

Police Aviation News

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PAR



UK: Massive Changes Predicted

This is Cambridgeshire Police and their volunteer public service partners the MAGPAS medical unit. Both are predicted to cease air operations

Malta - two 'new' aircraft

New York brings its 'secret' asset to the front

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EDITORIAL

The bad news has been imparted and the players have now been told their fate. The beginnings of National Air Support have been set in train.

There has been a great deal of hair pulling and not a few tears and anger reported from some quarters. Newly built facilities are to be abandoned and yet others created to make the grand plan fit. Where some areas have grown up with an over abundance of air support thanks to air support positive local preference – the north west springs to mind - there will be closures. No one said it all had to make sense to everyone.

Whatever will happen is not going to happen tomorrow, although some can take place instantly many have to await the expiry of various contracts for aircraft provision or engineering support. The Framework agreements expire next April and who knows whether there will be a need for a replacement. A case in point might be that of Wiltshire, the existing contract runs to 2014, two years beyond the creation of the national service. Potential further complication there may be local financing by the charity based air ambulance. Who knows where those pressures may take that operation now that deletion is the threat.

If you wonder whether this development is positive or negative you may not take comfort in the thought that the edict that brought this about was engineered by persons with no knowledge of police air support other than its cost. They were led by senior officers too young to remember what crime was like before air support put a damper on the activities of criminals, and who to a man never spent more than a token period of time being street policemen. The air support professionals have taken the edict and made the best job of it they can.

The biggest vote of confidence in keeping as many resources as possible was provided by the gangs who grabbed the headlines in attacking and destroying police aircraft in the last 18 months. This, unfortunately, is their victory.

To stand back from the pain a little this major realignment of UK police air support can be seen as the inevitable consequence of piecemeal development over the years. Other nations set off on the national route early on and centrally decided what the aircraft should be, where they should be based and a host of other decisions. They have a fleet that is both visually and mechanical similar responding to operational demand rather than the whims of individual past chief constables. The UK's mixed fleet reflects its origins based on personal choice, the future is likely to be one type, one engineering support contractor and one standard colour scheme.

If you think this has been difficult step back again and look at the mess in the USA. Individual choice has produced hundreds of air units with thousands of aircraft of all shapes and sizes serving some 17,000 law enforcement agencies. Some sections of the skies above such as Los Angeles can have a dozen different agencies providing air support, others have none; my guess is that no-one will ever seek to centrally remedy that!

Bryn Elliott

LAW ENFORCEMENT

AUSTRALIA

QUEENSLAND: A local report has been published on the BN-2 recently taken into service in the State. The aircraft, delivered at a cost of around A\$2.2M, will be used for search and rescue operations and transporting Queensland police officers and personnel around the Far Northern Region.

The seven passenger IFR Britten-Norman Islander aircraft offering a five hour endurance will be based at new hangar facilities on Horn Island, and able to land on all 13 airstrips within the Torres Strait. [Ryan Baker]

VICTORIA: The police air wing having just taken delivery of its latest Eurocopter AS365N3 Dauphin at Essendon Airport has allowed the Blue Ribbon Foundation to seize the moment and issue a fund-raising new toy helicopter that looks just like its forebear the SA365C Dauphin. Complete with turning wheels and rotor blades, the toy is a replica of the Victoria Police helicopter right down to its police insignia.

The helicopter is available for \$12 with money going to the Blue Ribbon Foundation. It can be bought at the foundation's office in Central Ave in Moorabbin or online at www.remember.org.au



BELGIUM

The air unit took delivery of a fourth MD Explorer helicopter to be G-16 in the middle of October. The new aircraft arrived in an all black colour scheme to supplement the three early model MD900 version currently in service. The earlier aircraft, now G-10, G-11 and G-12, were acquired in the late 1990's and early part of the 2000's and it was possible to have three similar airframes but the MD900 is no longer available as a production option requiring the sourcing of second hand airframes for fleet compatibility. The three early machines are c/n 00034/00045 and 00038 respectively.

The newer Explorer is a 2008 build MD902 Explorer delivered from Odense to Melsbroek airport in Brussels on October 14. The Explorer is c/n 900-00132 bought from CASA Air in Denmark. This airframe was N40216 until registered in August last year to CASA Air A/S, based in the town of Horsens with local registration OY-HMS. The airframe awaits role equipment and is not expected to enter service for some months.

From next year the three original airframes will each be upgraded to MD902 standard with a view that the eventual fleet will be to the same standard.

Meanwhile Zeiss has delivered its third new Leo III camera system to the unit. [BNP]



GERMANY

BAVARIA: Plans of the forthcoming police air operations infrastructure in Munich have been disclosed. The new building will house the Federal Police flyer squadron south and the Bavarian police operations at the Oberschleißheim airport. Readers will recall the recent open day there.

The structure will consist of two adjoining buildings and hard standings designed to accommodate the Federal and Bavarian EC135, EC155, AS332 and NH-90 helicopters.

Engineering support will be common for all aircraft at the completion date – expected to be 2012. [MM]

ITALY

GUARDIA DI FINANZA: The Helicopter Museum at Weston-super-Mare in Somerset has secured another First for a UK aviation collection, with the addition of an ex-Italian Guardia di Finanza Agusta A109GdiF helicopter. The aircraft is the first all-Italian aircraft and second addition this year to the Museum's helicopter collection. The helicopter was unveiled by UK Tourism Minister John Penrose and officially handed over to the Museum by Graham Cole, AgustaWestland's Managing Director during a ceremony held at the Museum on 8th October.

Following a first flight in 1971 the twin-engined A109 was the first all-Italian helicopter to enter large scale production, and the first to adopt the sleek lines and styling common among more modern helicopters of today. Since its introduction the basic design has been constantly upgraded and improved over the years and the aircraft is in worldwide service for military, corporate, search and rescue, air ambulance, law enforcement and other missions. The Guardia di Finanza, which is a parapublic organisation equating to a national customs and immigration force, purchased its own variant of the A109 during the 1980s to patrol Italy's borders and territorial waters. It has recently been taking delivery of the new generation AW109N Nexus to replace the older aircraft and declared the A109 surplus to requirements earlier this year. The acquisition by The Helicopter Museum was supported personally by the Chief Executive Officer of manufacturer AgustaWestland, Giuseppe Orsi, and the company also sponsored shipment of the helicopter from Frosinone, Rome, where it has been stored since withdrawal from service last June. [EAP]



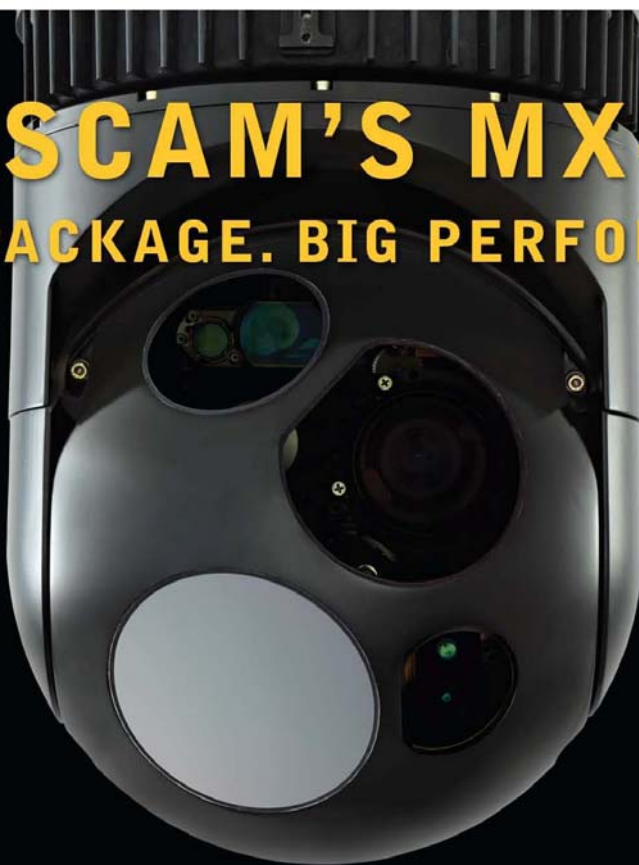


This Armed Forces of Malta BN 2 aircraft has undergone a major reworking, details on page 7.

Image: © Armed Forces of Malta
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Armed Forces of Malta Alouette III AS9315 has entered service, details on page 7.

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MALTA

ARMED FORCES: The Armed Forces of Malta's Air Wing has completed a €2M refit project which saw the installation of new turbine engines and top of the range avionics on one of its Islanders as well as the full return to service of a third Aerospatiale SA316B Alouette helicopter.

The project, which was co-financed by the European Union and the Government of Malta, will mean a 30% increase in the Air Wing's operational assets as well as lower operating costs. The funding was applied for under the External Borders Fund (EBF) which supports countries who face a heavy financial burden arising from the implementation of common standards on control and surveillance of external borders policy.

Malta had two Britten Norman BN-2B aircraft with piston engines and one of these has now been converted to turbine standard and had a systems upgrade. The aircraft is now equipped with a Garmin GNS530 navigation system, autopilot and air conditioning. The aircraft retains the Sagem sensor fit on its starboard side but the forthcoming Beech 200s are scheduled to have a Wescam fit. The turbine conversion will enhance the operational capabilities of the aircraft in the lead up to the delivery of the new Beech aircraft due for delivery in 2011 and 2012.

The Islander updated and modified is AS9819, the second of its type the AFM acquired in 1998. This has been 9H-ADF when civil registered c/n 2156. The other Islander operated is still piston powered and not due for a similar upgrade, probably with a view that it will leave the islands after the Beech aircraft arrive.

The Alouette 9H-AAV/AS9315 SA316B c/n 2288 was acquired in 7/1993 and I believe has never been operated prior to this engine and SAR upgrade conversion. It received a 'new' engine to replace a time expired Turbomeca Artouste IIIB power plant. The aircraft also received a winch to bring it up to a similar standard to those already in service.

With three Alouette's now available to service the AFM expect that they will be able to offer a 24/7 SAR service within 60nm of the islands from their own resources.

Both of the aircraft have been given a new paint scheme.

AFM staff are currently in the USA training for the new Beech King Air surveillance aircraft.
[MC-Independent/PAR]

SWEDEN

STOCKHOLM: Several suspects involved in the September 23, 2009 helicopter robbery of a G4S cash depot in Västberga south of Stockholm were found guilty last month.

The suspects allegedly made off with over 39 million kronor (\$5.3 million) after storming the banknote storage facility, which they broke into after being dropped from a helicopter.

Only a small fraction of the amount, less than 100,000 kronor, has been recovered.

Seven of the ten men originally charged for their role in the robbery were convicted. Those convicted include the 35-year-old pilot, sentenced to seven years in prison for aggravated robbery, as was a 31-year-old man who had entered the cash depot.

The 39-year-old man thought to be the brains behind the planning of the robbery was convicted of being an accomplice and given a three-year prison sentence rather than the maximum penalty of ten years in prison.

A 32-year-old man who helped procure mobile phone SIM cards was sentenced to five years in prison as an accessory to aggravated robbery, as was a 33-year-old man who provided the gang with explosives to blast its way into the depot.

The man who rigged a fake traffic accident which was supposed to give the helicopter an alibi was sentenced to two years in prison. And a 38-year-old charged for having recruited the pilot was convicted of protecting a criminal and handed a 1-year prison sentence.

Seven of the ten men originally charged for their role in the robbery were convicted. Two men accused of laying metal traps on the road to impede police response to the robbery were released, as was a man charged for having placed fake bombs at a police heliport. Three men acquitted by the case were released the day after the conclusion of the trial, which ended on September 9th.

During the raid three masked, armed men were dropped onto the banknote facility by a sto-

len helicopter. The men then smashed a window and blasted their way through the building using explosives before exiting the building several minutes later with sacks of cash. The police were hindered because a bag marked with the word "bomb" had been previously placed at the police helicopter base. The abandoned helicopter was later found north of Stockholm.

UNITED KINGDOM

NATIONAL: A Chief Officers Council meeting scheduled for mid-October was where the heads of each constabulary found out who has kept and who has lost their aircraft in the plans to create a National Police Air Service by April 2012. The National Air Support Symposium a

few days later was designed to bring together the various UEO's, DUEO's and Chief pilots and require them to make the system work. It is fair to assume that the details will still be fluid by the end of this year, as the whole does not need to be implemented for over a year there is no real rush.

The recently reported suggestion on the table [on a take-it or leave-it basis] was a proposed reduction from 'thirty three helicopters' to 'twenty three with three spares' has effectively been confirmed, although one is actually the Greater Manchester BN Defender fixed wing [the only remaining overt fixed wing resource across the UK]. These numbers do not include Northern Ireland or other exclusions. Beyond the airframes there are base closures, fleet relocations and a great deal of heart searching. One aspect that has yet to rear its head is potential for revolt. In theory a police force could declare and keep an independent air unit it has paid for but it is unlikely that such a revolt would last long with the Home Office and CAA holding the keys to the all important PAOC documentation.

The following is a breakdown of proposed base sites. The list does come with a rider that these are likely to change, they are proposals and subject to sign off from the relevant police authority *and whoever shouts loudest*.

Western Counties (currently serving Avon and Somerset and Gloucester) and Wiltshire (Consortium with Great Western Air Ambulance) will reduce from one EC135 and one MD902 to one aircraft, combine and relocate to a new base at RAF Colerne;

Sussex [MD902] and **Surrey** [EC135T2] will reduce to one aircraft, combine and relocate to a new base at Dunsfold, Surrey;

Norfolk [AS355F2] and **Suffolk** [EC135P2] will reduce to one aircraft, combine and relocate to a new base at RAF Honington;

Merseyside aircraft [EC135T2] will be withdrawn from service with provision continuing from other bases in the area [Cheshire, Lancashire & Greater Manchester] ;

South Yorkshire aircraft [MD902] will be withdrawn from service with provision continuing from other bases in the area [Humberside, North Midlands and West Yorkshire];

Cambridge aircraft [MD902] will be withdrawn from service with provision continuing from other bases in the area [East Midlands and Suffolk];

Dyfed-Powys aircraft [Agusta A109E Power] will be withdrawn from service with provision continuing from other bases in the area [South & East Wales];

Chiltern Consortium: The RAF Henlow based aircraft [EC135T2] from Chiltern (Thames Valley, Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire) will be withdrawn from service with provision continuing from other bases in the area [the other Chiltern aircraft and presumably East Midlands, London];

Essex aircraft [EC135T2] will relocate to Southend Airport;

Dorset aircraft [MD902] will relocate to Bournemouth Airport which will allow it to better cover Hampshire and Wiltshire. Last month the replacement for the now departed Hampshire fixed wing was supposedly the task for Surrey and Sussex now to be based even further away..



West Midlands aircraft [EC135P2] will relocate to work from Wolverhampton Airport creating a two aircraft unit with **Central Counties** (West Mercia and Staffordshire) [EC135P2]. Both aircraft currently work under the Central Motorway Police Group banner; If the unit was not mentioned in the original listing – as in the case of Central Counties, Cheshire, Chiltern [at RAF Benson, Oxford], Cleveland, Devon & Cornwall, East Midlands, Greater Manchester, Humberside, Lancashire, Metropolitan Police, Northumbria, North Midlands and North Wales and West Yorkshire - they remain largely as they are now with their current aircraft but they will in time lose identity and change airframes for newer ones when displaced from other areas.

There are thorny decisions to be made over the supply of services. The helicopter fleet is likely to settle on to one type, but this is going to take years. Engineering support likewise will reflect the mixed fleet but, because they are older, the number of MD Explorer's will dwindle quickly. Whether the in-house engineering [as at Devon & Cornwall] will survive has not been announced. The Essex and Suffolk arrangement certainly seems doomed.

And then there are the people who work at the locations. There will be many displaced pilots and observers.

Among the positives may be the 'final solution' of that long standing argument over which downlink capability to standardize on. They currently comprise a mix of analogue and digital equipment in two separate chunks of spectrum and are not interoperable. The key to the kingdom is the Ministry of Defence, the license holders for the leased spectrum. There is a need for a common standard [and presumably a common supplier] at a cost around £10M a year for the lease. That is without costing the across the fleet change to the common standard. Standardisation is going to eat a big chunk out of the mooted savings, only the re-

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cently delivered EC135P2+ airframes offer commonality. Floater pilots will face a nightmare of minor differences in how the aircraft are laid out. Not a problem when the flight is going smoothly, but potentially critical under pressure.

It is expected that the proposals will create their own firestorm so detailed discussions will last beyond the end of 2010.

In London on October 26th the Association of Chief Police Officers [ACPO] held a briefing on the future of police air support in the UK [effectively just England and Wales]. The ACPO lead on air support, Chief Constable of Hampshire Alex Marshall, spelled out as much as was to be public domain – effectively the listing above.

Long before the briefing the Chief Constable of South Yorkshire Police Meredydd Hughes QPM broke ranks and went to the media expressing concerns about the deletion of the force's Sheffield-based helicopter base and seek to obtain air support from other bases in Derbyshire, Humberside and West Yorkshire.

CC Hughes, who in the past has been at the forefront in bringing air support to the region [three forces he was connected with each chose to buy the MD902 Explorer during his tenure with them] states that he supports the National air wing proposal as a more effective way in which to bring about air support. But, it seems, not if his aircraft base in South Yorkshire is lost!

He is to fight to make sure the service stays in Sheffield. It might be supposed he is not going to be the only NIMBY but he is unusually close to air support and may well be the only senior rank with sufficient knowledge and fervour.

The plot makes many changes in East Anglia, not least the loss of the Cambridgeshire and [very much part time] Norfolk operations. Suffolk moving only a short distance from one military base to another to be closer to Norfolk abandons the engineering set up that served three forces. Clearly that concept is to be out of favour in the brave new world - so abandon the engineers and their expensive equipment at Wattisham. It was easy to justify the police helicopter in Cambridgeshire when it was used as an air ambulance by MAGPAS who were located in the police building at RAF Wyton. But having an air ambulance parked next to the police helicopter at Wyton the case for the police aircraft became less obvious recently – but see under the Air Ambulance section, that is to change.

The MD902 at Wyton was also the odd man out with EC135s in Essex and Suffolk sharing a group maintenance base at Wattisham but the whole model is to change with the Essex helicopter moving to Southend bringing it closer to Kent, an area it already serves.



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NORTHERN IRELAND: Senior Army officers have accepted that the terror threat has escalated in Northern Ireland and have stressed that every precaution is being taken to protect soldiers and families.

While the situation is not on the scale posed by the Provisional IRA during the 1970s, 80s and 90s, there is a credible danger to troops and, some suggest, having the former terrorists close to the seat of government makes dealing with the problem more difficult.

The PSNI Police Federation warns that after starting with 12,500 personnel with 13,000 soldiers in support 12 years ago, there are now just 7,200 PSNI officers, with numbers set to fall by 700 next year and a £230M budget cut potentially costing 1,500 more. Even the recently bolstered air support unit is overstretched and having to bring in additional resources.

YORKSHIRE: The police services in West Yorkshire and Humberside each made announcements last month that tend to underline the as yet unspoken fact of life that their MD902 Explorer's are getting very long in the tooth and are in danger of being the primary airframe 'victims' of the forthcoming aviation cuts in the UK.

MD Helicopters and the Air Operations Unit of the West Yorkshire Police announced that MD Explorer, helicopter serial number 078 registered G-YPOL has extended its record for flight hours, reaching 12,600 hours as of mid-September of this year. The flight hours exceed any other MD Explorer in the fleet, with Humberside Police Authority just announcing that their MD Explorer now exceeds 10,000 hours.

The West Yorkshire Air Operations Unit uses the Explorer to provide 24/7 police coverage over its own 785 sq. mile area, completing over 4,500 missions a year. In addition the unit and those of Humberside and Cleveland regularly supply air support to adjoining North Yorkshire an area that nominally does not have air support.

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UNITED STATES

FEDERAL: The US Coast Guard District 7 undertakes missions in an immense area stretching over 1.8M square miles. Last month the unit took delivery of its first HC-144A Ocean Sentry, a type still better known as the CASA'EADS 235 twin turboprop transport.

The HC-144A Ocean Sentry is the Coast Guard's newest aircraft and will serve as their medium range surveillance aircraft in place of the HU-25 Falcon twin jet aircraft. Air Station Miami is the second unit to fly the Ocean Sentry operationally after the Aviation Training Center in Mobil, Alabama.

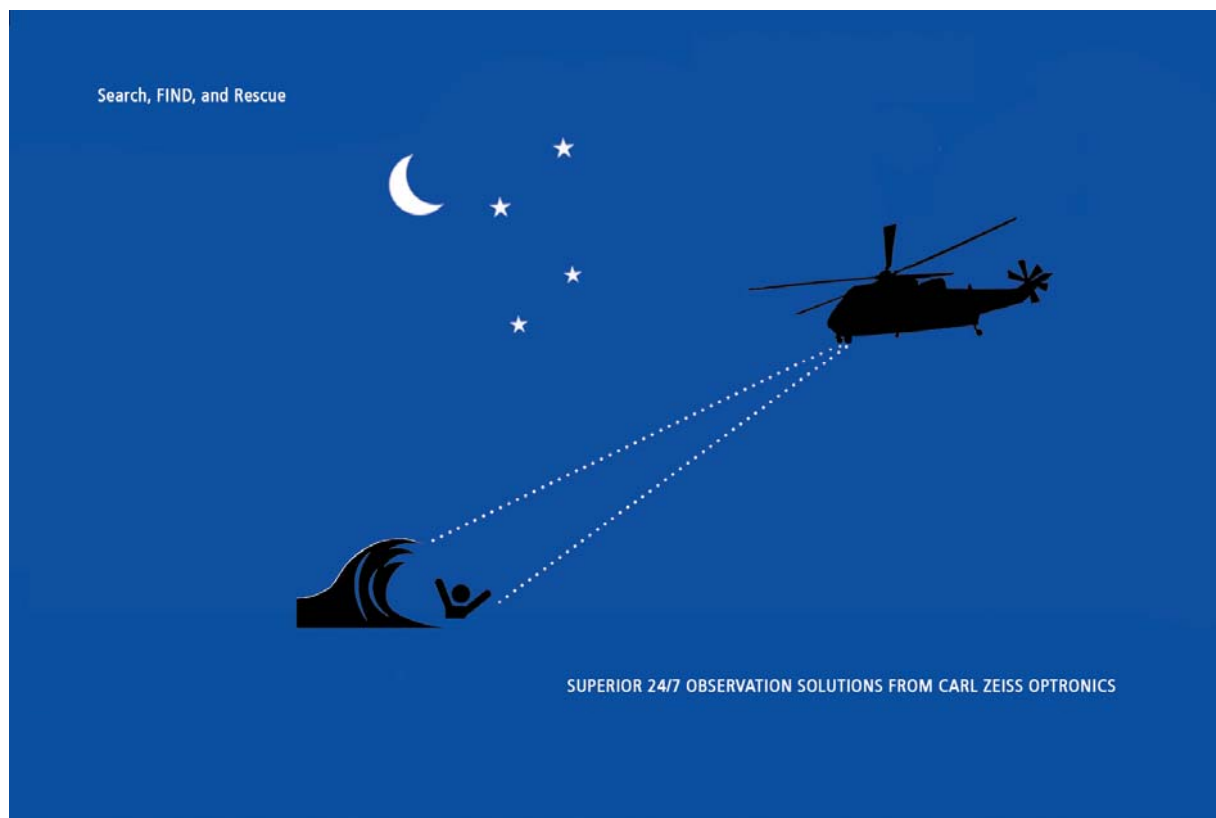
Capable of remaining airborne in excess of nine hours, it doubles the flight hours of the smaller faster HU-25. The greater endurance allows Coast Guard aircrews to remain on-scene longer, adding value to the execution of law enforcement, marine and environmental response and search and rescue missions.

A standard operational crew for the Ocean Sentry consists of two mission system operators (MSO), one drop master or load master (mission dependant) and one basic aircrewman.

The MSO position is a new role for aircrews with the arrival of the Ocean Sentry platform. MSOs are tasked with operating the on board mission system pallet (MSP) that combines a wide-ranging suite of electronic equipment that collects, compiles, interprets and disseminates data from the sensors and electronic equipment on the aircraft. These integrated components further improve situational awareness and responsiveness of Coast Guard aircrews.

CALIFORNIA: The Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (LASD) has selected the Cobham Synthetic Vision Electronic Flight Instrument Systems (EFIS) for their recently announced new fleet of 14 Eurocopter AS350B2 helicopters.

The aircraft, to be completed by Hangar One, Carlsbad, California, will be equipped with Cobham's two screen, 3D synthetic vision EFIS system, including: Primary Flight Display



(PFD) and Multi-Function Display (MFD), software version 7.0, WAAS Beta III GPS Receiver, integral TSO C-194 Helicopter Terrain Awareness and Warning System (HTAWS), integral Flight Management System (FMS), and Analogue Interface Unit (AIU). The system is fully NVG-compliant.

DELAWARE: Last month the State Police marked its 40th Anniversary with an 'open House' event held at its base, the Sussex County Airport on Rudder Lane in Georgetown. 2010 marks the 40th anniversary for the DSP Aviation Section and the 25th anniversary of the Trooper-Medic programme.

DSP launched itself into the airborne law enforcement arena in 1956 by renting a single engine Cessna airplane. Troopers were assigned to the airplane on a daily basis to assist the ground units with various law enforcement responsibilities.

It wasn't until 1970 that DSP formed an Aviation Section using grants from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration to acquire a Bell 206B JetRanger.

Since that time a number of aircraft have come and gone including further examples of the Bell 206, the Huey, 407 and 412 as well as single and twin-engine fixed wing airframes.

Currently a committee is reviewing the operation and is expected to recommend new aircraft to replace two ageing Bell 407's.

MARYLAND: The state of Maryland has awarded a \$72M contract to the lone bidder to provide six helicopters to begin the replacement of the Maryland State Police emergency medical fleet. The Maryland Department of Transportation, which ran the procurement process on behalf of the state police, received no bids other than Agusta's despite seeking offers from four helicopter manufacturers.

The value of the contract could more than double over the next three years because the state also received an option for the purchase of six more aircraft at a cost of \$11.7M each plus an inflation adjustment.

AgustaWestland has announced that the contract has been signed and that the initial six AW139 helicopters for the Medevac fleet programme will commence delivery in 18 months. These aircraft will be produced at AgustaWestland's Philadelphia, Pennsylvania production facility.

This will transition the fleet from the existing Dauphin helicopter fleet, which numbered 12 until the September 2008 crash of a rescue helicopter in Southern Maryland reduced it to 11 operable craft. The helicopters in the existing fleet range from 11 to 21 years old.

State procurement officials invited representatives of four leading helicopter manufacturers — AgustaWestland, Eurocopter, Bell and Sikorsky — to discuss the state's requirements and the possible purchase price. The four companies supplied estimates ranging from \$14.9M to \$18.3M per helicopter.

In the end game though only AgustaWestland replied to the tender bid. American Eurocopter filed a bid protest in September 2009, contending that the result had been "preordained" by the bid's specifications. The transportation department denied the protest and the company did not appeal.

Sikorsky, said the company's S-76 helicopter didn't meet the state's bid specification and Bell did not bid. [Baltimore Sun/AW]

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NEW MEXICO: Long standing readers may recall the major row that surrounded the landing of an Albuquerque police helicopter at a Krispy Kreme donut store in 2001 – some may even have heard a joke tape relating to the event that can be sourced on the Internet. In that instance the row was about a crew collecting foodstuffs for a meal as cop cars do around the world. The argument was that cars may do so but it should not be something you do in a helicopter.

The new event a few weeks ago was not dissimilar in that it was considered an error of judgement by those outside the unit.

Caught on video, the Albuquerque PD Eurocopter EC120 is seen slowly flying over a junior football game and dropping a football to launch the event. It was a great PR stunt and undoubtedly warmed the cockles of many a heart. This incident nearly passed unnoticed, but some days later it came to notice of the senior ranks in the PD and they viewed the video.

Subsequently the only issue raised and discussed was that the unit violated a SOP by not forwarding the request (dropping the ball) further up their chain of command. If anything, and as evidenced by the crowd, this was a great booster for the unit and a morale booster for those in attendance. Nothing wrong with that. As the EC120 was already airborne there was no fraudulent use of taxpayer money, the cost was judged to be around \$80, although no-one made mention of the potential safety issues surrounding the flight of a single engine aircraft over a large crowd at low altitude.

The request to drop the ball originated from the Rio Rancho PD, a regular user of the services of the Albuquerque helicopter. The unit had considered the request and agreed it at unit supervisor level. Unfortunately the SOP required the process to go a little higher up the pay grades and things got a little heated when those up the ladder realized they had missed out on making a decision. Then the media got in on the act and blew the whole incident out of proportion on its local news broadcast. [News 13/PAR]

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NEW YORK: After the September 22 accident that resulted in the water landing of one of its standard ASR Bell 412 helicopters [No 12 N412PD] in Jamaica Bay the unit grounded its other Bell primarily because of its similarity in build standard. A suspected mechanical failure in the accident airframe was considered potentially linked to the safety of the other. This grounding led the New York City Police Department to reconfigure another of its seven police helicopters for air-sea rescue missions.

The precautionary actions by the NYPD were taken two weeks in advance of the Air Service Bulletin issued by Pratt & Whitney of Canada indicating, "It is possible that the output drive gearshaft assembly can fracture, resulting in loss of power," in certain models, including the most recent air-sea rescue helicopters purchased by the NYPD. Preliminary findings indicate the failure may have been caused by metal fatigue in its output drive gearshaft assembly, which is housed in a combining-gear box of the helicopter. Energy generated by No. 12's dual Pratt & Whitney engines is directed through the box to a single drive-shaft which powers the helicopter's rotors.

Post crash examination of the helicopter by the FAA found a 6-inch hole in the top of the combining gear box. Damage to the helicopter included all four main rotor blades, the entire underside of the helicopter, and the tail-boom and the tail rotor.

The NYPD took delivery of No. 12, along with a second, identical \$12M Bell 412 – No. 14 – last December. When No. 12 experienced its failure and was taken out of service because of the damage, the Police Department, as a precaution against a similar failure of the rotor drive system, grounded No. 14 on the same day.

A third Bell 412, christened "No. 23" in honour of the 23 NYPD officers killed in the 9/11 attacks, but very much an open secret covert machine remained in service because it was older build standard. Unlike the other craft No 23 is not blue and white and usually offers a higher specification sensor fit of an Wescam MX-15 more in keeping with a surveillance role, counterterrorism and other investigative purposes.

In service since 2002 it is reported to have flown a very modest total only a little over 1,000 hours, without incident and with no indication that it shared the problem experienced by the newer Bell.

The NYPD's four other helicopters are Agusta A119s, used for patrol, and are unaffected by the grounding of the two Bell 412s.

American Eurocopter delivered another AS350B2 to the Aviation Section of the Suffolk County Police Department last month. This is another great looking helicopter and American Eurocopter's Engineering Center played a key role in the design and completion of the interior. I have included the text of the press release below and have attached a photo.

In the photo are (l-r) Police Officers Gregg Buonomo and Mike Alberico, both pilots with the Suffolk County Police Department's Aviation Section, as they prepare to leave American Eurocopter's Grand Prairie facilities.





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TEXAS: The Austin Police Department is asking the federal government for \$12M to buy three new helicopters, saying the helicopters it now has aren't enough to meet the demands of a major city.

Talks between the police department and the Central Texas' congressional delegation had already started when the matter was to a head by the absence of the primary helicopter, a modern Eurocopter EC120, call-sign Air 1 during three high-profile incidents. The aircraft was on major maintenance and the elderly back up was itself defective requiring a main rotor blade change during one incident. There was additional air support available during another shooting incident but APD claim that it is not reliable source of air cover and many other agencies call upon it. That time the Texas Department of Public Safety provided a helicopter that circled the crime scene with the and was again present during a 45-minute car chase.

The Police Department's aviation arm has been under scrutiny since an outside auditing firm recommended eliminating it in 2008, based on an analysis of its cost. Police say the analysis was flawed but the damage was done.

Austin Police requested a new police helicopter during this year's city budget deliberations but it was not pursued vigorously and the funding went towards the provision of 48 more patrol officers. Now additional funds are being sought through the Justice Department.
[Statesman/PAR]

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AIR AMBULANCE

AUSTRALIA

ROYAL FLYING DOCTOR: The operator hopes its new fleet of five new Pilatus PC-12 aircraft will be in action before the end of the year. The first of the medically-equipped Pilatus PC 12 aircraft is already operating and has transported more than 270 patients in three months.

A \$30 million program is replacing the existing fleet after 15 years of service, and is the single biggest replacement programme the RFDS has undertaken.

The aircraft will be based out of Adelaide and Port Augusta and fly to outback areas across South Australia and into the Northern Territory. [ABC]

SAUDI ARABIA

JEDDAH: The Saudi Red Crescent Authority is preparing to launch the first air-ambulance service for the 2010 Hajj season with five aircraft to carry sick or injured people to hospitals.

Preparations are under way to establish landing pads at the holy sites for the around-the-clock Red Crescent Authority operation. Air ambulances currently serve Riyadh, Jeddah and the roads leading to Mecca. [Okaz/Saudi Gazette]

SWITZERLAND

REGA: The Swiss air ambulance operation accomplished his 300,000th mission since it was founded in 1952. The October 1 flight was carrying 5 day old twins from the paediatric hospital in Lucerne to the University Hospital Center Vaudois. [Rega]

UNITED KINGDOM

CAMBRIDGESHIRE: In the wake of a long expected announcement by the East Anglian Air Ambulance [EAAA] charity, that it had selected a new commercial company to supply doctors and Clinical Governance, the previous supplier of the service, MAGPAS, issued a statement that launched a brief war of words between the two parties.

Magpas was complaining that its free at the point of service Helimedix teams of doctors and paramedics was being replaced by a private company and that this was likely to be a point on contention with the fund raisers who had to find the funding. Magpas has been providing doctors free of charge on the Air Ambulance since 2007. Magpas has also learned that the East Anglian Air Ambulance charity also plans to relocate the Eurocopter BK117C-1 helicopter from RAF Wyton to Cambridge next February – this removes the aircraft from being outside the Magpas HQ to the place where it is housed overnight anyway. Magpas are co-located with the police air support unit.

Currently Magpas has National Health funded doctors, Defence Medical Staff physicians and paramedics seconded from the NHS on board its various transport platforms which include the Cambridgeshire Police MD902 helicopter, road vehicles and Anglia 2 –the charity funded air ambulance. The military personnel are in training with Magpas in advance of deployment to Afghanistan. As well as these funded posts, Magpas uses a cohort of nearly 30 specially trained expert consultants, registrars and paramedics who donate their time free of charge – valued at over £ 2M a year - to fly on the aircraft. During the last three months Magpas has provided staffing on 100% of core air ambulance shifts.

The EAAA returned with its own press statement shortly afterwards and correcting a number of errors made by Magpas.

Where Magpas supplied the free service to the Cambridgeshire based aircraft they were not



involved in the provision of service to the other BK117 based in the east of their region and had not wished to bid to provide a full service. EAAA claimed the Magpas volunteer model was unsustainable.

EAAA are to work with a company called EMSC, which has a substantial track record in the air ambulance sector. It provides clinical governance services to the highly experienced NHS doctors serving aboard the Essex and Hertfordshire air ambulance, and the Kent, Surrey and Sussex air ambulances [see below].

They claim that working with EMSC ensures that they can commit to providing the clinical governance support to the highly experienced specialist doctors on board both aircraft 365 days a year. This is in-line with best practice recommendations for air ambulances documented in 'Framework for a high performing Air Ambulance Service' published in 2008 [Ed: *Not yet actually a legal requirement but it may be in a years time*].

EAAA counterclaimed that the Magpas service, while free was not without its costs. While the organisation's doctors are volunteers, there were other costs including the £132,000 it costs to shuttle Anglia Two between its base at The Marshall Airport and Magpas' operating base at RAF Wyton every morning and evening. They also state there are instances where the aircraft does not fly because there is no Magpas staffing and that costs both in terms of wasted lease fees and the idle pilot available. These costs amount to at least a further £100,000 per year. The EAAA has not disclosed the contract price with EMSC but it presumably is contracted to ensure that no instances of crew no show are acceptable.





ESSEX & HERTS: In late September – and pouring rain - the Essex & Herts. Air Ambulance hosted an Aeromedical Case Study Conference within the amenable Essex Golf and Country Club, Earle's Colne, Colchester, Essex. The venue is within the same business park as the air ambulance operation HQ.

On the face of it this was a grown up version of the regular Clinical Governance debrief sessions undertaken by the Essex & Herts. and therefore something of an acquired taste for non-clinicians. Where this was different was that rather an in-house debrief the audience and some of the speakers were drawn from a far wider catchment area than the two counties immediately north of London. This was designed to be a National event. The themes covered this year were Trauma, Paediatric Care, Medical Retrievals, Multiple and Logistical Challenges

The furthest speaker group came from the Scottish Air Ambulance, the others from many operations nearer to home including Devon & Cornwall, Great Western, Kent, Surrey & Sussex and Yorkshire.

More importantly the majority of the costs associated with the gathering were not a drain on the charity funds as there were sufficient sponsors to cover the costs; Bound Tree Medical, Datix Software, Medical Aviation Services, ProAct Medical Limited and Spencer.

The latter company, Italian company Spencer is probably the best known internationally for its medical supplies. The St John Ambulance is now representing Spencer in the UK and their presence at Earle's Colne was part of a push towards raising the profile of their own medical aspirations. St John Ambulance Supplies is a means by which the charitable organisation best known in the UK for training and providing volunteer first aid staff at major and minor events might improve its commercial financial position.

Currently St John are able to point to being suppliers of equipment to a number of the air ambulances in the south east of England. In the past 80 years they held a wider role in training and equipping the UK police in first aid matters and more recently in running fixed wing air ambulances – although that has now ceased. With nearly 300,000 members in 42 countries, St John Ambulance has diversified to meet local community needs around the world.



The presence of Medical Aviation Services with a high visibility stand was perhaps to be expected as they now supply both of the MD902 Explorer helicopters in use with Essex and Hertfordshire. In the audience there

were others of a different persuasion including Sterling Helicopters the operators of the helicopter fleet in East Anglia. If this wider get together does grow in stature we can perhaps expect to see greater industry participation in what is probably the only real growth area in UK airborne emergency services.

The Essex & Herts. Air Ambulance Trust would like to thank the sponsors and have invited any company or group interested in joining them for similar events next year to call 0845 2417 690.

GREAT NORTH: Local fundraising continues towards a £1M target intended to allow the operation to fund three new helicopters. The local newspaper, the Sunday Sun Air Angels appeal shot up by £100,000, to £700,000, in just seven days. The main attractions were Air Ambulance week and the West Cumbrian Run, held in memory of Police Constable Bill Barker an officer swept to his death when the Northside bridge he was standing on, in Workington, collapsed in November 2009. The effort has been over just 10 months.

Meanwhile the aircraft contract with the venerable Eurocopter AS365N G-HEMS has drawn to a close and it is expected that future operations will be wholly supplied by Multiflight.

SURREY & SUSSEX: Objections by vociferous local neighbours to 24-hour flights by the Surrey Air Ambulance from the charity's Dunsfold Park base have been overruled.

Waverley Borough Council's 48-member planning committee voted overwhelmingly to extend the helicopter's emergency medical cover throughout the night and at weekends. Neighbouring residents had called for the application to be refused because of the noise disturbance it would cause but the plan was backed with a petition of support signed by 300 local people.

The operation will provide the only night-flying air ambulance service covering Surrey, Sussex and Kent and is expected to lead to the aircraft being suitably modified with searchlights in the near future.

Ed: The existing 2008 arrangement between the air ambulance operators and the Sussex Police whereby the charity funded police night air ambulance has ceased. There remains an expectation that in urgent cases both the Sussex and Surrey police helicopters will provide night HEMS on demand.

UNITED STATES

INDIANA: LifeLine Critical Care Transport has placed its fourth EC145 into service. The Indiana-based air medical provider selected the EC145 at the 2008 Air Medical Transport Conference (AMTC), and placed its first EC145 into service in May of this year.

LifeLine has been flying earlier versions of the BK117s for over 25 years and satisfaction with them led to the decision to order the EC145 development.

LifeLine Critical Care Transport serves 19 hospitals throughout the state of Indiana. Its missions include critical care transport, adult specialty care transport, neo-natal and paediatric transfers, as well as on-the-scene flights. LifeLine operates 24/7 out of five bases throughout the state with a fleet of six helicopters, a King Air 200, and ground ambulances. Founded in 1979, it is one of the oldest air medical providers in the country.



MICHIGAN: On October 1 the Henry Ford Hospital in Detroit introduced Air Med 1 an aeromedical helicopter as a new service for transporting critically ill and trauma patients to its facility from within a 150-mile radius in Michigan and Ontario.

With demand growing for caring for critically ill patients, the air ambulance service positions Henry Ford to provide fast, emergency one-way transport to its medical complex, which boasts the largest intensive care capacity in Michigan and a Level 1 trauma center for treating the most critically injured patients.

The Eurocopter EC135 helicopter is a new addition to a fleet of ground ambulances that transport patients to the hospital and other Henry Ford facilities under an existing partnership with Superior Air-Ground Ambulance Service of Michigan that began in 2005. Henry Ford is the only hospital in the tri-county area equipped to provide air ambulance transport service.

To ensure a seamless patient transport, each flight is coordinated by a Henry Ford transfer nurse and staff physician, the patient's referring physician and a Superior Ambulance coordinator. Superior provides the Air Med 1 flight crew including a critical care RN, critical care paramedic and pilot. No Henry Ford medical personnel are involved in in-flight transports.

Mary Franco, vice president of Business Development at Superior, says its pilots have vast experience flying in Michigan, Ohio and Windsor. Its pilots, not Superior ground personnel, make all flight decisions, she says. In this vein the company prides itself in providing their aircraft with the latest available safety equipment.

The EC135 boasts numerous safety features including auto pilot, weather radar, TCAS, TAWS, NVG's and WSP. It also has satellite and weather radar and a satellite phone. The helicopter will be housed at the Oakland International Airport in Pontiac.

Flight crews are certified in critical care emergency medical transport and emergency vehicle operations, and undergo mandatory training in pharmacology, and managing intravenous medication delivery.




MISSISSIPPI: The University of Mississippi Medical Center has purchased an EC145 for its Department of Helicopter Transport – the AirCare program. The helicopter is replacing one of their current aircraft and will be based in Jackson, MS. It will be operated by PHI Helicopters, Inc.

AirCare was established in 1996 with a single helicopter based in Jackson. The program has grown and it currently has a fleet of two helicopters that serve the Jackson and Meridian areas.

NEW YORK: Mercy Flight of Western New York has signed an agreement to purchase the first of a potential three Bell 429s to replace its existing fleet of Eurocopter helicopters. Mercy Flight of Western New York began their business flying the Bell 206B – it is only fitting they have returned to upgrade their fleet using the 429.

Headquartered in Buffalo, New York, Mercy Flight of Western New York is an independent, not-for-profit provider of emergency air medical transport and supporting services, ensuring rapid, safe and cost effective delivery of expert emergency response teams. Established in 1981, Mercy Flight has flown more than 19,000 patient missions over the last 29+ years. They currently operate five helicopters and have crews ready to respond 24 hours a day, 7 days a week out of bases in Buffalo, Batavia and Olean. The first of the three twin-engine helicopters is expected to be in service in second quarter of 2011.






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TEXAS: Travis County's *STAR Flight* program has been selected to receive the fourth annual Vision Zero Aviation Safety Award. The operator was chosen for its investment and proactive accomplishments in training and safety initiatives throughout the organization. As part of the award, American Eurocopter presented representatives with a cheque for \$10,000 to continue its efforts at the AMTC Community Awards Banquet.

STAR Flight (Shock Trauma Air Rescue) began operation in 1985 to provide Advanced Life Support response and transport to the citizens in the outlying areas of Travis County. Soon after the program's inception the operation expanded into the more regional basis it is to-day. In 1993 they enhanced operations to include helicopter rescue, land/water rescue, wilderness/SAR (search and rescue), and fire suppression. Scene flights and hospital-to-hospital transfers comprise over ninety percent of responses.

FIRE

AUSTRALIA

VICTORIA: Two new faster and more flexible large fire bombing planes will be trialled as part of Victoria's fire fighting arsenal which will also be boosted by the use of NVG and EO/IR technology.

The Victorian Government is investing A\$12M for two Convair 580 fire



Australian Convair 580
[File Photo via Wikimedia]

bomber planes, a new Erikson Airplane and four extra fixed-wing aircraft for the upcoming fire season. The new aircraft will join Erikson Airplanes Elvis and Elsie and bring Victoria's aerial fire fighting arsenal to 48 with a further 170 aircraft on standby if required.

The trial of the two 580's will replace a trial last year of the DC-10 Very Large Air Tanker (VLAT) following an assessment by the National Bushfire Co-Operative Research Centre that its use was less effective in Victorian fire fighting terrain, in particular use around the urban interface. The sheer weight of water threatened both people and property.

The Convair's have the capacity to carry and drop 8,000 litres of water or fire retardant and will be deployed at airfields around the state wherever needed.

The trial of new airborne infrared cameras attached to a number of the helicopters will replace outdated equipment and allow pinpoint hotspot mapping and real time video streaming in difficult conditions, such as thick smoke.

The Convair 580s are expected to arrive in Victoria later this year and will be based at airports around Melbourne and throughout the state including Avalon, Mangalore, Sale and Mildura and if they need a service they can hop over to Bankstown [Ryan Baker]



Reims F406 Land & Sea Surveillance



SEARCH & RESCUE

AUSTRALIA

NEW SOUTH WALES: The trial of aerial shark spotting along beaches between Newcastle and Wollongong near Sydney will continue this summer using a plane and a helicopter so their effectiveness can be compared.

The trial will also include aerial surveillance on weekdays and weekends, and at different times of the day to help determine if a permanent shark-spotting service will be established and, if it is, what type of aircraft is best suited.

Last summer a helicopter was used to patrol 51 beaches covering 202km of coastline on weekends and public holidays between December 19 and January 10.

Initially, the State Government refused to continue the trial but in March Emergency Services Minister Steve Whan agreed to extend the trial this summer and to include fixed-wing aircraft in it.

"This government has a duty to do what we can to protect beachgoers," he said. "We are seeking expressions of interest from companies interested in conducting the trial program in key periods during the holidays.

"This trial is aimed at complementing our successful beach-meshing program, by offering another measure to help improve swimmer safety." [Manly Daily]

NETHERLANDS

SAR: Last month an AgustaBell AB-412 helicopter of 303 Squadron undertook the squadron's 4,500th rescue since it was formed in 1959. The flight picked up a man with medical problems and flew him to Vlieland Medical Center, Leeuwarden. The unit is based at Leeuwarden Air Base. [via Helihub]

UNITED KINGDOM

DEFENCE REVIEW: The British government announced many of its cost saving measures last month in the Strategic Defence and Security Review and there were some losses and changes in the SAR system.

RAF Kinloss the base that co-ordinates all of Britain's helicopter mountain rescue missions looks set to close under coalition Government plans. Alongside the announcement was the cancellation of a new fleet of long-range search aircraft intended to be based there – the much troubled BAe Nimrod MRA4.

The Aeronautical Rescue Co-ordination Centre is housed at RAF Kinloss in Moray, Scotland, and handles all requests from Britain's mountain rescue teams for helicopter support by the Sea Kings of the RAF and Royal Navy and rescue missions by the Coastguard. Also due for closure is nearby RAF Lossiemouth, home to 202 Squadron, which provides search and rescue helicopter cover for the East of Scotland.

Although the search and rescue helicopters of the RAF and Royal Navy are primarily a military resource, about 90 per cent of the missions flown are on civilian rescue incidents, of which about half in Scotland are mountain rescues.



One item that did not get airtime in the review was SAR-H, that therefore remains an unknown quantity. Whether the venerable Westland Sea King's are to fly a few more years yet has not been covered but according to the commercial plan that has been published by the preferred contractor – Soteria - the interim H M Coastguard contract ends in 2012 and the existing fleet of Sikorsky S-92's is supposed off to Ireland.

SKYWATCH: A meeting of The Air Search Forum was held at the Royal Air Force Club in Piccadilly, London on October 14, 2010. The Forum provides a networking and fellowship facility for members of the Air Search community.

Fellowship of the Forum is open to anyone involved or associated with emergency or humanitarian aviation - public services, civil, voluntary or military. There is no hierarchy - no President, Chairman, Committee etc. When anything needs doing appropriate Fellows will be co-opted to deal with the particular task.

There are no joining fees or subscriptions and the Forum is non-profit. Fellows just pay at cost for attendance at meetings and social functions. To become a Fellow e mail enquire@airsearch.co.uk with your name, e-mail and post address with a short description of your involvement in emergency or humanitarian aviation. You will then be notified by e-mail about Forum meetings and social events.

There will normally be two Forum meetings per year, usually in London, plus some social events.

The October 14 meeting Agenda and procedure was presented by Neil Smith, a voluntary air search pilot. The programme included lunch and two presentations. Safe practice in air search operations by Stephen Hayman who is a Captain with Thomson Cook Airways and also a voluntary air search pilot. Observer Training was covered by Nigel Hoult and Julian Midder. Nigel Hoult is a British Airways Captain and voluntary air search rotary and fixed-wing pilot. Julian Midder is a voluntary air search pilot who recently completed the Solo Round Britain Help for Heroes Charity Flight.

INDUSTRY

Revue Thommen AG are currently touring in the USA demonstrating the forthcoming Thommen HSL1600 IR searchlight. Meanwhile the first eight Eurocopter EC135 helicopters destined for GAZPROM in Russia are with EC in Germany and the first searchlight has already been installed by the helicopter manufacturer. www.thommen.aero

Bell Helicopter announced the sale of sixteen Model 206L4 LongRanger IV helicopters to Air Medical Group Holdings (AMGH), the largest independent provider of Helicopter Emergency Medical Services (HEMS) in the world. The aircraft will be operated by AMGH subsidiary Air Evac Lifeteam with deliveries in 2012 and 2013.

Air Evac Lifeteam operates the world's largest fleet of over 100 medically-equipped Bell 206 LongRanger helicopters and has flown more than 220,000 people who were in critical need of care since its founding in 1985.

The sale to Air Evac was just one of a number of successful sales clinched at the Air Medical Transport Conference in Fort Lauderdale, Florida last month.

At the show, Bell were able to announce the sale of a combined total of 32 new aircraft, flew more than 35 potential customers in its 429 demonstration ship and reinforced its commitment to the air medical transport community with a \$200,000 donation to the MedEvac Foundation.

Of the 32 aircraft Bell sold at AMTC, only one was a 429. The other 31 were single engine (15 Bell 407s and 16 Bell 206L4s). In view of the HEMS market safety arguments currently raging that is both a comment on the extent of the market for the 429 in the USA and an indication of a US industry moving towards light singles to hold costs down regardless of the various arguments relating to single/twin engines in IMC.

Pure & Secure LLC, has completed a competitive-bid contract with the United States Coast Guard to provide high-purity rinse water for the Coast Guard fleet of HH65C helicopters using dual Ariel 2C2CG Turbomeca turbines.

The unique custom-designed high purity rinse-water purification system is used for the post-sortie and all other turbine rinse applications. The equipment, produced in Lincoln, Nebraska, is now installed at 25 U. S. Coast Guard stations nationwide. The Coast Guard's maintenance approach is to provide standardized equipment system-wide. In addition to standardized water purity, the Coast Guard now has uniform water purification education, equipment training and water sampling techniques at each location.

The Coast Guard chose this standardised approach to ensure they could meet the rigorous Turbomeca turbine maintenance specifications and allow for training efficiencies as USCG personnel get transferred from base to base. The Coast Guard's goal for this program is to upgrade its maintenance program, and improve turbine life and performance of its fleet.

Now marketed under the TurboPureWater brand, the product line has several models of varying capacities to suit any budget. Each is based on a steam-distillation purification technology with deionization and other integrated technologies. Water quality is constantly monitored and a visual meter provides a real-time status of the water quality. Pure & Secure has seen growth in sales of water purification equipment using steam-distillation and has an increasing list of global customers. Besides the Coast Guard current customers include the US State Department, the US Air Force, and Boeing.

UK based **Ovation Systems** have announced the launch of their new FlashBack-3R unmanned remote covert surveillance system.

The system was designed and built to meet the requirements of an unspecified customer and there are 50 of these units already in use.

The new system is based on the existing FlashBack range of evidential recording systems already in use with over 1500 law enforcement, government and military customers worldwide.

FlashBack-3R is a ruggedized version specifically designed for unmanned remote covert surveillance operations in harsh climates or vehicle borne surveillance.

FlashBack-3R is only 90 x 30 x 155 mm in size and weighs just 625g. It is weatherproof (able to operate in temperature conditions -20 to +65°C [-4 to + 150°F] with suitable HDD fitted [e.g. Solid State Disk]) and the ruggedised sealed casing means that it can be used in extreme environments.

It uses H.264 video compression technology, which provides high quality video coupled with very long record times. The system records to an internal 2.5" SATA hard disk drive of up to 1TB which can record real-time up to a staggering 8 weeks of real-time video footage. To extend battery life, it is possible to record selectively via its internal timer or to record for a preset duration when triggered by external ground sensors. The unit also includes internal 16 zone motion detector.

All the features and functions of FlashBack-3R can be either pre-programmed or configured remotely to a built in Ethernet interface. This allows for remote control, file download and even the streaming of live video when connected to either a wireless 3G or Satellite BGAN modem.

It is also possible to connect to FlashBack-3 Rugged via Wi-Fi which can be activated by a remote key-fob transmitter.

Air Ambulance Worldwide announced the start of a MedEvac and Air Ambulance service operating the **Piaggio Aero** P.180 Avanti aircraft air ambulance configuration. The first



<http://www.thedefencealliance.com/cts/index.html>



flight was the first medevac flight for a P.180 Air Ambulance in the US and was done from Ft. Lauderdale, Florida to Lancaster, PA on Friday August 27, 2010.

The P.180 Avanti was selected after an extensive evaluation process that took into consideration the outstanding performance of the aircraft and its cost effective operational capabilities for the MedEvac role. The unobstructed space available within the P.180 stand up cabin with its unrivalled cross-section and the very low ambient noise levels of the aircraft, were key factors in the Air Ambulance worldwide final purchase decision. The Piaggio Aero P.180 provides tremendous accessibility for patient loading, and its large cabin offers a work-friendly environment for medical staff to provide care for up to two patients on the well-proven FAA approved stretcher system. Facilities for incubators and other medical equipment can also be provided on board of the P.180 Avanti II Airambulance

FLIR Systems, Inc. has successfully completed its previously announced acquisition of ICx Technologies, Inc. for \$7.55 per share, representing an aggregate purchase price of \$268M, or an enterprise value of \$232M including ICx's closing cash balance. FLIR announced its intention to acquire ICx on August 16, 2010 subject to certain conditions. The acquisition was completed via a tender offer by a FLIR subsidiary for all of the outstanding shares of ICx followed by the merger of that purchasing subsidiary with ICx, as a result of which ICx became a wholly-owned subsidiary of FLIR.

ICx is a leading provider of integrated advanced sensing technologies for homeland security, force protection and critical infrastructure applications. ICx has established a technology leadership position across a wide spectrum of CBRNE (chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear and explosives) detection and surveillance technologies, supported by a robust intellectual property portfolio.

Tecnams UK and Ireland distributor **Airways Aero Association Ltd** (www.tecnamuk.com) actively marketing the Airborne Technologies Multi Mission Aircraft (MMA) version of the new **Tecnam** P2006T Twin announced the sale of the first aeroplane early last month. In recent editions of PAN this aircraft has played a significant visual role, being illustrated in

both the PAVCon 2010 and Farnborough Air Show special editions. The type was the subject of presentation at the PAVCon 2010 in the Czech Republic.

ChelAvia's strategic vision is to deploy a number of TECNAM MMA's on a diverse range of ISR missions including police, border patrol, drug enforcement and urban surveillance.

The company was attracted to the low operating costs, an ability to refuel AVGAS or car gasoline in any blend in combination with the size and the flexibility of the cabin in order to carry a variety of sensor equipment. The high wing configuration and the reliable, quiet and low maintenance Rotax 912S engines are also an important attraction.

North American Surveillance Systems Inc., (NASS) has been awarded the AS9100 certification, the aerospace industry's highest standard for quality management systems.

AS9100 is a single quality standard used across the global aerospace community. It is based on ISO 9001 but adds stringent additional requirements necessary to address critical civil and military aviation and aerospace needs.

For more information about NASS products and services visit www.nassusa.net

Hélidax the operator in a public-private partnership set up to provide the French armed forces with a modern and cost-effective training helicopter received its 36th and final EC120 from Eurocopter last month.

Hélidax is equally owned by its founders DCI and INAER France (formerly Proteus). On January 31, 2008, the DGA (French government procurement agency) awarded Hélidax a contract for 16,000 to 26,000 flight hours a year to provide ab initio helicopter pilot training to all three branches of the French armed forces and the Gendarmerie. The training will take place at the French Army Air Corp's training school (EALAT) in Dax. As part of the innovative partnership agreement, Hélidax is responsible for the financing, operation and maintenance of the helicopters, and retains full ownership. The training work itself, however, will continue to be provided by the military instructors at EALAT.

The French Army opted for the EC120, and the first three helicopters were delivered to Dax in October 2009. Within just twelve months, all 36 helicopters were delivered and have progressively been replacing the 54 SA341 and SA342 Gazelles previously used for training. With a training staff of 80 and a fleet of 36 EC120s, the EALAT in Dax is now the largest helicopter training academy in Europe. Instructors and trainees from Belgium also serve at the school year round, making it a truly multinational institution.

Eurocopter has delivered more than 650 EC120s to date, and many of the world's air forces have placed their confidence in the helicopter. Its compact size, low costs, excellent flight quality and simple piloting capabilities have made it a popular choice for training missions. The fleet currently in service logs more than 150,000 flight hours every year.



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Metro Aviation has entered into an MOU for 12 Eurocopter aircraft. The mix will include EC130's, EC135s and an EC145 and will support the company's ongoing growth and expansion of its Aircraft Operations Division.

Metro Aviation, based in Shreveport, LA, has been in the air medical service business for over 28 years. The company currently operates 71 aircraft, which includes a fleet of 61 Eurocopter helicopters. With these aircraft, Metro Aviation serves 23 programs across the United States.

The S-92[®] fleet of medium-lift helicopters has surpassed 250,000 flight hours since the first aircraft entered service six years ago, establishing a record pace for a commercial fleet of **Sikorsky** helicopters. The first production S-92 entered service in September, 2004. Transport companies flying work crews to offshore oil and gas platforms account for 90 percent of those airtime hours.

Outside the offshore oil and gas industry, the S-92 helicopter performs search and rescue off the coast of Scotland, utility missions in the Middle East, and VIP and head of state transport for the leaders of several nations.

Sikorsky Innovations, the technology development organisation of **Sikorsky** Aircraft, has completed rig testing of a Hub Mounted Vibration Suppression system (HMVS), designed to eliminate vibration and deliver a smoother helicopter ride. The effort is jointly funded by Sikorsky and the Aviation Applied Technology Directorate (AATD).

"HMVS represents a significant improvement in the control of vibration at its source with less weight than conventional vibration treatments," said Jim Kagdis, program manager for Sikorsky Advanced Programs. "Combined with our active flap technology, this makes the opportunity for a 'jet-smooth' ride a practical reality. Our plan is to install and test flight this vital technology on a Sikorsky helicopter in the next 12 months. We expect to drive this technology into all our products once its commercialization is complete."

The key development team member for the project is the LORD Corporation of Cary, North Carolina.

Air Partner has won the prestigious contract to be the sole provider of all passenger and freight air charter services for the UK Government's Department for International Development (DFID) for the next four years. DFID is responsible for almost all humanitarian airlifts on behalf of the UK and for addressing the UK's global relief efforts.

Effective immediately, the contract was won following a six month competitive tendering process.

Air Partner is now the sole provider of logistical support to DFID's global aid assignments. In times of crisis, its responsibilities will include organising emergency flights for any civilian deployments of response teams and the evacuation of British nationals.

www.airpartner.com

Curtiss-Wright Corporation has signed a follow-on, long-term Design and Manufacturing Agreement with AgustaWestland to provide data recording and replay equipment, ice detection equipment and air data computers for use in GrandNew, AW139 and AW149 aircraft. Curtiss-Wright has been a supplier to AgustaWestland for the past 10 years.

Aircraft components provided by Curtiss-Wright under the agreement include Data Acquisition Flight Recorder, Multi Purpose Flight Recorder, Cockpit Control Unit, Cockpit Area Microphone, Recorder Independent Power Supply, Cockpit Panel Quick Access Recorder, Generic Air Data Unit, Ice Severity Detection System and PGS Flight Recorder Replay System. www.curtisswright.com.

Air Methods Corporation unveiled the new EZ Lift 1300 wheeled patient stretcher at the annual Air Medical Transport Conference (AMTC). Air Methods claims that this is the first and only wheeled stretcher available for modern single-engine helicopter emergency medi-

cal service (HEMS) aircraft. This first EZ Lift 1300 is installed in a Eurocopter EC130 airframe which will initially serve the company's hospital-based customer Baptist Life Flight at its Evergreen, Alabama base.

Of rugged, durable construction, the EZ Lift 1300 has rotating/translating wheels for easier loading. When secured in the aircraft the unit can translate forward and back 12 inches for easy patient access via a release latch that is convenient to the clinical crew. Patient care is further enhanced as the patient head can be elevated to 85 degrees during landing and takeoff. During unloading, the folding undercarriage drops down and securely locks so the clinical crew can wheel the patient without transitioning the patient to another apparatus. The stretcher also is equipped with four, rugged castoring wheels each with brakes. Additionally, the design of the EZ Lift 1300 will allow it to load and secure into a ground ambulance. www.airmethods.com

An incident has been reported by a Maintenance Organisation of vibration associated with the **Spectrolab** Nightsun XP Searchlight. Investigation revealed that the Gimbal Azimuth Top Hex Nut was loose.

This condition, if not detected and corrected, could lead to a gap between the rubber edging of the top shroud and the Gimbal frame, resulting in degradation of pointing accuracy and stability performance and pose excessive vibration. If the nut were to entirely disengage, the Searchlight/Gimbal could disconnect from the helicopter and remain attached solely by the internal cable harness or separate totally, possibly resulting in damage to the helicopter or injury to persons on the ground.

Operators are now faced with repetitive pre-flight checks to verify correct installation and, if discrepancies are detected, the removal of the searchlight unit from the helicopter.

The AD is considered to be an interim measure, until a modification has been developed and certified. From the issue of the AD the Spectrolab Nightsun XP Gimbal Assembly P/N 033295 series cannot be installed on any new helicopter.

DART Aerospace has received FAA, Transport Canada and EASA approval of their Utility Trim Kits for the Bell 206 L3/L4 models of helicopters.

DART's durable, lightweight interior trim panels improve the aesthetics of the aircraft interior and feature a modern texture. Kits install using same method as OEM parts. The DART kits are made of quality engineered and impact resistant aerospace grade plastic that won't warp or crack in service.

The DART hat bins, when installed in conjunction with DART Rear Overhead Panels, include a quick removal feature that eases inspections and maintenance.

L-3 Avionics Systems has announced that Automatic Dependent Surveillance-Broadcast (ADS-B) capable versions of the SkyWatch® HP models SKY899 TAS and SKY899A TCAS -I are expected to be available in mid-2011. The new SkyWatch HP units will come with a pre-installed updated software package that will fuse active traffic and mode-S (1090 MHz) ADS-B information to provide users with a complete collision warning and traffic advisory solution. An upgrade for existing SkyWatch HP units will also be available.

The SkyWatch Collision Avoidance System was the first active collision avoidance product certified for general aviation. Since its release, more than 14,000 units have been installed in aircraft ranging from single-engine piston planes to high-performance business jets. The powerful SkyWatch HP model meets the needs of turbine aircraft and can fulfil TCAS I requirements if installed with a TCAS-certified antenna.

With an active surveillance range of 35 nautical miles, the upgraded SkyWatch HP will incorporate pilot-selectable display ranges of 30, 15, 6 or 2 nautical miles and display traffic within plus or minus 9,900 feet of the user's own aircraft. If an unsafe situation is encountered, an audible "Traffic, Traffic" warning is issued with a corresponding visual alert. Optional Verbal Intruder Positioning™ (VIP) callouts add range, relative bearing and relative altitude to the aural alert, helping pilots orient their scan without checking the screen.

L-3 Avionics Systems announced the selection of the Trilogy™ ESI-1000 Electronic Standby Instrument as standard equipment on the **Pilatus** PC-12NG single-engine turbo-prop. Shipments of the Trilogy systems will begin in the fourth quarter of 2010 in support of aircraft production.

ESI-1000 is a digital standby instrument developed to Design Assurance Level A, the highest safety standard acknowledged by the FAA. The ESI-1000 was designed to complement today's all-glass avionics packages. Trilogy is clearly visible with a 3.7-inch Active Matrix LCD display and conveniently fits into a standard 3-ATI mounting cut-out. An ambient light sensor is integrated for automatic brightness control on both the screen and keyboard. By presenting attitude, altitude, airspeed and optional heading data in a layout that matches the primary displays, the Trilogy ESI eliminates the adjustment to traditional analogue standbys in an emergency and enhances consistency across the panel. Once installed, the unit is aligned and ready for flight in less than three minutes.

DMS technologies, specialist in batteries and battery systems, has released a Low Voltage Disconnect (LVD) - a low power device that can be used to protect batteries from damage and help extend battery life.

The RED FLASH™ LVD prevents over-discharge and subsequent damage of batteries, regardless of battery technology, and is designed to operate on a 12V nominal voltage. The unit has a factory default disconnect voltage of 10.8V, however the disconnect voltage is very easy to set up, requiring only an adjustable power supply. An automatic re-connect function is an available option.

The unit has a very low residual current drain, particularly when compared with other similar LVD products. The 3 state-of-charge LEDs adjust automatically when on load providing an accurate visual indication of remaining battery capacity.

A multi-pole connector provides access to the functions remotely allowing the user to set up off-board switches and LEDs. It can control currents up to 10A on board and can control an external relay to allow for load currents up to 200A. For safety, the unit is fully isolated and protected against spikes, surges and reverse polarity connection.

For further details visit www.dmstech.co.uk or call +44 (0) 1794 525400.

LifePort Inc. has signed two agreements that launch the company into customised mission-specific seating.

The first agreement – with V. Kelner Pilatus Center (DBA Pilatus Center Canada) – marks the company's entry into the slide and swivel seating segment of medical mission equipment. LifePort will design, build and certify medical multi-mission seats for the Pilatus PC-12, a dual patient single engine turbo plane. Delivery is scheduled for June 2011.

LifePort also has entered into a contract with another customer, whose identity is not being disclosed, to provide troop seating that will integrate machined aluminium frames and carbon fibre backrests. This custom seating solution is 30 percent lighter than previous offerings and will be incorporated with high-density medical systems in the same aircraft.

The Kelner agreement – along with a recently secured contract for ultra-lightweight troop seating – further expands Lifeport's offering of mission equipment interiors.

Based in Thunder Bay, Canada, V. Kelner Pilatus Center Inc. (DBA Pilatus Centre Canada) is the exclusive Canadian distributor for the Pilatus PC-12 Aircraft. Pilatus Centre Canada supports more than 100 PC-12's throughout North America, or an impressive 10 percent of the worldwide fleet.

Eurocopter India Pvt. Ltd., the 25th subsidiary established worldwide by Eurocopter and the 10th in Asia is headquartered in New Delhi and has an existing facility in Bangalore for the management of industrial activity. An engineering centre will be created in Bangalore next year, along with the opening of a new commercial office in Mumbai. Eurocopter India's current headcount of 30 employees is expected to grow significantly during the coming years as the company evolves its commercial, industrial and services/support presence in the

country.

Eurocopter currently has 23 civil and government customers currently operating its helicopter products in India, with these rotary-wing aircraft performing duties that range from the support of offshore oil and gas drilling to VIP, corporate and passenger transportation. In addition to reinforcing these current markets, Eurocopter also is working with Indian institutions, companies and associations to develop new markets such as law enforcement, helicopter emergency medical services (HEMS), disaster management and utility.

Another priority for the new Eurocopter India subsidiary is the expansion of the company's industrial cooperation, building on the 40-year relationship with Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) – which has produced 600 of the company's Lama and Alouette III helicopters under license. HAL is currently manufacturing some 100 shipsets of airframe components per year for the AS550/AS350 helicopters, and is part of the Eurocopter global supply chain. HAL will continue to work with Eurocopter as a major industrial partner.

Russia's UTair is to acquire twenty **Eurocopter** AS350/AS355 light helicopters in a new agreement that extends this leading rotary-wing aircraft operator's long-term strategic relationship with Eurocopter.

The acquisition contract signed covers the delivery of 20 single-engine AS350 B3 and twin-engine AS355 NP versions of the Ecureuil family beginning in the summer of 2011 and continuing through the spring of 2013.

UTair has been operating Eurocopter helicopters since 2006. Its fleet currently includes examples of the ordered types as well as the earlier BO105 – which are flown in a wide variety of missions that range from VIP services and oil/gas industry support to medical missions. The company also is a launch customer for Eurocopter's EC175, with the intention to order 15 of these medium-weight twin-engine helicopters, plus 15 options. A total of 13 AS350 B3s are currently operational in Russia and the CIS.



RIEGL Laser Measurement Systems and **Diamond Aircraft** Industries have presented their next generation survey aircraft, as announced in March 2010.

Airborne Laser Scanning is a rapid, highly accurate and efficient method of capturing 3D data of large areas for various applications like, e.g., city modelling, power line monitoring, large area and flood plain mapping and even precise digital terrain modelling. Up to now airborne service had to put a lot of time and work into system integration and data acquisition - a major cost factor of the whole surveying mission.

As a result of intensive R&D efforts, service providers are offered an extremely time and cost effective solution now: The two leading manufacturers Diamond Aircraft and RIEGL Laser Measurement Systems now have a turnkey survey aircraft ready for short-term delivery. With the high performance RIEGL airborne laser scanner LMS-Q680i fully integrated into the "Universal Nose" of the Diamond DA42 Multi Purpose Platform (MPP) an innovative, high-performance and efficient overall system for surveying missions is available.

The system comprises of the most economical survey aircraft on the market, the Diamond DA42 MPP, and RIEGL's state-of-the-art airborne laser scanner LMS-Q680i. The RIEGL LMS-Q680i airborne laser scanner offers an unrivalled laser pulse repetition rate of up to 400 kHz, corresponding to an effective measurement rate of up to 266,000 measurements on the ground – per second. Application of the innovative, state-of-the-art RIEGL measurement technologies allows benefiting from these high pulse rates even from high flight altitudes.

Handling of the system is remarkably simple. As the "Universal Nose" is flexibly interchangeable, it is possible to install another sensor – for example for a photogrammetric task – within minutes.

ACCIDENTS & INCIDENTS

22 September 2010 Eurocopter EC135 N952AL Air ambulance of Airlift Northwest of Seattle, Washington. Operated by Air Methods Corp. While at cruise altitude, a popping noise was heard and a pressure change felt, followed shortly thereafter by the left clamshell door opening. The pilot notified the Communication Center of his intent to make a precautionary landing at Paine Field. At the hover while landing the right clamshell door opened. Otherwise the landing was uneventful. The door latching mechanism was inspected and found to be undamaged. In the maintenance hangar the next day, the door latch mechanism was compared to that in the backup aircraft and was found to be more easily opened, using slight finger pressure. The latch mechanism was replaced. [Concern]

22 September 2010 Piper Cheyenne II N47CA. Air ambulance of CAL-ORE Life Flight, Brookings, Oregon, USA. After completing a patient mission and dropping off the medical crew at another base, the pilot (the sole occupant) executed a normal IFR approach to Crescent City, California. The pilot descended below the overcast and received a visual approach to the airport. Upon selecting gear down, the red "in transit/gear unlocked" light remained illuminated and the gear handle remained in the down position (it should have returned to the neutral position) with no green lights. The pilot used the back-up system hand pump to get the gear down manually. This was successful on the first attempt as the pilot obtained three green lights and the red light extinguished. The pilot landed without further incident. It was found that a seal in the left gear door actuator had failed and allowed a large volume of hydraulic fluid to leak away. [Concern]

26 September 2010 Eurocopter EC130 B4 N132LN. Air ambulance of Air Methods Kentucky of Lexington, KY. Operated by Air Methods Corporation. After completing a scene flight and on final approach to primary airport at Hazard, Kentucky, the crew heard a loud noise toward the front of the aircraft. The aircraft suffered no change in attitude control and no damage was noted to the windshield. The PIC proceeded to land at the nearest airport, which was the final approach path at Hazard. A 10 inch impact area was noted on the nose of the aircraft. A bird strike was suspected related to impact area details, but no bird was noticed prior to impact. [Concern]

31 September 2010 MH-60 Jayhawk U S Coast Guard helicopter made an emergency landing on the stern deck of the Coast Guard icebreaker Healy. There were no injuries to the four-person Jayhawk crew or to anyone aboard the cutter. [KMXT]

1 October 2010 Helicopter Phoenix Police Department. Helicopter made an emergency landing near the Arizona State Capitol. After checking it flew itself back from the Wesley Bolin Plaza to Deer Valley Airport. The fault was an unspecified warning light. [AP]

2 October 2010 Eurocopter EC135 N911SV. Air ambulance of HELP Flight St. Vincent Healthcare, Billings, Montana operated by Metro Aviation Inc. Shortly after take-off from a scene flight at a remote location, the medical crew noticed the smell of smoke in the cabin, followed immediately by what appeared to be smoke. The pilot was notified and a precautionary landing was performed. It was determined that the source of the smell/smoke was residual compressor wash solution in the bleed air lines. Both engines had received compressor washes since the last time the aircraft heater had been used.

5 October 2010 Beechcraft E-90 N181CG. Air ambulance of Classic Lifeguard. While en route from Flagstaff Pulliam Airport to Page Municipal Airport at 16,000 feet, the RH Fire enunciator illuminated along with the right side fire extinguisher button. The right engine was shut down and secured, and ATC notified of the emergency. No evidence of fire was observed but the pilot actuated the right hand fire extinguisher. The aircraft let down into the

nearest airport at Tuba City some 15 miles distant. The single engine landing was uneventful. No evidence of fire was found. The fire detection system electrical components were inspected and cleaned and no defects were found. [Concern]

8 October 2010 Eurocopter AS350B2 N. Los Angeles Police Department. Made an emergency landing at Cole Park in Hollywood after an engine warning light illuminated. It flew out again some three hours later after checks were made. [LAT]

8 October 2010 Cessna 172A N8437A Two US Park Rangers died when the private plane they were flying in crashed in a remote section of the Dixie National Forest, near Cedar City, Utah, USA. The bodies of the pilot and aircraft owner, Dangling Rope District Law Enforcement Ranger Laurie Axelson, and his passenger, Glen Canyon National Park's Chief Law Enforcement Ranger Brent McGinn, were found in the wreckage. They were assigned to the Glen Canyon National Recreation Area along the Arizona-Utah border. They were missed and later found the following day. Dixie National Forest covers about two million acres of southern Utah. [Garfield CSO]

9 October 2010 AgustaWestland A109E Power N5UV. Air ambulance of The University of Virginia Hospital, Charlottesville, Virginia. Whilst landing in a field in Orange County, Charlottesville rear rotor struck tree branches. [FAA]

11 October 2010 Eurocopter EC135 N139AM. Air ambulance of Airlift Northwest, Seattle, Washington, USA operated by Air Methods Corp. At cruise altitude a loud thump was heard. Bird remains were seen on the windscreen. Flight operations were normal and the remainder of the flight to the destination hospital was uneventful. [Concern]

15 October 2010 Bell 206B JetRanger N96MP. Missouri State Highway Patrol. The helicopter crashed in Horseshoe Ridge Road, off Kehrs Mill Road in unincorporated St. Louis County between Chesterfield and Ballwin. The area to the west of Chesterfield Mall and north of the Forest Hills Country Club is a residential street lined and surrounded by trees. The pilot Joe Schuengel was killed. The 29-years old helicopter was assigned to traffic enforcement over Highway 55 in Jefferson County and had been returning to Spirit of St. Louis Airport in Chesterfield when it went missing from radar and was found lying on its side totally destroyed. There were no distress calls prior to the crash. [Media/FAA]

20 October 2010 Pilatus PC-12 N116SK. Air ambulance of Guardian Air Transport operated by Air Methods. Aircraft was on the return leg of a flight from Albuquerque, New Mexico to Show Low, Arizona when the crew noticed a flash off the right wing tip. There were no avionics issues, nor changes in flight integrity. The crew and pilot decided to proceed to Show Low, 20 minutes from the location. Upon inspection it appears that lightning struck the prop and front of the engine and exited the right wing tip. Minimal damage was noted, however, the aircraft will undergo an extensive inspection and engine replacement. [Concern]

22 October 2010 Eurocopter EC135 N. Air ambulance of Martin County's LifeStar operated by Air Methods. The Witham Field, Stuart, based helicopter was carrying a crash victim to St. Mary's Medical Center, West Palm Beach, Florida USA when an apparent electrical problem forced the pilot to land on Jupiter High School's football field.. A generator warning light went on in the cockpit. The pilot also reported an odour of smoke. [Media]

28 October 2010 Eurocopter AS355F2 G-SEWP. Police Service of Northern Ireland. The leased in supplementary airframe owned by Veritair was being used to support investigations at the site of a fatal A109 crash in the Mourne mountains. When coming into land in poor weather the aircraft crashed inverted. The four persons aboard suffered none-life threatening injuries and were rescued by others on the ground dealing with the earlier investigation. The weather conditions resulted in all four remaining on site for treatment. [Media]

FLIGHT SAFETY

On September 20 the President of the HAI, Matt Zuccaro issued an open letter to the industry both thanking them for their input but further promoting action on the issue of flight safety in the helicopter industry. *Do we have the collective will?* Can be read at www.rotor.com or on their Facebook presence <http://www.facebook.com/HelicopterAssoc>

In what seems an endless task of promoting the aims stated by industry – but still eluding much of it - Zuccaro was in Portugal for a meeting of the international steering group that is working on the development of a helicopter edition for the International Standards for Business Aircraft Operations (ISBAO) program. ISBAO is an internationally recognized accreditation program utilised by many of the world's business aircraft. The two day meet was prior to Helitech Europe on the seafront at Cascais.

At Helitech PAN met Zuccaro shortly after the conclusion of these meetings in Portugal and asked what had been the reaction to the letter of September and his feelings after the previous days labours. He said overall support had continued to be extremely positive, he had again received many positive messages of support to the message he sent out. In the same vein the meetings in previous days had also been extremely positive.

Also early in October the US FAA announced proposed broad new rules for helicopter operators, including air ambulances, which, if finalised, would require stricter flight rules and procedures, improved communications and training, and additional-board safety equipment. The proposal includes a range of requirements of Air Ambulance Operators including: -

Fit Helicopter Terrain Awareness and Warning Systems (HTAWS).

Comment on light-weight aircraft recording systems (LARS).

Conduct operations under Part 135, including flight crew time limitation and rest requirements, when medical personnel are on board.

Establish operations control centres if they are certificate holders with 10 or more helicopter air ambulances.

Institute pre-flight risk-analysis programs.

Conduct safety briefings for medical personnel.

Amend their operational requirements to include Visual Flight Rules (VFR) weather minimums, Instrument Flight Rules (IFR) operations at airports/heliports without weather reporting, procedures for VFR approaches, and VFR flight planning.

Ensure their pilots in command hold an instrument rating.

There are additional items aimed at all commercial helicopter operators including the revision of IFR alternate airport weather minimums, the demonstration of competency in recovery from inadvertent instrument meteorological conditions, equipping helicopters with radio altimeters and a change in the definition of extended over-water operation.

A brief, voluntary grounding of helicopters has allowed a middle Tennessee air ambulance company to remedy a mechanical problem, according to a spokeswoman for Air Evac. The company proactively grounded its entire fleet of medical helicopters on September 31, after a bolt on one of its fleet was found to be wearing dangerously thin, way before it was scheduled to be changed out.

The parts are said to be pitch change rod connecting bolts' fitted to the AirEvac Bell 206L LongRanger fleet. The problem is type specific and not affecting the standard Bell 206 JetRanger.

The AirEvac grounding affected more than 100 LongRanger helicopters spread out over 14 US states. A brief survey of the operations likely affected by the mass grounding suggested that thanks to a low sortie requirement at the time there was little or no effect on actual aircraft availability.

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PEOPLE

Long term readers of PAN may recall the relatively brief existence of the Helicopter Section of the Metropolitan Police Flying Club. The section operated by Traffic Department Sergeant Alf Kendry who was himself a pilot instructor mainly operated out of Wycombe Air Park from 2002 and went on to train a couple of serving police officers to be helicopter pilots. Then as now the dream was to fly for the police and as ever in the UK the powers that be are against the concept. In fact they were pretty much against the whole idea of the Helicopter Section and it eventually gave up the unequal task and folded.

On the positive side, one of its trainee pilots Chris Dent attained his goal of flying and has now come into the market to seek that elusive 'flying for the police' marker.

After three years at the University of Birmingham where he gained a BSc in Genetics he joined the Metropolitan police in 2000, went on to fly with Alf Kendry but, like so many others in this industry, finally gave up policing in favour of helicopter flying. From 2005 he was a JAA/FAA flight instructor at the Bristow Academy in Florida and a JAA instructor at Biggin Hill and Bournemouth before moving onto fly with Bristow in the oil industry on the North Sea from 2007 to date.

He currently has a JAA ATPL(H) FI (H) Unrestricted, is an FAA Certified Flight Instructor with 2,500 total helicopter time, 1,500 twin turbine of which 1,300 were on the Sikorsky S-92A.

The trustees of the Sky Watch Civil Air Patrol, the largest national volunteer air observation and air search organization in Europe have appointed Air Marshal Cliff Spink CB CBE FCMI FRAeS as their new President. Following a very successful career in the RAF, first as a fighter pilot flying the Lightning and the Phantom, followed by a number of senior appointments Air Marshal Spink retired from the RAF in 2003. In addition to his business interests he is now well known in general aviation circles for his flying displays in the Spitfire, the P51 Mustang and the F86 Sabre. Air Marshal Spink replaces Wing Commander Ken Wallis MBE the renowned autogyro pilot.

Sky Watch was formed in 2000 and after ten years of development it has been re-structured with a Board of Trustees, Regional Coordinators and operational units each with a chief pilot in charge. The new structure reflects the lessons that were learned in 2009 following a study, sponsored by the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust of the United States Civil Air Patrol and the US Coast Guard Auxiliary Air Service. Further lessons came from other volunteer search and rescue organizations in the UK, particularly the Royal National Lifeboat Institution and the mountain and lowland rescue teams.

Piaggio Aero Industries has appointed Mr. Eligio Trombetta as General Manager as part of its consolidation and expansion programme.

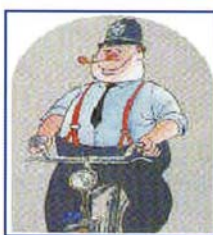
Trombetta joins Piaggio from Alenia Aermacchi where he was Deputy General Manager. After graduating in Aeronautical Engineering at Milan Polytechnic he began his career in Alenia Aermacchi in 1979 becoming Head of the flight test dept in 1987. He later worked on the JPATS (Joint Primary Aircraft Training System) and DO328 and before undertaking a number of other managerial posts in the group at SIA, Ansaldo Breda ground transportation systems and becoming the Deputy General Manager in Alenia Aermacchi.

Mr Trombetta is member of the Society of Flight Test Engineers and he is a Royal Aeronautical Society, Fellow. He is also a Senior Member of the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics



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LETTERS

Dear Sir

I have [read] an article which appeared in the September issue of your magazine. The article commented on the loss of Hampshire dedicated Air Support Unit and went on to comment about my reaction.

For the record I attended a number of meetings and a presentation at the Police Authority with regard to the business case around the collaboration between the three forces. What became clear to me was that because of the differences of ability between the fixed wing and rotary there was concern that there could be a more limited cover in certain parts of the force area such as the IOW and the New Forest. I raised these issues and was advised that measures were being looked at which would prevent this from occurring.

I have always maintained that reducing three air craft across four counties to two would not provide a better service as was suggested by some, but from the business case presented I had to accept it would be an adequate service, and that £8 million in savings was a significant amount. I am therefore convinced by the savings, but reducing the service to an acceptable level is a backwards step and is a sad day for Policing. As you will appreciate, I am not the decision maker, and I am certainly no expert in air support so I have to take on face value the content of the business case, and hope the information contained within it is factual and has been fully consulted.

In relation to the concerns raised I have put the Police Authority and the Chief Constable on notice that I will be monitoring the coverage of Air Support over Hampshire and the IOW under the new consortium and will highlight any issues we find.

I found the article made massive assumptions about my involvement and I would ask that so the views of the Police Federation are not misrepresented you publish a correction in your next article.

Kind regards

John Apter

Chairman

Hampshire Police Federation

Ed: The Hampshire Police air operation closed last month and the aircraft, one of only two fixed wing assets remaining in the UK is up for sale.

‘EVENTS NEWS’ WILL APPEAR AS A SPECIAL EDITION

This will cover Helitech Europe and recent events in Kuala Lumpur [where this edition was published] and the Dubai Helishow.

DIARY

3-4 November 2010. 2nd International HELI World Conference “HELICOPTER Technologies and Missions” Exhibition Centre Frankfurt, Germany. The second international HELI World Conference is a meeting place for everyone involved in helicopter systems and operations during the AIRTEC exhibition in Frankfurt. Chairman of the conference will be Professor Dr.-Ing. Stefan Levedag from the German Aerospace Centre Institute of Flight Systems, Braunschweig, Germany. Homepage www.airtec.aero. airtec GmbH & Co. KG, Carl-von-Noorden-Platz 5, D-60596 Frankfurt Tel. (direkt): +49 69 27400337

7-10 November 2010 fifth edition of **AVEX, Egypt International Airshow**. The air show and aviation expo takes place from **November 7th to 10th**, 2010 at Sharm El Sheikh International Airport.

17-19 November 2010 Owning The Night Conference and Exhibition at the The National Shooting Centre, Bisley, Surrey, UK, The event is being managed by BATTLESPACE Publications and The National Shooting Centre and targets visitors from all levels of UK MoD, Home Office and UK Police involved with firearms, night vision equipment and weapon sighting systems and all companies and individuals involved in the industry. Flir Systems Inc. is the new Platinum Sponsor for Owning The Night 2010.

The Owning The Night Conference, held over two half days on the 17th and 18th of November, features papers given by the MoD and Industry regarding the key issues of Force Protection.

17-20 November 2010 **Sicurezza Milan, Italy**. Sicurezza, now in its 15th edition, keeps on being the only international exhibition in the security industry taking place in Italy, and confirms its position among the top world events dedicated to security. **The Italian Chamber of Commerce for the UK** are currently organizing a **delegation of British firms** interested in exhibiting. The Chamber of Commerce provides discounted rates and a full support during your stay in Milan. Should you need further information please contact [Alessandro Giacalone](#) or [Giuseppe Paoletti](#) by email or telephone **+44 (0)207 495 8191**

A NICE FEATURE

It has been said that cameras are the 'eyes' of modern day video surveillance systems and video analytics the 'brain'. Still, for the added intelligence they afford, video analytics implementations and especially outdoor deployments, are not without challenges. Factors such as rain, snow, wind, fog, scene illumination, seasonal changes and the distance and size of objects you're trying to identify, all come into play. In my many years in video surveillance, few if any projects I have been involved in have topped the Qingzang railway. I mean that quite literally!

With 80% of the track above 13,000 feet (rising to over 16,000 in parts), the Qingzang railway is the world's highest passenger railway. It was opened in July 2006 and runs 1,215 miles from Gould in China to Lhasa in Tibet, traversing the Himalayan Mountains and crossing a massive plateau known as the 'Rooftop of the World'. To help keep passengers, crews, infrastructure and rolling stock on the line safe and secure, the Ministry of Railway (MOR) in China uses a comprehensive video surveillance and intrusion detection system from **NICE Systems**.

In addition to the usual environmental challenges encountered when deploying surveillance systems across railway networks, we had to contend other diversions crossing a camera's field of vision (such as moving cattle), which could cause a false alert – not to mention the extreme weather conditions which include very low temperatures, high winds and low air pressure. In fact, a section of the track is laid atop permafrost, ground that remains frozen throughout the year.

Across the entire length of the track, at one-mile intervals, are surveillance cameras (positioned 24 to 36 feet above the ground for optimal viewing range and protection from vandalism) integrated with NICE System's feature-packed 'edge' devices giving seamless surveillance coverage along the length of the line and in both directions. Each fully weatherproofed device comprises of its own electrically powered heater, cooling fan and specially developed electronic filter to mask out falling snow, which can obscure the image. Furthermore, the Himalayas can be a very windy place, especially during blizzards, so to deal with this the devices are programmed to compensate for a shake rate of +/-20 pixels in either direction. This ensures that the video feeds are watchable in virtually all conditions. Meanwhile, where night time visibility is an issue, infrared capability is included.

These devices keep staff based at the railways head office in Xining, China, fully apprised of what needs to be responded to, and what doesn't. The surveillance cameras do the initial analysis and only events that violate pre-defined security parameters are flagged as alerts to the team, who can monitor the situation in real-time as well as replay the events leading up to the incident. This approach substantially reduces the strain on the surveillance team, as rather than trying to watch thousands of individual feeds from all cameras, they can focus on those that may be indicative of trouble. Furthermore, incidents are more likely to be detected and when they are, the appropriate level of response can be delivered.

Being part of such an ambitious and astounding video surveillance system has been an enjoyable challenge. It also proves just how useful video analytics can be, even in the remotest, wildest areas of the world.

Since the implementation, NICE Systems was chosen by the MOR to deploy its IP video security solution for country's first high-speed rail-line, the Beijing-Tianjin inter-city passenger line. Its technology is also used by railway and metro systems around the world including the Beijing metro, South Africa's **TransnetFreightRail** and the Belgian national railway operator. [Authored by Moto Shabtai, Exec VP Sales, Nice Systems]

