

Police Aviation News

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IPAR



FRONTEX set to secure EU borders

Malta readies for the challenge

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LAW ENFORCEMENT

AUSTRALIA

WESTERN AUSTRALIA: Last month the police in Perth were saying their BK117 helicopter was out of action and there was a likelihood that they would have to hire one in from a private company in the event of an emergency.

The role equipped helicopter is undergoing routine maintenance and has been grounded since March 24 [Easter Monday] and it is expected to remain grounded into May. A second police aircraft has also been grounded for maintenance work. [media]

Ed: The State Government is considering a police proposal to replace the ageing aircraft with two smaller helicopters. Local politicians were making a point that Western Australia is the only state with one police helicopter - although they naturally neglected to say that other states including Queensland have none.

This operator has other resources including recently acquired Pilatus PC-12 but these are transport aircraft and not particularly suited to tactical work.

BRAZIL

A maximum-security prison located in the Mato Grosso do Sul state capital of Campo Grande in Brazil was attacked by armed men firing heavy calibre weapons from pickup trucks and a helicopter. The helicopter flew over the prison during the attack but never landed. The walls were not breached.

The prison holds some of Brazil's highest-profile inmates including drug lords and gang leaders but the target remains unknown. [Media]

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CANADA

EDMONTON: It has been proposed that a second Eurocopter EC120 helicopter should be added to the police air operation above Edmonton.

The Edmonton Police Commission has voted to purchase the new helicopter and operating it as "Air-2" at a base cost estimated as CAN\$1.65M, with another \$350,000 in role equipment.

If extended in accordance with the proposal the operation will offer a 24/7 capability and will require the hiring of another flight officer and pilot to fly the second helicopter.

The current helicopter - Air-1 - flew 1,150 hours last year a high figure for a single turbine on similar operations. The police put forward a case that sustaining this operation required a second airframe to prepare for a significant maintenance event requiring 3 months down time in 2011. It was also claimed that the current airframe will not be safe to operate beyond 2017.

If approved the second machine could be delivered by July 2009. Police intend to give the manufacturer a \$150,000 down payment this month.

The Edmonton helicopter supports the local officers of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police about once a week. In return, the Mounties let Air-1 rest in their hanger at the municipal airport, the helicopter also supports fire and EMS needs. [media]

CAYMAN ISLANDS

The Cay Compass newspaper recently highlighted that the Eurocopter EC135T1 acquired from a UK police force last year has still not been delivered to the new owner – the Cayman Islands Police.

Some four months ago Cayman Islands Police officials admitted that the programme was suffering a 'slight delay' but that description is now being seen as somewhat off beam. The aircraft is still in the United States.

This 'slight delay' has been ascribed to difficulties with the tendering process for the helicopter's maintenance, hangar construction and piloting services. These issues have now been sidelined in the latest news releases. Although the EC135 was maintained before it left the UK and was thought to be just receiving external work – primarily a repaint – it is now being said that a few parts are needed and it was being totally reconditioned.

The Government approved the \$1.8M purchase price for the 1999 model helicopter in the current year's budget with arrival in service expected in September 2007 – over 6 months ago. [CC/IPAR]

FINLAND

Although the deal has yet to be finalised late last month local media announced that the Finnish Border Guard is to replace its existing Bell 206 JetRanger helicopters with three new AgustaWestland AW199Ke Koala choppers in 2010. The Bell airframes being replaced in this €11M deal are 35-years old.

Helicopters are used mainly for border surveillance, but also sees some use in assisting in police and rescue operations. [STT]

GUYANA

After having to borrow a helicopter from Trinidad and Tobago to get over an immediate shortage of helicopter cover in the wake of a massacre the government in Guyana has sourced two helicopters for use by the Guyana Defence Force.



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The first of two helicopters acquired by the government to augment the security forces' air capacity to fight crime arrived early last month. The new arrival was a new Bell 206B c/n 3012. On arrival the helicopter was still US registered as N2464X to Global X Group Inc., Wilmington, Delaware but it is unclear whether the deal is a lease where they remain the owners or whether the helicopter will be locally registered.

It is not clear when the other helicopter will arrive. A few weeks ago President Bharrat Jagdeo stated that the government had made payments on two air surveillance helicopters which were sourced from Costa Rica and the United States. The new arrival from Delaware was clearly the latter machine.

It seems that the craft are somewhat ancient – a fact that did not escape the attention of at least one local newspaper reader. Initial enquiries suggest that the US supplied machine is already 27 years old – that makes it older than some of its now departed forebears in GDF service.

Ed: The nominal strength of the Guyana Defence Force is quite high – they have operated over 20 modern aircraft and helicopters in the last forty years but all of them fell into disrepair through the lack of qualified engineering support. It was that situation that led to the need to call for help from Trinidad & Tobago. Industry professionals estimate that little or no activity has taken place for a decade.

The Guyana Government repeatedly bought helicopters for use by the GDF – a succession of Bell 206, 212, 412, Mil-8 and Alouette's. In each case they either succumbed to accidents, were not maintained or simply sold off.

Two years ago Miners of the Guyana Gold and Diamond Miners Association were to acquire their own security forces and a helicopter to operate in association with the Ministry of the Interior after mining areas became the subject of major attacks by gunmen. The proposal does not seem to have seen the light of day but the talk then was of obtaining two helicopters to ensure the safety of the first flying over the vast and sparsely inhabited 214,970sq km/83,000 sq mls interior of the country. It may be that there is a link between the two new helicopters and that older proposal.

Readers may recall earlier complaints about the GDF using its aircraft commercially. They operate the only Short Skyvan in the country, and it is equipped to carry heavy equipment. As a result the miners charter the GDF Skyvan rather than commercial options in Guyana.

Similarly the army's Y-12-Turbo Panda aircraft, nominally acquired from the Chinese Government back in 2002 for Economic Zone Patrol and comprehensively equipped to do parachuting and medevac does not seem to actually undertake the role it was acquired for let alone anti-drug trafficking patrols.



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ITALY

PURCHASING: The European Union's highest court has again ruled that the Italian government's purchase of Agusta and Agusta Bell helicopters for both military and civilian use without any competitive tendering procedure is illegal.

The court noted only helicopters intended specifically for military purposes may be eligible for exemption from EU rules.



MALTA

A.F.M. With the main illegal migration period about to start, in recent weeks the Armed Forces of Malta [AFM] have been getting ready for a major effort in thwarting the persistent assault on their shores by 'boat people' from north Africa. For a small country [population 400,000] the task facing the AFM is major and it is fair to say they find it difficult to cope with arrivals throughout the summer. For that reason the EU has regularly sent in aid to ensure its southern borders are secured. As previously mentioned Super Puma helicopters are due in the islands over the summer. The German Federal Police helicopters add to the SAR only presence of Italian helicopters but, like the Italian operation they are reconnaissance assets and do not get involved in intercepting the intruders - that is the responsibility of local forces. Recently a Spanish fishing boat in the vicinity of Malta paid the price of too much compassion when it picked up some boat people and was forced to break off from its primary purpose of fishing to take them to Spain – around 1,000 miles to the north. A les-

Malta's resources are limited and what they have is ageing. The primary surveillance type is a pair of the trusty BN-2 twin [above] and that type is up for replacement soon.

Thanks to EU funding a single Sagem sensor unit is available to the AFM.



son learned the hard way. The Frontex operation is about observing the illegal migrants progress and ensuring their safety, not stepping in instantly. It is generally held that the migrants want to make mainland Europe [where they can disappear easily] but often the weather and their poor craft conspire against that and they land on one of the islands.

Meanwhile a Maltese Member of the European Parliament [Simon Basuttil] has disclosed that this year the EU's Frontex aid to the region, Operation Nautilus, is to last over six months. This represents a significant increase in aid. In 2006 just two weeks aid was given and last year the effort was extended to two months. That extension will be a major improvement in the help available to the AFM.

The arrival of this years uninvited guests has started. Last month the people taken from a heavily laden dingy arrived in the Grand Harbour and safety. That one arrival required a significant air reconnaissance effort by AFM BN-2 aircraft ensuring their wellbeing and finally the sending of one of the patrol boats to pick the 'victims' out of the vessel.

It has been noted that the standard of these boats – each apparently constructed specifically for this traffic – has got lower and lower. The thin GRP hull is not intended for longevity, a safety margin well known to the patrolling SAR forces that tends to serve the purpose of the people on board admirably. No nation wants to undertake the interception but the parlous nature of the craft invariably forces their hands.



A DESPERATE MISSION

The flimsy GRP craft and the discarded debris of the crossing tell an all too poignant story of the economy driven human trafficking from Africa to Europe.

This is but the first of many such dangerous journeys of this season. For the occupants of this craft the end game included them all arriving safely, in too many instances all the SAR craft find are upturned boats and bodies in the water.

Below: P32 one of a handful of patrol craft available to the Maritime Squadron of the AFM.





The Armed Forces of Malta air fleet is increasingly seen as elderly but a high level of maintenance is making the best of their fleet.

The Alouette III helicopters obtained from the Netherlands are now acting as hangar queens for spares retrieval to keep the former Libyan airframes operational.

Despite serving the RAF and AFM for over 30-years the Bulldog fleet continues to provide a valuable training and coastal surveillance tool.

The former Italian MD500 fleet is now reduced to one machine after 9H-ABZ lost its tail boom.





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MEXICO

Enstrom Helicopter has delivered three brand new 480B turbine helicopters to Mexico. Enstrom's newest international dealer, Aerolineas Ejecutivas S.A. de C.V (ALE). Two of the aircraft went to the State of Guerrero. In Guerrero, the state of the art, turbine powered aircraft will be used for law enforcement purposes. Both helicopters are equipped with Sprecrolab SX-16 searchlights, NAT public address systems, Garmin GNS 530 GPS/COM's, and Bose headsets.

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MIDDLE EAST

PIRATES: Piracy is alive and well in the region. A Canadian navy helicopter joined French forces in tracking a luxury yacht hijacked by Somali pirates last month.

The Le Ponant, a three-masted four-deck yacht, was seized on April 4 as it passed between Yemen and Somalia through the Gulf of Aden on its way to the Mediterranean from the Seychelles Islands. The International Maritime Bureau advises against ships travelling closer than 370 kilometres to the Somali coastline.

The Le Ponant is owned by la Compagnie des Iles du Ponant, with its head office in Marseilles (France), is a subsidiary of CMA CGM, the world's third largest container shipping company. The vessel, popular in the cruise industry, is a 260 feet luxury 3 masted sailing cruiser with 32 outside cabins all with marble shower rooms.



The Canadian helicopter from HCMS Charlottetown, sailing in the Gulf of Aden, was deployed to the search area and collected images of the vessel for Combined Task Force 150 - an international coalition of vessels that monitors and inspects shipping vessels in that area for terrorism.

Working on intelligence French authorities believed a dozen pirates were involved in the attack. Initially no ransom demand was received and there was no contact with the crew or the pirates. Eventually negotiations took place and after the payment of an unstated ransom thirty hostages were released.

After the crew had been set free, French helicopters kept watch over the pirates, and moved in when they saw some of them making an effort to flee. The helicopter raid by three French commandos surprised the Somali pirates and resulted in the arrest of six of the twelve pirates and, it is believed, the recovery of part of the believed \$2m (£1m; €1.3m) ransom paid by the owners.

The governor of Mudug, Abdul Kadir Ahmed subsequently claimed that three bodies had been recovered after the raid and that eight people had been injured. The French authorities denied reports that anyone died or was wounded in the operation. [Agence France]

Ed: Within days of the operations surrounding the Ponant subsiding Somali pirates hijacked a ship en-route from Dubai and Spain had sent out a frigate from its navy to deal with a hijacked Spanish tuna fishing boat with 26 people on board. Other pirates fired on a Japanese flagged chemical carrier off Yemen and held up a Dubai-flagged vessel carrying food just 7km off the Somali coast.

SPAIN

GUARDIA CIVILE: Only weeks after successful trials on naval Frigates, on April 14 the Camcopters® S-100 set to prove its capabilities south of Gran Canaria from a vessel of the Spanish Guardia Civil, the 51 meter long Rio Miño.

The S-100 was demonstrating its capabilities from a small vessel for the first time, the Rio Miño vessel has a gross weight of 605 tons and is based in the harbour of Las Palmas on Gran Canaria. Having been converted from a tuna trawler into one of the largest patrol vessels of the Guardia Civil, its mission is to patrol the coasts of the Canary Islands and nearby Africa.

The Rio Miño's small helicopter deck at the stern is intended for emergency use by manned helicopters only. It is 10.5 by 8.5 meters in size and has no landing grid that would allow the use of the S-100's harpoon decking aid. The S-100 took off for a one-hour flight over the Atlantic and continuously provided reconnaissance data to the crew and spectators using its

day/night-capable camera gimbal.

Landings are generally conducted autonomously to a relative waypoint above the landing deck at the stern of the vessel. There the S-100 showed its unique capability to hover close above the heli deck and automatically follow the ship's movements, with a subsequent smooth touch down. [Camcopter]

UNITED KINGDOM

KENT: Kent Police has publicly announced details of their air support cooperation with Essex Police.

As part of a new deal between Kent and Essex Police, the existing Essex-based helicopter will be made available to both counties for up to 20 hours a day, seven days a week. .

The collaboration programme, which was brokered between the forces and authorities aims to improve the efficiency and performance of both forces.

This agreement was proposed in October 2007 and has been subject to air-testing and the ratification of terms and conditions and contractual agreements. It was formally agreed at the joint statutory committee on March 13, 2008 and contracts were signed by respective police authority chairs.

NORTH EAST: The EC135T1 'Classic' that was tipped as being the sixth airframe to be replaced under the forthcoming bulk buy of police helicopters looks likely never to be replaced. After a succession of all-too-public disagreements over the replacement of the helicopter [G-NESU] police have come out in favour of disposing of it without replacement.

Where the two disagree so loudly is where the remaining airframe will be based. Currently Cleveland, Northumbria and Durham police contribute to the running of two aircraft - one based at Newcastle the other at Durham Tees Valley Airport.

Later reports were claiming that lives were at risk if the scrapping of the second helicopter went ahead. These reports seized on the use of the police helicopter as an out of hours ambulance. The chairman of the Cleveland Police Authority, Dave McLuckie, said it would be a tragedy if Teesside lost one of the aircraft. Based on the authorities figures five people have been picked up this year alone.

Ed: Northumbria has always put up the greater proportion of the three force funding but Cleveland are now fighting the next natural move to take the remaining aircraft to Newcastle where the greater amount of workload takes place. Cleveland say that the helicopter should be kept at Durham Tees Valley because of the fact it is in the middle of the three authorities.



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Industry sources suggest that the core of the problem is that there is insufficient work for two helicopters on a 24/7 basis and the high level of availability of the two helicopters in the wake of the disposal of the fixed wing Islander ended up in working against the overall operation. The war of words continues and although time is running out to turn the situation around there is still a year of counter argument before G-NESU needs to be withdrawn without replacement.

A Northumbria Police claim that the helicopters stand idle for 85% of the time indicates that there are more effective ways of providing this important frontline resource.



WILTSHIRE: The future funding of the joint police and air ambulance operation based on an MD902 Explorer based at the police HQ in Devizes continues to attract attention. The police have been talking with the Great Western Ambulance Service about the lease of the helicopter. This PFI [Private Finance Initiative] based lease from Police Aviation Services is due for renewal in December. When first set up it was a 10 year PFI but reports suggest that the renewal term being sought this time is five years. [Wiltshire Today]

In an allied story a row emerged over funding for the jointly operated police and air ambulance operation. It is being said that money raised by people for the Wiltshire Air Ambulance Appeal has been paid to a private fundraising firm without consulting long standing members of the Wiltshire Air Ambulance Appeal Committee. They allege that they have been told that Great Western Ambulance Service [GWAS] had employed a firm of consultants to act as fundraisers for the operation after the original fundraiser left in January. The service is paying over £3,000 each month for the consultants and they in turn have to oversee the raising of the £350,000 a year required to keep the Wiltshire air ambulance operating.

Part of the problem is that under charity commission rulings GWAS has to keep the fundraising at arms length and this has proved difficult after the fundraiser left.

UNITED STATES

CALIFORNIA: The Riverside County (CA) Board of Supervisors voted last month to approve plans and specifications for a new sheriff's patrol and aviation facility. It is hoped that construction will begin on the 20 acre plot within 12 months.

Plans call for a central office area for deputies and investigators, a forensics lab, evidence storage facility and fueling depot. The Sheriff's aviation facility will include two full-size hangars to accommodate two helicopters and one twin-engine, fixed-wing aircraft.

CALIFORNIA: Merced County Sheriff's Office officially launched the department's new \$400,000 2005 Robinson R44 Raven II helicopter last month. The operation has the support of Atwater Police Department, Merced Police Department, Fresno County Sheriff's Department, Madera County Sheriff's Department and other agencies.

The helicopter comes equipped with an infrared camera and a searchlight. Some \$200,000 of the funds used to buy the helicopter were assets confiscated from criminal drug trafficking, and other small and rural county funds also went toward the costs.

The helicopter was obtained from the assets of Silver State Helicopters, a Nevada-based company that recently went out of business.

DELAWARE: Although it is by no means a stranger to the public gaze Delaware State unveiled its new \$10.6M Bell 412 N2SP/36425 last month. The airframe was registered in June 2007 and appeared apparently fully painted and role equipped on the Bell Helicopter booth at the 2008 HAI Heli-Expo two months ago.

The 412 supplements the existing fleet of Bell 407 helicopters in providing a larger cabin and capability added to twin-engine power.

FLORIDA: The cost for operating the Leon County Sheriff's Office Bell 206B2 helicopter N40MC is up to about \$311 an hour, up from about \$259 in 2007, and \$118 in 2006. The operator uses the resource sparingly but the annual cost for Leon County in 2007 amounted to \$565,000 compared with \$410,000 in 2006 and \$364,000 in 2005. Unlike operators across the world no specific record is kept of persons arrested as a means of recording its worth.

The aviation unit operates scheduled patrol flights twice a week in the afternoons and evenings and adds event specific reactive flights during the week and weekends for both Leon County and the Tallahassee Police Department.



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KANSAS: The law enforcement aviation situation in Topeka is getting more complex by the day. The operator was focussed on buying an additional Robinson R44 only a matter of weeks ago until the idea was vetoed. The latest development is that the single engine R44 reportedly suffered an engine problem and in trying to set down in the dark struck an unlit light standard and turned over. The resultant impact caused only minor injuries to the those on-board but it caused considerable damage to the Robinson and it will be months before it is repaired. The Helicopter Unit of the police department is grounded until all investigations are complete but it does still have a Schweizer 300 it can call upon.

It is the third police helicopter crash in Topeka history. In 2000, two officers were killed in West Topeka and in the 1970s a pilot was killed in a crash near Downtown.

And just to add to the sense of fun surrounding this whole sad affair the local newspaper The Capital-Journal went to court in an effort to find out details of the crash that were being denied them. The newspaper filed a lawsuit in Shawnee County District Court seeking access to the flight log of the police helicopter that crashed on April 4.

They had requested the log, which they contend is public information available under the Kansas Open Records Act. It was also in part material that had already been aired in a newspaper but it was now being denied on the grounds that this was an "active federal investigation" by the FAA.

The names of the two pilots had been released by a City Councilwoman but the identity of the observer had not.

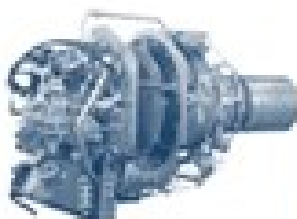
The Capital-Journal also requested an 'open-records' sight of the Kansas Highway Patrol report on the accident. That too was taking its time to appear in their hands.

OHIO: The Oklahoma Highway Patrol has announced that Lieutenant Brian Sturgill and Trooper Joe Howard were selected to receive the prestigious, 'Trooper of the Year' award for 2007, from the Oklahoma Highway Users Foundation. The awards stemmed from their heroic actions on August 19, 2007, that saved the lives of a couple who were surrounded by flood waters and trapped in their flooded vehicle which had been swept off US Highway 81 north of Kingfisher.

Without regard for their own safety, Lieutenant Sturgill and Trooper Howard hovered the helicopter above the flood waters and with the help of Chief Poindexter were able to pluck Leroy and Bernice Krittenbrink from the water, and safely delivered them to rescue units on dry ground. The rescue was tedious, took several attempts to complete and at times appeared would fail. Both the troopers as well as the Krittenbrinks were totally exhausted when the ordeal was over.

TEXAS: Dallas police officials have suspended the department's lone helicopter mechanic while internal investigators look into whether he falsified important safety inspection records.

Police Chief David Kunkle and other top DPD officials have confirmed that an inquiry is underway after the mechanic was accused of not performing a scheduled inspection he had recorded as having done.



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There are allegations that he may have been dishonest with the maintenance records and in any case it is clear that some if not all the pilots reliant upon his work have lost confidence in the quality of his work. Meanwhile a civilian contractor has been hired to fill in.

The department replaced most of its ageing fleet of helicopters last summer with three new helicopters at a cost of about \$5.3M.

Two of the three mechanics left the department last year for better-paying jobs leaving just one person to look after the fleet. Officials have tried to replace them but they have had difficulty because the starting pay – about \$31,000 – is not competitive.

TEXAS: The police air operation for the Houston Police Department is to have new helicopters added to its fleet this summer. The cost of the fleet upgrade is set at \$18.3M over 15 years.

The fleet of helicopters is predicted to more than double from six to thirteen, in order to reach the departmental goal of providing 42 hours of helicopter patrol on a daily basis seven days a week.

The announced plan is good news for MD Helicopters after its recent problems. The current patrol fleet uses two types, consisting of four MD500E and two Schweizer 333 - these are to be changed to a wholly MD fleet. One MD 500E helicopter is currently on order with eight more said to be on order over the next eight years. The two Schweizer 333 patrol helicopters will be sold off but Schweizer will not lose out as three new Schweizer 300C training helicopters will be replacing existing trainers. Two will arrive in July and the third in September.

AIR AMBULANCE

AUSTRALIA

QUEENSLAND: A recent use of an RAAF Lockheed C-130 aircraft to fly a morbidly obese and critically ill woman to hospital highlights the pressures the obesity epidemic puts on medical services in the western world.

The Australian Medical Association (AMA) highlighted the case of the woman, who weighed about 530 pounds [240kg], had to be flown from Mount Isa to Townsville Hospital because she was too heavy for an ambulance or the Royal Flying Doctor Service's aircraft.

The Australian Defence Force, which deployed the C-130 from Sydney, spent nearly \$100,000 on the task. [AFT/IOL]

CYPRUS

A private air ambulance service is to be launched on the island to transport patients both inland and abroad.

Until now, emergency medical air transport has been provided by the police, with the force stretched as a result of only having one helicopter at its disposal for this purpose and its Islander now out of use. As a result, many patients in need have had to go without air transport.

Initially, the company will provide two helicopters and two aircraft, equipped with the latest medical technology including defibrillators, oxygen supply, surgical and immobilising equipment and a full range of pharmaceuticals. [Mail]

CZECH REPUBLIC

The air rescue alliance TEAM DRF will be joining a range of air medical practitioners at the forthcoming Airmed 2008 in Prague this month.

TEAM DRF representatives will be at Airmed from May 20 to May 23. During this industry forum the air rescue alliance will be presenting its concept of medical simulator training together with the Center for Patient Safety & Simulation (TuPASS). Dr. Gerson Conrad, responsible for medical training at DRF will be on hand to explain the emergency missions and introduces the training concept.

In addition, the DRF actively takes part in the diverse congress programme: Representatives from the DRF Medicine, Technical Services and Aircraft Operations departments will participate in workshops and round-table discussions relating to "European Cooperation", "International Repatriation", "Flight Safety Update", and "Medical Risk Management".

The following week TEAM DRF will be attending the ILA Show in Berlin and will be in the Helicenter from May 27 to June 1. At its stand it will present its innovative Flight Following-System Rescue Track. Visitors can observe live the current position and the status of the TEAM DRF helicopters on a screen. Experienced TEAM DRF crew members explain why Rescue Track makes air rescue more efficient and what kind of time advantages the system involves.



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EIRE

The high-profile launch of a 24/7 national air ambulance service was put on hold after differences of opinion arose between two Government departments promoting it. The service, using the new Irish Air Corps AW139 helicopters went live as expected but subsequently a high profile public launch designed to promote the service and those that were sponsoring it in the Department of Defence and the Department of Health and Children foundered after they could not agree on when the public should be told about it.

The date was set for late March and some elements of the media picked up on it but the ballyhoo just did not happen. Officially the reason behind the delay was a disagreement over the newness of the service. The IAC has been operating an air ambulance service since the 1960s and that did not fit in with the 'new 24/7' slant intended for the cancelled launch event. It is not a full HEMS service and most flights are expected to be along the lines of the inter hospital transfer. It is likely that another [more acceptable] event will be scheduled later in the year.

SOUTH AMERICA

CHILE: Eurocopter demonstrated a significant presence at the Fidae Show in Chile at the end of March to April 6th, having most of its product range being presented on static or flying display.

With the signature of eight new contracts during the exhibition, Eurocopter confirmed its position as the leading helicopter manufacturer in the region. During the exhibition, Eurocopter held the first symposium in Latin America on Helicopter Emergency Medical Services (HEMS). The event was organized on the last professional day of Fidae with its customer Aerorescate and included reference speakers in this sector.

UNITED KINGDOM

CHARITIES LOSE OUT ON REBATE: Two British Charities are coming to terms with the news that British Airways and Virgin Atlantic are opposing their suggestion that airline passengers who were victims of a price fixing conspiracy should be able to choose to donate their refunds to Charity. Similarly, suggestions that unclaimed refunds should be donated to these good causes have been rejected, meaning that BA and Virgin may still profit from illegal surcharging.

Both airlines have agreed to refund up to £73.5M to UK passengers who bought tickets between August 2004 and March 2006 when an illegal fuel surcharge was being levied. However, whereas refunds unclaimed by US passengers will be assigned to an American good cause "Miracle Flights for Kids," no such legal remedy is being offered on this side of the Atlantic.

Speaking on behalf of the British Disabled Flying Association, one of the charities involved, Chairman Mike Miller-Smith said:

"We are deeply disappointed that the airlines have reacted in the way they have. This was a perfect opportunity for them to demonstrate goodwill on their part. The logic seems flawed, flagship British companies giving money to charity in the US, yet refusing to do the

same in the UK.”

David Philpott, Chairman of the Association of Air Ambulance Charities, the other not-for-profit organisation involved said:

“The airlines have already set this money aside to make restitution, so we find it somewhat unfortunate that they should oppose this humanitarian intervention. In the case of British Airways, one has to ask who is advising them, since a good news story would do them no harm right now.”

Both Mr Miller-Smith and Mr Philpott will now attend the Northern California District Court on 25th April, where they will ask the judge to intervene in their favour.

CHARITIES LOSE OUT ON LOTTERY: A court in Plymouth sentenced the boss of a local company, Leigh Douglas Windsor, 44, to a term of prison after hearing how he took money for air ambulance charities for his own use.

He pocketed nearly £300,000 given as charity donations by members of the public to two air ambulance charities - Wales Air Ambulance Trust and Dorset and Somerset Air Ambulance Trust.

Leigh Windsor Promotions ran fundraising lotteries for nine air ambulance trusts across the UK.

Windsor admitted two charges of theft, of £63,000 from the Dorset and Somerset trust and £210,000 from the Welsh trust, between September 2002 and July 2004.

Robert Edwards, aged 56, of Chapeldown Road in Torpoint, admitted one charge of false accounting by understating on a return how much money the company had raised for one of the trusts.

DERBYSHIRE, LEICESTERSHIRE & RUTLAND: The new air ambulance launched its first rescue mission only an hour after it officially went live at East Midlands Airport early last month. The operation flies a new Agusta A109E Power.

DEVON: Devon Air Ambulance Trust have confirmed their second EC135, registered G-DVAA, is now in the UK for completion at the Eurocopter UK facility. This helicopter will be a higher specification than their current one, and will thus replace it at their main base at Exeter which they share with the Devon & Cornwall air unit. The leased EC135 will move to the North Devon base at Eaglescott Airfield, displacing the BO105 operated from there.

STAFFORDSHIRE: County Air Ambulance's latest operation has commenced operations from its temporary base at Tatenhill Airfield. It will move to Hixon when the new base is declared operational in about six months time. The aircraft and crew operate a 10-hours each day, seven-days-a-week.

The County Air Ambulance Charity launched a £1M appeal in October 2007, to support the move of an existing helicopter service from East Midlands Airport into Staffordshire. Due to funding issues the move was much delayed and led to the setting up of the new service in Derbyshire.

The flying hours of the County Air ambulance operation have been increased to enable the helicopter to offer a night time inter facility transport operation.

The County Air Ambulance is to commence a 16-hour day, seven days a week, air operation across the region.

Flight crews currently operate a 14-hour service but from May 1, the helicopter service based at RAF Cosford will introduce a shift system, with two teams of pilots, paramedics and doctors working a 16-hour a day.

In readiness for the extended service, the helicopter bases are being equipped with new landing lights required for night flying. County Air Ambulance also aims to have helicopter pad lighting available near each of its major receiving hospitals.



SURREY & SUSSEX: On Sunday June 1st from 11am - 4pm the air ambulance operation is holding a free entry event at its Dunsfold Park base open to all sections of the public. With plenty of free on-site parking they are offering a tour of the Air Ambulance base, meet the crew and help celebrate the anniversary of their first full year of flight.

Among the attractions on offer are Cranleigh Fire Brigade, SECAMB Ambulance Service, Sussex Police – including a Dog Display Team - Highways Agencies, Face Painting, Childrens Carousel, Stalls, Displays, Food outlets, Air Ambulance Merchandise and Helicopter Rides. The helicopter rides need to be pre-booked through Meinard of London Helicopter Centre on 01737 823514. Prices are £30 for a 5 minute flight over Dunsfold Park, with £10 of the fee donated straight back to the Air Ambulance.

THAMES VALLEY: The Thames Valley & Chiltern Air Ambulance Trust, which operates out of RAF Benson in Oxfordshire, will take delivery of a new Eurocopter EC135T2 this summer. The air ambulance service serves the people of Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire. The new helicopter is in the Eurocopter UK facility at Oxford being prepared for service.

An example of the new type of aircraft went on display to supporters and staff at Danesfield House Hotel in Marlow, Buckinghamshire last month. The display helicopter, G-KRNW normally serves in Cornwall. Later in the day another display was put on at the Weston Manor Hotel, Weston-on-the Green near Bicester in Oxfordshire.

The £1.7M Eurocopter is expected to come into operation from July this year and will be acquired on a lease from Bond Air Services based in Staverton, Gloucestershire.

It will replace the existing BO105DBS4 G-TVAM, this was formerly a Scottish police helicopter also replaced in service by an EC135.

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FIRE

UNITED KINGDOM

ESSEX: Talk about UK fire brigades getting into aviation via their own aircraft have circulated for years without any substance being evident. Now it is being suggested that fire-fighters could soon answer some 999 calls in a helicopter - as a way of beating traffic congestion.

Essex Fire and Rescue Service is considering taking to the skies in response to growing congestion caused by new homes and businesses in the county.

Assistant chief fire officer Gordon Hunter confirmed the service was investigating the possibility, though details of the cost and how it might be operated remain unclear.

The idea of using such a machine in Essex is part of a new review of operations being carried out by the fire and rescue service. [Echo]



UNITED STATES

CALIFORNIA: Rotorcraft Support, Inc. (RSI), of Van Nuys, California has announced that they have been awarded the completion of the new Bell 206 BIII that was recently purchased by the Los Angeles Fire Department (LAFD).

Completion of this new green helicopter includes supplying and installing the Sagem Avionics, Inc. (SAGEM), Integrated Cockpit Display System (ICDS). Along with the Sagem ICDS, Rotorcraft will also provide the following additional systems, including an Aero Computer GPS/moving map, a complete NVG cockpit, a SX16 Night-Sun and Wire Strike Protection System. A belly-mounted water dropping tank and a new airframe paint scheme that is unique only to the LAFD will also be provided within this contract.

www.rotorcraftsupport.com

CALIFORNIA: Orange County County fire officials are to spend \$21.6M to modernise an ageing helicopter fleet, buying two twin-engine helicopters with night flying capabilities as part of a series of moves by the Fire Authority's to meet future needs.

The Fire Authority relied upon two Vietnam War-era helicopters to battle serious fires last year but parts for the 1966 Bell Super-Huey helicopters have become harder to come by. They spend four months a year grounded by major maintenance needs.

The two Bell 412EP helicopters will be built by Edwards & Associates. The first is expected to arrive in January 2009. The second is scheduled to arrive a month later.

For the time being it appears that the older Huey machines will remain on strength but there are accommodation issues to be resolved meanwhile. The current hangar space cannot serve all four aircraft. [OCR]



ILLINOIS: The Chicago Fire Department introduced a new helicopter to service last month. Beyond stating that the 'wonder machine' was equipped with digital audio and video equipment that allows fire fighters to see through smoke and haze, a downlink, FLIR and a searchlight the reporting media neglected to identify it or say how it was intended to fight fires with it.

Ed: In June 2005 Chicago FD was involved in a non-fatal accident to its Bell N581FD, that was written off leaving a 2001 Bell 412EP N682FD c/n 36279 in service. The FD hired in a Bell Huey N204GP in the meantime pending the arrival of a new Bell 412EP replacement for the crashed machine - It might be surmised that the new craft is that replacement 412EP.



SEARCH & RESCUE

AUSTRALIA

A fleet of recently introduced Dornier 328 surveillance aircraft is said to be suffering from problems with their search radar.

The search radar on the five Dornier 328 turbo-prop aircraft operated by the Australian Maritime Safety Authority, which was designed to locate vessels in distress and other objects at sea or on land, has been temporarily replaced with weather radar. This leaves them reliant upon their sensor turrets and visual scanning.

The Dornier aircraft were selected over other types because they offered a higher transit speed to task are but the type has been regularly criticised for a range of technical issues that might otherwise escape attention. The Dash 8 aircraft is used by Australian Coastwatch.

The Howard government awarded contracts worth \$196.5m in 2005 to AeroRescue Pty Ltd, a subsidiary of the Darwin-based Paspaley Group, to provide and fly the five Dorniers, which were purchased second-hand from overseas. [News.com]

CANADA

Stickers will have to be pasted into 300,000 phone books that mistakenly direct anyone looking up the number of a car rental company to call the search-and-rescue centre in Halifax.

In the forthcoming directory for Halifax, the 1-800 number listed for National Car Rental is actually the number for the centre that sends ships and aircraft to rescue sailors. The errors have already started and on one day the centre had to redirect five calls for car rentals.

The same 1-800 number was listed online on a website. That was easily remedied but even so the government launched a civil lawsuit against Yellow Pages the company that publishes the phone book. The lawsuit was dropped after Yellow Pages agreed to the sticker amendment in all 300,000 copies of the directory.

Thanks to a lack of funding and indecision by the government Canada's old fleet of fixed-wing search and rescue aircraft, originally ordered replaced five years ago, are to keep flying until at least 2014 and possibly longer. The air force has been struggling to keep its 40-year-old, twin-engine Buffalos in the air along the West Coast, where their slow speed

makes them ideal for searching mountain ranges.

The air force relies on both the Buffalo and an ageing fleet of C-130 Hercules cargo planes for fixed-wing search. In addition, there are 14 CH-149 Cormorant helicopters.

EUROPE: A major international exercise using advanced new technology to help European nations improve their response to massive coastal flooding was held throughout Europe last month. Emergency command centres in the UK, Sweden, Holland and Ireland worked together to coordinate a joined-up response to flooding from a simulated tsunami in another EU member state. The exercise was of particular relevance in the light of the major tidal surge that nearly overwhelmed flood defences in the eastern United Kingdom, Germany and Holland in November 2007, and the growing threat from rising sea levels caused by climate change.

The EU FloodCommand programme, co-funded by the European Commission, is a project run by emergency training and technology company VectorCommand. It was set up to improve pan-European cooperation in the event of major coastal flooding emergencies such as tidal surges and tsunamis.

The complex issues of how to offer and prepare emergency response forces such as helicopters and boats, transport them to the recipient nation, and deploy and coordinate them in the recipient nation, were all explored during the exercise, with VectorCommand's Command Support System being used to improve communications and integrate all aspects of resource command and control.

JAPAN



COAST GUARD: AgustaWestland and Mitsui Bussan Aerospace have announced the delivery of three AW139 medium twin turbine engine helicopters to the Japan Coast Guard. The AW139s will be deployed at Japan Coast Guard bases throughout Japan and used to

perform maritime search and rescue and patrol missions. These helicopters were ordered in late 2006 as the initial phase of a replacement programme for up to 24 helicopters. The AW139s are equipped for all-weather, day/night and ship-based operations, with a comprehensive mission equipment package that includes a rescue hoist, high definition FLIR, communications and navigation equipment package.

The three AgustaWestland AW139 helicopters are outfitted with FLIR's Star SAFIRE HD imaging system. They will be deployed at Coast Guard bases throughout Japan and used to perform maritime search and rescue and patrol missions. These helicopters were ordered in late 2006 as the initial phase of a replacement programme for up to 24 helicopters.

Following the delivery of their first two EC225s in Search and Rescue (SAR) configuration a month ago, the helicopters were launched into operation by the Japan Coast Guard in late April at the Kansai International Airport. They perform public service and coastal surveillance missions as well as patrol Japan's territorial waters. Since 1989, the Japan Coast Guard has been using four AS332L1 Super Pumas to carry out these missions. In 2007, one of these Super Pumas rescued 44 people from a cargo ship in distress, under extremely difficult weather conditions.

The new helicopter has a completely new five-bladed main rotor which provides optimum lift, a maximum takeoff weight of 11 metric tons, and low vibration levels. Its range can also be significantly increased through the installation of auxiliary tanks to provide a total fuel capacity of 1180 kg. Because one is installed outside the fuselage and the other at the rear of the cargo bay, these tanks do not reduce the available cabin space. Amongst its different mission capabilities, the EC225 can rescue ten people at up to 300 nautical miles from the coast.

UNITED STATES

COAST GUARD: Admiral Thad W. Allen, Commandant of the US Coast Guard recently commented on the Coast Guard Authorisation Act 2008 [HR2830]

"I am deeply concerned about a number of provisions contained in H.R. 2830 that I believe would have a detrimental effect on the Coast Guard's ability to carry out our many vital maritime safety, security and environmental protection missions. As the commandant, I have an obligation to the public and our Coast Guard men and women to ensure the Coast Guard retains the necessary discretion and flexibility to meet our mission demands in an often-changing, dangerous operating environment. This bill, in its current form, does not do that. I am also disappointed that proposals to protect seafarers who participate in the investigation and adjudication of environmental crimes and enhance our ability to prosecute alien migrant smugglers at sea were not included in the bill. While the bill contains several provisions that would improve Coast Guard operations and mission support, I strongly oppose other provisions as written in the bill that would limit the commandant's authority to direct Coast Guard operations and assign senior personnel to specific duties. I look forward to continuing to work with the Congress to address each of the provisions outlined in the Statement of Administration Policy."

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INDUSTRY

Apical Industries Inc., has received Transport Canada's approval of their Nose Landing Gear Door Kit for AB139/AW139 model helicopters. FAA approval was previously received and EASA approval is pending.

The Apical Nose Landing Gear Doors Kit provides a complete bolt on solution which reduces drag and cabin noise associated with an open front wheelhouse. The doors are constructed of lightweight carbon fibre with closed cell foam cores which will improve service life and resist water absorption.

The Nose Landing Gear Doors are provided primed and ready for paint, while the machined linkage components come anodized, primed and painted to protect against corrosion. This kit can be installed as a stand alone or as a replacement kit and uses factory provisions found on all aircraft. Therefore, no permanent modifications are required to the airframe.

AgustaWestland announced the opening of its new regional business headquarters in Tokyo. The opening ceremony was attended by Finmeccanica Chief Operating Officer Giorgio Zappa, AgustaWestland Chief Executive Officer Giuseppe Orsi, Italian Ambassador Mario Bova and British Ambassador Sir Graham Fry.

AgustaWestland and Kawasaki Heavy Industries (KHI) signed a licence production and purchase agreement in 2003 to produce and support the Japanese MCH101s, as the Japan Maritime Self Defence Force's AW101s have been designated. The AW101 was selected in September 2003 with orders for 14 units for Airborne Mine Countermeasures (11) and Antarctic Support (3) roles. Additionally, one AW101 is operated by the Tokyo Metropolitan Police Agency. The Japan Coast Guard has recently taken delivery of three AW139 medium twin helicopters, ordered in late 2006 as the initial phase of a replacement programme for up to 24 helicopters to perform maritime search and rescue and patrol missions. Two additional helicopters have been ordered and they are expected to be delivered in the fourth quarter 2008.

The AW109 Power has been selected by the Japan National Police Agency for 16 prefectures including the Tokyo Metropolitan Police Agency. With 18 aircraft already in service, the AW109 Power and the AW139 are now the benchmark helicopters for Law Enforcement operations In Japan.



FLIR Systems has announced that it has acquired the stock of Ifara Tecnologias, S.L., a leading provider of middleware and client application software used to create sensor networks, for €7M. Based in Madrid, Spain, Ifara develops software technology, hardware, and developer tools used for the creation and maintenance of sensor networks for applications such as security and surveillance, force protection, reconnaissance, and maritime. Ifara's middleware sensor platform, known as Nexus, is a turnkey solution based on an open, modular and flexible architecture. Nexus offers connectivity and integrated control of a variety of different sensors, including thermal and CCTV cameras, fence and ground sensors, alarm contacts, UAVs and radars. With Ifara's technology, FLIR will be able to provide its customers with the capability to easily and seamlessly integrate a wide variety of sensors as required for any given project.

North American Surveillance Systems, a global leader in the design, installation and integration of airborne, mobile and fixed camera systems, announced at the recent SPIE Defense & Security Show, that it has been appointed as a distributor for FLIR Systems new product, the pilot's Enhanced Vision System or EVS3.

The FLIR EVS3 allows the pilot to see terrain, obstacles, wildlife, and other aircraft in total darkness, through smoke, smog, dust and haze.

AOPA have generously granted Sky Watch Civil Air Patrol a free Corporate Membership of the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association in recognition of the voluntary air observation and search charity's noble work.

In Chico, **California Aero Union Corp.**, are working with the Air National Guard [ANG] to test and equip Lockheed C-130 aircraft using a new, locally made firefighting system.

On present plans eight sets of these second generation Aero-Union retardant-carrying systems are to be supplied to the ANG.

The new system is strategically different than the first generation, in which the delivery channels for retardant were positioned out the back of the aircraft requiring the rear air-drop ramp of the aircraft to be opened. The new system delivers through piping out a side door, allowing the aircraft to remain pressurised.

By August, all eight Air National Guard planes should have the systems installed. The planes are likely to return annually for system maintenance and repairs.

United Rotorcraft Solutions (URS) and Ahlers Aerospace are forming a new partnership to provide the helicopter industry with Night Vision Lighting Capabilities.

URS is a premier aircraft completion facility, avionics shop and MRO; Ahlers Aerospace is a manufacturer of TSO, PMA aircraft instrumentation, lighting specialties and instrument/accessory overhaul facility. The two companies have combined their expertise and capabilities in a separate business to provide Night Vision Modifications at the highest quality and the best value that meet FAA Compliance to 14 CFR 27/29 as well as MIL-L-85762A for military and special mission use.

This partnership offers the new company the capability to do all instrumentation internal modifications in house under their respective repair station certifications and perform the aircraft modifications in house or at the customers' facility. The combined resources allow STC and new technology development at a faster rate with lower costs to customers.

Chelton Flight Systems has approved the amendment to STC SR02230AK-D, allowing software version 6.0B to be run on Chelton's Synthetic Vision EFIS displays in Eurocopter models AS350 and AS355. 6.0B was TSO'd in December, 2007 and is DO-178B Level-A certified. Over 40 significant benefits are available for end-users.

Pilatus Aircraft Ltd has announced that its PC-12NG is now in receipt of European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) and Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) certification. Announced at NBAA 2006, the Next Generation program is the latest progression of the highly successful PC-12 turboprop. EASA and FAA certification are significant milestones that will allow deliveries of the PC-12 NG to begin immediately.

Featuring a number of significant improvements, including a fully integrated Honeywell Primus Apex avionics system, a completely new cockpit designed by BMW Group Design-worksUSA, and a more powerful Pratt & Whitney Canada PT6A-67P engine, the PC-12 NG sets the tone for the market sector.

With the worldwide fleet numbering over 780 aircraft the PC-12 NG continues to generate strong interest from operators worldwide. As businesses strive to operate as competitively as possible, the PC-12 NG's versatility and low direct operating costs are more pertinent than ever before.

After recent and ongoing trial deployment of the **MW Microdrone** mini-UAV system with the West Midlands Fire Service Station Officer Pat Mika has upgraded their Microdrone system to include the new TI Camera from FLIR for extended trials.

The Camera is A FLIR Photon 19mm @25Hz giving 310m detection, 80m recognition & 40m identification of a 'human target. FLIR are looking to develop the system to give absolute temperatures from the system further aiding the Fire Service to identify hotspots and targeting their efforts at minimising fire spread and for the safety of their Firefighters. [AF]



Ed: As part of the wider police aviation information flow SO Mika is scheduled to give a presentation on the Microdrone system at the Shephard Police Aviation Conference in Olympia in November.

Earlier reports in Police Aviation News stating in good faith that Staffordshire Police had purchased a Gyro-Cam mini-UAV have been challenged. An enquiry of the source of this story—the manufacturers agent— has so far not been answered.

Eurocopter and five other companies have agreed to pay three families \$18.4M (€11.75M) to settle lawsuits over a 2002 AS350 medical helicopter crash that killed three people aboard.

The six companies that made and maintained the helicopter and its key components agreed to pay the families but did not admit any wrongdoing.

As part of the settlement Eurocopter has required more frequent inspections of the tail rotor part that was believed to have caused the crash. Eurocopter are to change the inspection requirements for the tail rotor load compensator from every 500 hours to every 100 hours of flight.

The six companies involved in the settlement were American Eurocopter, Eurocopter S.A, Duncan Aviation of Lincoln, CIT Leasing Corp., Societe D' Applications Des Machines Motrices and Dunlop Limited.

SunGard Public Sector announced that its SunGard DS2000 Integrated Communications

Control System (ICCS) has been recognised in the Queen's Awards for Enterprise: Innovation 2008.

SunGard Public Sector won the award for its continuous development of public safety communication systems. The Queen's Award recognises the contribution that SunGard has made in improving the operational efficiency of public safety control rooms and thus helping to save lives. The DS2000 ICCS has been deployed across a broad range of public agencies in the UK including Police, Fire and Ambulance, the Maritime and Coastguard Agency, the Highways Agency, British Transport Police, the MOD Police and RAF Search and Rescue. The completion of the roll-out to the ambulance service by the end of 2009 will see the DS2000 ICCS underpinning the Government's drive to bring improved response times to the whole of the UK population.

The DS2000 ICCS provides public safety organisations with flexible options for telephony and radio dispatch. Immediate touch-screen access gives the call taker/dispatcher an advantage when every second is vital. The DS2000 ICCS has traditionally been deployed to support fixed location control rooms; however, one of the innovations developed by SunGard has been a fully portable operator position that can be deployed quickly and easily for major events such as football matches and at disaster incidents. Moving forward, the success of the DS2000 ICCS product in the UK has generated strong interest from overseas public safety organisations.

Paul Eggleton, head of control room solutions at SunGard Public Sector, commented, "The Queen's Award recognises the contribution that the SunGard DS2000 team has made in developing innovative solutions for emergency services. The DS2000 system was the first of its type to be integrated with TETRA radio systems. Features such as dynamic allocation of TETRA radio system interfaces and the portable operator solution were developed to solve operational and deployment issues for the emergency control room environment."

The UK volunteer search and surveillance organisation **Skywatch** Civil Air Patrol now has a web site setting out its aims and achievements at <http://www.skywatchcivilairpatrol.org.uk/>

DART Aerospace Ltd., has received FAASA approval of their newly designed Low Profile Basket with an integrated Wrap-Around Step for Bell 205/210/212/214/412/UH-1 Aircraft.

Like their original basket, the Low Profile Basket is constructed of stainless steel with a high gloss, white scratch-resistant finish. Both versions of the basket may be installed on either the right or left side of the aircraft and installs using existing aircraft hard points.

DART's Low Profile Basket is designed with a slip resistant flat lid which provides a work platform and gives you easy access to the cargo cabin. The basket has 22 ft³ of cargo space and is capable of carrying a distributed load of 300 pounds which is ideal for transporting skis, golf clubs, fire fighting equipment or tools.

DART's Integrated Wrap-Around step is designed specifically to be mounted to either the Low Profile or original design Basket and assists passenger entry. The step wraps around the forward and outboard sides of the basket and features a slip resistant surface.

The Heli-Utility Baskets™ are also available for: Agusta A119, Bell 206A/B, Bell 206L/L1/L3/L4, Bell 407, Eurocopter AS 350/AS 355 and EC130.

Thermoteknix Systems Ltd is to be presented with a Queen's Award for Enterprise. The award, under the Innovation category acknowledges the success it has achieved through outstanding innovation with the groundbreaking range of MIRICLE® thermal imaging cameras over the last three years. They previously won The Queen's Award for Export Achievement in 1998, and is one of only a very few companies to have ever won Queen's Awards in two different categories.

The Award recognizes Thermoteknix for developing the MIRICLE range of high performance, ultra miniature thermal imaging cameras. Utilising complex electronics and packag-

ing, the cameras are used in many moving target or camera applications. The range includes hermetically-sealed units for use in space exploration, hand-held imagers, surveillance cameras, cameras for unmanned vehicles and the world's first shutterless thermal imaging camera. Using proprietary algorithms and control circuits the need for heating/cooling systems used in infrared cameras has been eliminated. Thus manufacturing costs and power consumption have been reduced and operational temperatures extended.

Turbomeca Australasia has opened a TurboSupport Center (service center) in New Zealand, the first in the region. This opening marks an important step forward in the achievement of international expansion through new support resources.

Located in Queenstown, this New Zealand TurboSupport Center supports a fleet of nearly 150 Turbomeca engines in service throughout the country. It is home to a regional Field Representative and a rapid response technician so in addition to providing daily troubleshooting assistance. There will be some local logistical support as well as provision for deep maintenance on all of the different Turbomeca variants operated within the region.

This additional stepping stone in the Turbomeca global network will boost its future capability to service both commercial and military customers. The recent decision from the RNZAF (Royal New Zealand Air Force) to purchase Turbomeca powered A109LUH and Rolls-Royce Turbomeca powered NH90 helicopters confirms Turbomeca's strong position in New Zealand. Turbomeca now operates a network of 26 TurboSupport Centers worldwide.

Geneva Aviation a member of the DART Helicopter Services family of companies, has received EASA approval of their Two-Place Front Seat and their Rear Bench Seat Modification Kit for AS350/355 series helicopters.

Geneva's P119 Two-Place Front Seat provides the capability to seat two passengers in the front left position instead of one. The seat is constructed of durable Kevlar® fiberglass composite; is reinforced in high stress areas, and is designed around the collective area to provide flight control protection from passengers and carry on items. The Two-Place Front Seat Kit includes the necessary under floor structure, seat cushion foam, a collective area guard, shoulder harness and lap belt assemblies, and a Rear Seat Modification Kit.

Geneva's P134 Rear Seat Modification Kit creates more space in the rear seat area while maintaining passenger comfort. The kit also aids in faster passenger loading/unloading.

Pratt & Whitney Canada (P&WC) has signed a three-year engine repair and overhaul contract with the Los Angeles County Fire Department to support its fleet of P&WC-powered Bell 412 helicopters. Under the agreement, P&WC will provide engine maintenance for six installed PT6T-3D engines and two spares, used in firefighting, EMS transport, and search and rescue operations.

Two business units within Cobham's Avionics and Surveillance Division, **Chelton Flight Systems** (CFS) and



S-TEC, are to be merged to create an avionics centre of excellence based in Mineral Wells, Texas. The move is part of Cobham's drive to develop a fully integrated cockpit and improve its customer focus. The new integrated business unit will operate under a single management team by the end of 2008.

The makers of *Planet Earth* are diving into their next expedition: the icy reaches of the North and South poles.

BBC's Natural History Unit has begun filming *Frozen Planet*, a sequel of sorts to last year's 11-episode hit *Earth*, exploring the wildlife and extremely sparse human populations of Antarctica and the Arctic Circle. The eight-hour project will take more than two years to complete and is estimated to cost more than \$16 M. It will arrive on the UK's BBC in the autumn of 2011 and won't surface on the Discovery Channel until spring 2012.

Producers are using an advanced version of an Axsys **Cineflex**, a helicopter-mounted high-definition camera used in *Earth* that withstands extreme cold temperatures up to 30 below zero and remains steady and films at long ranges without disturbing wildlife.



Cessna Aircraft Company has announced that it has achieved FAA certification to deliver its Caravan models with Garmin G1000 integrated avionics as standard equipment.

Cessna is also to Deliver First Skyhawk Turbo Diesel by Mid-2008. It is closing in on certification of the turbo diesel model of its popular 172 Skyhawk.

Dart Helicopter Services announces EASA approval of Apical's Tri-Bag Emergency Float System for EC135 Series Helicopters.

Dart Helicopter Services has announced that their subsidiary Apical Industries Inc., has received EASA approval of their Tri-Bag Emergency Floatation System for Eurocopter EC135 helicopters. The approval provides for two different installations, either with liferafts or with-



out. FAA and Transport Canada approval has been previously received.

The Tri-Bag Floatation System includes four floats which provide a very stable float platform and is the only system that allows the aircraft to be towed after a water landing. The floats may be deployed manually by a cyclic mounted handle or by the optional automatic electrical back up system, which utilizes two water activated switches. The external liferafts with survival kits are integrated into the forward floats, a design that offers not only ease of use but also enhanced safety. The life rafts may be deployed either in the cockpit or by two externally mounted T-handles. The externally mounted liferafts conserve valuable passenger space and improve safety.

Apical offers an optional skid extension kit which allows use of the float system with standard skidtubes. There is also an exchange program available for floats, liferafts and reservoir/valve assemblies.

ACCIDENTS & INCIDENTS

21 February 2008 Bombardier LearJet 35 N351AS Air ambulance of Aeromed International based out of Anchorage, Alaska and operated by Chipola Aviation. In gusting winds on short final into Aniak airport and just prior to landing, the aircraft's left wing dipped, causing the tip tank to contact the runway pavement. The landing rollout was normal. Visual inspection showed damage to the bottom of the left wing and tank. Initial information suggests wind shear as the cause. [Concern]

16 March 2008 Agusta A109E Power N5UV Air ambulance. UVA-Pegasus Medical Transport Network, University of Virginia Medical Center, Charlottesville operated by OmniFlight

Following recent routine maintenance and several post maintenance flights the aircraft was placed back in service. On the second operational flight the door light illuminated at cruise speed. Seconds later the right cabin door opened abruptly and violently. Attempts made to close the door by medical crew members during near cruise speed were unsuccessful.

Pilot slowed to 30 knots and door was closed and secured by medical crew members. Flight concluded without further incident. The door mechanism was inspected by the pilot and the door was tested and appeared to function appropriately and was secure. [Concern]

3 April 2008 Bell UH-1H Huey N911NV. Washoe County sheriff's office helicopter was damaged after apparently striking a bird while on a training mission.

No one was hurt and the HH-50 Huey helicopter landed just over the Nevada-California line after the accident. The sheriff's office says the pilots and flight crew reported hearing a popping noise and whistling sound, and felt a slight vibration. Once on the ground, significant damage was noticed to the main rotor blade.

5 April 2008 Robinson R44 N402PD Topeka Police, Kansas. The one year old police helicopter auto-rotated on a parking lot at Stoffer Science Hall on the Washburn University campus and suffered major damage. The two officers on board walked away with minor scratches. It is believed that the helicopter was setting down in the dark and struck an unlit light post and turned over onto its side. Some reports suggest that it will be a write-off. [Media]

10 April 2008 Bell 412 N412SM. Air ambulance operating for St. Mary's CareFlight in Colorado by PHI. On initial start up for an interfacility transport a security guard witnessed a towel blow up through the rotor system. The security guard picked up the towel but failed to notify the crew of the incident. The crew was allowed to take off and fly away. Upon return the pilot was notified by the security supervisor of what had happen. The helicopter was taken out of service at that time and a thorough inspection was performed by the mechanic. No damage was discovered and the helicopter was returned to service. [Concern]

10 April 2008 Eurocopter BK117C2/EC145 N145LF Air ambulance of the University of Massachusetts Memorial Life Flight in Worcester operated by Air Methods. The aircraft

was on inter-hospital patient transport and 10 minutes into the flight when a smell associated with an electrical element was noticed. Aircraft immediately diverted to a local airport and landed without incident. Maintenance personnel found a circuit breaker in the overhead cabin which had become loose and chafed a wire. This caused the outer covering of the wire to burn away creating the smell in the cabin. The circuit breaker and wire were replaced.

12 April 2008 helicopter Indonesian Police. A helicopter being operated by the police over Bandung in West Java on a election leaflet delivery sortie lost one of its rear windows. The window struck the roof of a house but caused no injuries. [Jakarta Post]

Ed: The police in Indonesia operate a mixed fleet including BO105 and Enstrom 480 helicopters.

16 April 2008 Airtanker AT6T N602AA. Fire fighting aircraft. Commercial operators aircraft flying fire fighting mission near Fort Carson, Colorado Springs, Colorado crashed just after delivering a load of retardant to a wildfire. The pilot Gert Marais from Fort Benton, Montana was killed. [Media/FAA]

17 April 2008 Bell OH-58 Kiowa. California National Guard. A Mather Airport, Sacramento, based helicopter operating a drug enforcement mission with Forestry law enforcement officer aboard was forced to make a hard landing in the Sierra Nevada foothills. The helicopter came down on a dirt road a mile from the Georgetown airport, 40 miles from Sacramento. The Kiowa had significant damage but without causing injury to the three on board. [AP]

17 April 2008 Russian fixed wing twin. Aircraft taking part in an international fire fighting drill came off a runway in Sardinia during training operations. None of the 17 people aboard was injured. The cause was initially attributed to heavy rain. [AP]

20 April 2008 Helicopter A Los Angeles police helicopter [presume Eurocopter AS350] made an emergency landing on a West Hollywood street Sunday after a warning light indicated a possible problem. Officer Kate Lopez said the helicopter landed on San Vicente Boulevard in front of a public library. Deputies at a nearby sheriff's station said a light went on indicating an oil pressure problem in the engine and possible loss of engine power. [Media]

23 April 2008 Eurocopter Bk117C2/EC145 N984ME Air ambulance of STAT MedEvac of West Mifflin, Pennsylvania operated by CEM of Western PA. During straight and level flight, a loud thump was heard followed by an aircraft vibration from the tail section. Pilot executed a precautionary landing at the closest air park in Laurel, Delaware. Initial aircraft inspection indicated a failure in the air conditioning system. The bolts holding the air conditioning drive pulley sheared from the rotor brake disc, causing the pulley belt to disengage from the pulley. [Concern]

25 April 2008 Helicopter. Iranian Police. The helicopter crashed in the mountains of Varazghan town in northwestern East Azerbaijan province killing five on board. Three were the helicopter crew and the other two were the heads of the crime prevention and traffic police of the province. The flight related to a traffic control mission. [Frontier Post]

EVENTS

BAPCO

Last month was the annual BAPCO communications conference and exhibition aimed at the emergency services sector was held in Islington, London N. Much of the content of BAPCO lies outside the core airborne emergency services sector but there are numerous areas of crossover. It is therefore mainly an area to stand back and observe.

Ahead of the main event where new offerings were to be publicised Motorola hosted a round table briefing on the latest developments and future aspirations for TETRA digital communications. The location was appropriately in The Clink Prison. Clink I had heard of and used as a loose term of imprisonment but I never expected to be called there at my time



of life! It is in Southwark, London and I simply never knew that!

TETRA is the UK's digital radio and data solution and it has quite a complex history dating back more than a decade. In many ways it is cutting edge technology but it does have its areas of less than perfect service provision. More than ten years ago the system promised all those features we have become used to in 'simple' GSM/mobile phone technology in a separate stand-alone system. They promised much and were new and untried technology, but many of the features have never come to fruition within TETRA.

Although money has undoubtedly played a part in the delayed roll-out it seems that there is more than a measure of the police being hidebound and unwilling to accept seed change technology in more than dribs and drabs. After all this is the same police that 'discovered' the telegraph in 1888, the bicycle in 1905 and the car in 1923 although each had been available commercially for at least 20 years at the time the police accepted them. So there is some historical weight behind the police being at best lethargic. A fragmented buying system based on dozens of individual police forces only exacerbates the situation. But before we blame the UK police for everything the situation is far worse in the USA where there are over 16,000 organisations. The UK is now close to 100% emergency services TETRA coverage.

Although it was never the original idea the providers of the system and the NPfA are looking at an option that may see the police officer on the ground being able to use a mix of TETRA, GSM and Broadband to service the needs of the day. There are radio black spots although there are not as many as in the old analogue radio systems so there is an operational pressure to circumvent that drawback. People watchers may have noted that in some areas police officers carry a GSM/mobile as well as the TETRA set. As every call within TETRA has to be paid for individually paying a commercial GSM provider to ensure a parallel connectivity is not too far outside the box.

Multi-function wireless broadband technology was ably demonstrated to the Dorset Police covering the September 2007 Labour Party Conference at Bournemouth. Motorola set up a localised network [MESH based on UK military technology] that included high levels of on-the-ground video links, low quality body cams supplementing a range of high quality HD hand cams that were not transmitting their output. All this secured the perimeter of the venue without bringing in large quantities of heavy equipment. To underline the capability Motorola were able to dismount the system within hours and set it up again down the road to undertake a similar MESH treatment of an important soccer match.

Next generation TETRA infrastructure and in particular, new developments such as data over TETRA with TETRA Enhanced Data Service (TEDS) have been set up. In Scotland the Northern Constabulary has recently introduced video messages, sending images across



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their massive region – blind spots notwithstanding. In their case TETRA remains the only option. GSM coverage is abysmal. With officers often hours from their base having the image of the suspect sent to them has its positive aspects. This is not a trial but roll-out across the UK will as ever rely upon local whim.

There are significant [or at least perceived] data protection aspects to sending images of individuals. It seems that it is the perception in the region [which does not have air support] that you cannot send an image of a suspected person to an officer on his TETRA radio because [under human rights laws] you need the suspects permission to do so. And yet a police aircraft [or even a CCTV point] with a camera regularly points that camera at individuals or groups of people undertaking criminal acts and both records and transmits that image to a whole range of police personnel with receivers. It could be said that the control room [and its dozens of eyes] is the only place with a receiver – but that is not the case. In many instances special operations will quadruple the number of handheld receivers in use. I do not know the answer to that human rights issue but it certainly seems to hold no water - it is a strange world.

ISNR

The launch this month of the UK's new unified Border Agency highlights the crucial importance of countering threats to national security posed by terrorism, illegal immigration and organised crime.

The technologies needed to optimise the effectiveness of border protection operations will be on display at ISNR, the international security exhibition and conference, which will take place at London's Olympia on 2nd and 3rd December this year. Key players in this sector of the security industry that have already signed up as exhibitors include Thales, EADS and Senstar-Stellar.

		ACPO-APA 2008		
		International Policing Exhibition and Summer Conference		
		Conference 24 - 26 June 2008	Exhibition 25 - 26 June 2008	
		Liverpool	Liverpool Arena & Convention Centre	
The Biggest and Most Influential Policing Event of the Year				



Border control will also be one of the core themes of this year's ISNR conference. The event, which will also cover critical infrastructure protection and transport, will bring together leading figures from around the world to share their views and experiences. There will also be a free seminar programme running on the exhibition floor to allow exhibitors the chance to demonstrate the theory and practice behind some of the latest border protection and security related technology.

DIARY

11-13 May 2008. Heli-Middle East 2008 Grand Hyatt Muscat Hotel, Oman www.shephard.co.uk/heli-me

15-17 May 2008 HeliRussia 2008. International Helicopter Industry Exhibition, Moscow. Crocus Expo 4, Third Silikatny proyezd, Moscow 123308 Russia. +7 495 643 11 93 info@helirussia.ru www.helirussia.ru

20-23 May 2008 World Congress AirMed 2008 Prague, Czech Republic. Guarant International +420 284 001 444 fax +420 284 001 448 airmed2008@guarant.cz www.airmed2008.org

20 – 22 May 2008 EBACE2008, Geneva.

21-23 May 2008 Integra + Seguridad 2008. Feria de Zaragoza, Spain. The International Congress for Local Police Chiefs & City Councils and the Big Cities Open Forum, The International Emergencies Congress, The International Congress of Defence and Applied Technologies, The Annual Meeting of The Foundation CLUB DE LA SEGURIDAD, The Security and Emergency National Awards. Marketed by ENTERPRISE ASSOCIATES INTERNATIONAL 30 Pennyford Court, Henderson Drive, London, NW8 8UF TEL/FAX: 020 7289 6982 E-MAIL: eai@btopenworld.com

27-29 May 2008 Shephard's Heli-Pacific & UV Pacific 2008 will be held at the Royal Pines Resort, Gold Coast, Australia. www.shephard.co.uk/events

27 May – 1 June 2008 ILA Berlin Berlin International Aerospace Show Berlin Brandenburg International Airport. Exostar, the leader in secure multi-enterprise collaboration for the aerospace and defense market and suppliers from around the world will exhibit in the International Suppliers Center – a three-day conference event (May 27–June 1, 2008) at the Berlin International Air Show – the show within the show that will facilitate business discussions, designed specifically to match up OEMs and first tier suppliers with 2nd and lower tier suppliers. [EADS](http://www.ila-berlin.com), [Diehl](http://www.ila-berlin.com), [Airbus](http://www.ila-berlin.com), [Eurocopter](http://www.ila-berlin.com), [Rolls-Royce](http://www.ila-berlin.com), [MTU](http://www.ila-berlin.com), [Liebherr](http://www.ila-berlin.com) and [Lufthansa Technik](http://www.ila-berlin.com) have already committed to attend, explain their programs and future needs and meet with suppliers. www.ila-berlin.com

