some time. [Media]

**15 December 2008 Eurocopter BK117 N117NG.** Air ambulance of Nightingale Regional Air Ambulance, Norfolk Virginia. Operated by Omniflight Helicopters, Inc. Aircraft in cruise flight inbound to referral hospital for inter-facility transfer. Fire warning light for #2 engine. Extinguishing system activation for 2 attempts with no change in warning. Engine

shutdown completed and single engine landing completed at Suffolk Municipal Airport without incident. [Concern]

**20 December 2008 Bombardier LearJet 25 N251AL.** Air ambulance of AIRLIFE Denver, Englewood, Colorado operated by International Jet Aviation. After takeoff the cockpit crew and nurses noticed an "unusual noise". The source could not be isolated and it sounded like "electrical arcing". The team also smelled what they thought might have been smoke or something burning. The aircraft immediately returned to Centennial Airport and the team transferred to the fixed-wing backup aircraft. After the transfer had been completed, the Captain noted that the First Officer had left his keys in the door when he initially entered the aircraft. (When the LearJet clamshell doors are open, the keys are not visible.) After a thorough inspection of the aircraft by maintenance personnel it was surmised that the source of the noise was the keys flapping against the door. The source of the smell could not be found and may have been due to a heightened awareness by the crew when they heard what they thought was electrical arcing and the fact that the heat had just been turned on.

This is the only known occurrence of this event for the operator in 29 years of operation however it could have resulted in the keys becoming dislodged and causing engine damage or failure. Cockpit procedures have been changed. [Concern]

**24 December 2008 Eurocopter BK117 N601EH.** Air ambulance of Air Methods. Reported an engine fire in flight. Shut down engine and made a safe precautionary landing at the airport in Orlando, Florida [FAA]

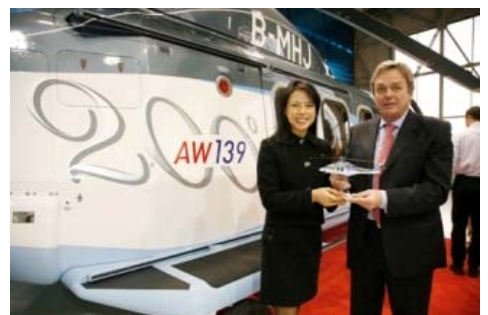
**26 December 2008 Eurocopter EC145 N145SU.** Air ambulance of Stanford Life Flight, Stanford, California. Operated by Air Methods. Flying a night-time interfacility transport with a patient on board, the pilot was alerted by dual caution lights for an engine pressure condition on both engines. This was followed by an indication that the automatic torque matching system was not keeping the engine torques matched, followed soon thereafter by fluctuating torques and the perception of higher than normal requirements for power. The pilot elected to undertake a precautionary run on landing and shut down normally. It was found that there were indications that a VEMD computer was malfunctioning but the trouble was traced to a malfunctioning (shorting) torque transducer.

The EC-145 is highly dependant on computer inputs from all manners of sensors and sources to provide the pilot with data and functioning systems. This particular emergency was not one that had been seen previously and there was no clear indication that the malfunction was limited to one engine or one sensor input. [Concern]

**27 December 2008 Bombardier LearJet 25 N351PJ.** Air ambulance of Lifeguard Air Ambulance, Hillsboro Oregon. Two hours into the flight, smoke was smelled in the cockpit. Fire extinguisher utilised. The problem was traced to a short in a non-essential light in the cockpit. The pilot pulled the breaker for that lighting system and the flight continued without incident. [Concern]



*AW671.jpg Caption - Cheyenne Chan, CEO of Sky Shuttle Helicopters Limited (left) is presented with a model of the AW139 by Renzo Lunardi, Senior Vice President Commercial Business Unit, AgustaWestland at the handover ceremony of the 200th AW139.*



## PEOPLE

Field Aviation of Toronto and Calgary, Canada has named **Christophe Chollet** to the position of Director of Sales. Chollet will be based in Toronto. [www.fieldav.com](http://www.fieldav.com)

The Fire Service College was chosen as **UK National Training Award** Winner of the Year 2008 in the Providing Education and Training category (sponsored by CIPD) from eleven finalists in the category.

The Fire Service College received the Winner of the Year award for developing a new urban search and rescue training programme to help the UK be better equipped with natural disasters and terrorist attacks. The realistic training involved actors and a massive purpose built rig designed to simulate a real life rescue scenario.



Several emergency services also won regional and national awards at a series of regional ceremonies held across the UK during the early autumn. They were:

### POLICE

Cumbria Constabulary, Penrith – UK National Training Award, Kent Police Force Communication Centre, Maidstone – UK National Training Award; Metropolitan Police, London – Greater London Training Award; Staffordshire Police, Stafford *in partnership with Centre for Professional Management, Stoke-on-Trent* – UK National Training Award

### FIRE AND RESCUE

The Fire Service College, Moreton-in-Marsh (training to manage natural and terrorist disasters) – UK National Training Award; The Fire Service College, Moreton-in-Marsh *in partnership with Communities and Local Government, London and The Fire and Rescue Service, Mansfield* – West Midlands Training Award

### SEARCH AND RESCUE

RNLI, Poole – UK National Training Award

The 2009 National Training Awards open for entries in January. For more information phone 0800 0191 475 or visit [www.nationaltrainingawards.com](http://www.nationaltrainingawards.com).

President-elect Barack Obama has nominated Arizona Governor **Janet Napolitano** as Secretary for the Department of Homeland Security.

The Helicopter Association International [HAI] released details of its annual '**Salute to Excellence**' awards at year end. Each of the recipients will receive their recognition on February 23, 2009, at HELI-EXPO 2009 in Anaheim, California, during HAI's 48<sup>th</sup> annual awards ceremony and banquet

HAI is a professional trade association representing 2,800 plus members, in 74 nations,



who safely operate more than 5,000 helicopters approximately 2.3 million hours each year. HAI is dedicated to the promotion of the helicopter as a safe, effective method of commerce, and to the advancement of the international helicopter community.

The 2009 Igor I. Sikorsky Award for Humanitarian Service goes to **Helitack Papillon Grand Canyon Helicopters**, Grand Canyon, Arizona who provides a full 365 day a year service contract which includes pilots, mechanics, and support vehicles to preserve and protect the visitors and resources of the Grand Canyon. Grand Canyon National Park Helitack provides some 450 hours of search & rescue services, medical evacuations, short-haul rescues, and an aerial search platform annually. During the summer Helitack is additionally staffed with fourteen fire-fighters who provide wildland support including fire initial attack, heli-rappel fire-fighter deployment, long line cargo support, passenger transport, water bucket support, and other large fire logistical support.



On August 16, 2008, Havasu Canyon, a popular side canyon of the Grand Canyon, flooded as a result of heavy, localized, monsoon rains. Five unmanned rafts had been seen floating down the Colorado River with supplies and personal flotation devices aboard.

The following morning a helicopter found the boating party stranded on a ledge at the confluence of Havasu Creek and the Colorado River. In difficult flight conditions all the members of the boating party were evacuated.



The 2009 MD Helicopters Law Enforcement Award this year goes to the **Stanislaus County Sheriff's Department** Modesto, California and is based on a flight on September 14, 2008. Their helicopter Air 101, a Bell 206, was conducting a routine patrol and was directed to a man beating an infant in a roadway. The officers decided to intervene directly. The pilot, Deputy Rob Latapie, landed in a cow pasture near the road. Officer Jerry Ramar, a Tactical Flight Officer that evening, exited the helicopter and ran to confront the man. The actions of the crew, combined with the unique capabilities of the helicopter, provided an early conclusion to this mission.



The Eurocopter Golden Hour Award goes to the **Chicago Fire Department Air Sea Rescue**; Chicago, Illinois.

The Chicago Fire Department's Air Rescue Helicopter unit was formed in 1965 with the delivery of two Bell 47G's to provide aerial observation and command for large scale traffic and medical evacuation operations, and for rapid delivery of medical supplies. Their role expanded over the years to include Air and Sea Rescue. In 2001 the unit took delivery of its first twin turbine engine helicopter, a new Bell Model 412EP.

On April 18, 2008, Chicago Fire Department Helicopter 6-8-1, piloted by Lieutenant Kenneth Straman and Fire-fighter/EMT Anthony Lisanti, responded to an incident of a child in a stroller being blown into Lake Michigan by a freak gust of wind. Having obtained the location



from first responders, the helicopter hovered above the area where the child was thought to be while rescue divers Fire-fighter/EMT Brian Otto, and Fire-fighter/Paramedic William Davis dropped into the lake. After four minutes the child was found at the bottom of the lake, still strapped in to the stroller. Otto then swam some 12 feet up to the surface, carrying the child still in the stroller. Unit members immediately began resuscitation. Although the child had been under water for 15 minutes, after four months of intensive care he made a full recovery.

Northrop Grumman Corporation is to appoint **Sir Nigel Essenhigh** as non-executive chairman for Northrop Grumman in the UK. He will join the board of the company's UK holding company NGC UK Ltd as a director early in 2009.

In the UK, Northrop Grumman provides a variety of advanced technology solutions in support of programmes in the defence and security and resilience markets. The company operates from primary locations in London, Fareham, Chester, Coventry, New Malden, Peterborough, RAF Waddington and Solihull and provides avionics, communications, electronic warfare systems, marine navigation systems, robotics, C4I solutions and mission planning, aircraft whole life support, IT systems and software development.

### **FORTHCOMING EVENTS**

22-24 February 2009. Heli-Expo 2009 at Anaheim, California [www.heliexpo.com](http://www.heliexpo.com)

**6-11 July 2009** Aeromedical Certification Course, to be held at Hospital ABC, Sante Fe , Mexico. Spanish language course for those in the aeromed field, including pilots and administrators. Certified under FAA and OACI regulations.

The 40 hour course contains three modules and a variety of practical workshops with helicopter medical staff and a visit to hangars of the government in Toluca [tbc].

Organised by Manny Nunez of ALSAM, USA but hosted by Dr. Hector Lopez at Hospital ABC in Sante Fe. Contact number: (55) 52308000 –Ext 8593,8594 or + 1 562 746 9442 in the USA.

### CREDIT CRUNCH VICTIM

There are other events facing the same fate waiting in the wings, PAN will be reporting on more victims in the coming months ... Last month the National Business Aviation Association (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.