

Police Aviation News

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PAR



Japan confirms AW139

Prediction of 50 police tilt rotors

West Midlands police ride again
Essex Air Ambulance select MAS
U S Fire - decisions required
Police Aviation Conference Report

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EDITORIAL

In the wake of last month's reported calling in of the Skywatch Civil Air Patrol to assist police survey the site of an UXB some disquiet has been expressed by Home Office sources.

The police in North Yorkshire do not have their own air support resource and therefore rely upon mutual aid from other police air units including Cleveland and West Yorkshire to meet their occasional needs. The lack of any deep knowledge of the rules governing police using air support has tended to increase the level of acceptance of the local volunteer organisations to the basic police edict of 'if you want it get it and argue about the bill later' - this includes organisations such as Sky Watch Civil Air Patrol [SWCAP] and a whole host of other services.

The SWCAP readily responded to a police request to survey the UXB site from the air and as a result a plan to evacuate the area was formulated by North Yorkshire Police as the local RAF bomb disposal squad [BDS] was brought in and prepared to explode the bomb.

No one discussed money; the flight fell under the ancient heading of a citizen aiding the police in the execution of their duty. Not quite 'follow that car' but not so far removed.

Although the SWCAP is a charitable rescue organisation like the long established Royal National Lifeboat Institute [RNLI] the recent activity in North Yorkshire and particularly the police service making the approach for assistance is frowned upon by others as a potential area of risk. The lower ranks of the police service are not risk averse when danger beckons but the higher up the tree you go it gets worse.

The seemingly farcical official Home Office position is that whilst it is still alright to call in the RNLI or a charitable air ambulance via their control rooms at the drop of a hat the regulations covering charitable SWCAP aircraft are somehow another matter. While they will [reluctantly] accept and act upon information from SWCAP the organisation has yet to reach the level of acceptance of the similarly set up sea rescue and air ambulance services. The news that North Yorkshire Acting Chief Constable Stephen Reid personally thanked the volunteer crew was therefore even less welcome!

It appears that the life saving SWCAP is just new and blindingly obvious where the sea rescue service is a few hundred years old and the status of life saving air ambulances just seems to have crept up unseen hiding behind a health service gloss. The worn out excuse that they are a bunch of amateurs just does not hold water when their spokesmen include the likes of British Airways pilot Archie Liggatt who has time on a range of RAF fast jets - and he is just one of many professionals.

Someone somewhere in UK law enforcement needs to get their ducks in a row and either join a number of other official organisations like HM Coastguard and get the SWCAP position agreed sensibly or stop calling upon the other older charitable organisations - the RNLI and air ambulances included - to undertake rescues on behalf of the police!

Just sitting down and talking to them would be a start!

Bryn Elliott

LAW ENFORCEMENT

AUSTRALIA

VICTORIA: The police helicopter rescue of a Victorian Government minister, Tim Holding, has raised a number of questions among other politicians in the state.

The MP undertook a solo expedition into the wilds of Victoria's Alps but got lost and after being declared missing was involved in a very public rescue operation from the hostile slopes of Mt Feathertop after setting off to Victoria's second-highest peak 300km from Melbourne.

Holding was a former army reservist with a background of marathons endured and was considered to be fit and well prepared. Feathertop, at over 6,200 feet is windswept, freezing and snow-covered in the Southern Hemisphere winter and an error led to disorientation and two nights wet, cold and hungry alone on the slopes.

Holding was lifted to safety by a helicopter after a chance sighting and a lucky break in the weather. A torch he was carrying was spotted from the air and searchers were able to see him on his feet and flapping a reflective thermal blanket for help.

Senior Constable Sue Mapleson in the police helicopter rappelled down to the MP and winched him to safety in a short, two-minute, rescue that was nonetheless a dangerous operation.

The 37-year-old was well prepared, but he was hiking alone and was not carrying an EPIRB - an Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon - which alone has been cited as a reason for an Opposition MP to term him as foolish. The question of whether he and others like him should be charged for the true cost of the rescue has been asked.

Others, including professionals, are against the implied 'Nanny State' requirement that people should not undertake such trips solo let alone requiring the need for an EPIRB. As a battery powered aid the EPIRB satellite phone or GPS device still requires users to know what they are doing so that they can survive if it were to be unavailable - flat batteries, damage and separation being real dangers. Charging for rescue costs is also seen as an unpopular move and difficult to legislate for.

A system of charging was tried years ago in the Yosemite Valley, California and although hundreds of people were rescued payment was only pressed on a couple of occasions thanks to the legal problems.



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AUSTRIA

Last month PAN reported that the Bell 206 had been withdrawn from the Austrian military and in mid September a tender was published for selling three of the four remaining Bell 206 Jet Ranger helicopters remaining in service with the police. The three machines, all introduced in the mid-1990's are c/n 4410 OE-BXP, c/n 4413 OE-BXR and c/n 4440 OE-BXO. The youngest of the fleet, 12 years old c/n 4441 OE-BXT, will remain for training purpose. [GH]



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CANADA

EDMONTON: In mid-September the Edmonton Police Service's new flight operations unit Eurocopter EC120 went to work right after an unveiling ceremony where it was welcomed by police Chief Mike Boyd and other civic officials. The unveiling took place at a special event at the Vallevand Kennels, Edmonton.

Air-2 will take over Air-1's role as the police service's main eye in the sky, the older helicopter will be primarily used as a maintenance stand in.

Air-1 has been in service since 2001 and maintenance down-time is reckoned as 30%. With a second helicopter, the police service will be able to have an eye in the sky up to 1,500 hours per year, up from the current 1,000.

Edmonton's Flight Ops is one of only six full time police helicopter programmes in operation within Canada and the only one that utilises sworn members as pilots.

Air-1 and its crew carry out about 300 arrests per year and assist in 150 ground-unit arrests. Last year, Air-1 attended 2,500 calls for service. It has also been used to help with the city's emergency services as well as assist RCMP.

Air-2 cost \$1.65M to buy with an additional \$350,000 spent to role equip it. Both helicopters are equipped with the FLIR 8000 Camera System and an MRC [Vizlink] downlink system.

COLOMBIA

FLIR Systems, Inc. has received a \$4.9M US Government Foreign Military Sale (FMS) order for the Colombian Army and Air Force. The order includes FLIR System's Star SAFIRE® III infrared multi-sensor surveillance systems, training and related services. The units will be installed on rotary wing craft supporting Colombian Ministry of Defense airborne day and night counter-narcotic and counter-insurgency missions. Deliveries are expected to be completed in 2010.

The image displays the Honeywell Observer (MKIII Mission System) interface. It features several circular inset images showing different surveillance capabilities: 'SEARCH & RESCUE' (a helicopter over a body of water), 'SHIP TRACKING' (a large cargo ship), 'TRAFFIC PROXIMITY' (a yellow helicopter), and 'VEHICLE TRACKING' (a yellow sports car). The main interface shows a map with various tracking lines and data. The text 'OBSERVER (MKIII Mission System) ON TRACK ON TARGET ON TIME' is prominently displayed at the bottom left. The Honeywell logo is at the bottom right, along with contact information for Honeywell Aerospace.

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GERMANY

BAVARIA: The Bavarian Police has started offering for sale its existing Eurocopter EC135P2 fleet of helicopters ahead of the deliveries of a replacement fleet of similar machines. The EC135's are scheduled to be replaced between January and July 2010.

INDIA

ANDHRA PRADESH: A Bell 430 helicopter [believed VT-APG c/n 49049] that was destroyed in a fatal accident early last month with Andhra Pradesh chief minister Y S Rajasekhara Reddy on board was said to have not been airworthy for many months. Despite this the aircraft was linked to use by the local police. The 'not airworthy' allegation was later discredited.

The Government of Andhra Pradesh, Hyderabad, withdrew the Bell from VIP service last year after taking delivery of a new AgustaWestland AW139 but when the new helicopter was unavailable on maintenance it is reported that the 'dust covered' Bell was pulled out from storage and pressed into service.

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), the aviation regulator has said that Bell 430 was not airworthy and its certificate of airworthiness had not been renewed for the last two years – including a period before it was replaced by the AW139.

After the new helicopter arrived in November 2008 the Bell 430 was handed over to the Andhra Pradesh Aviation Corp for commercial operations including police use.



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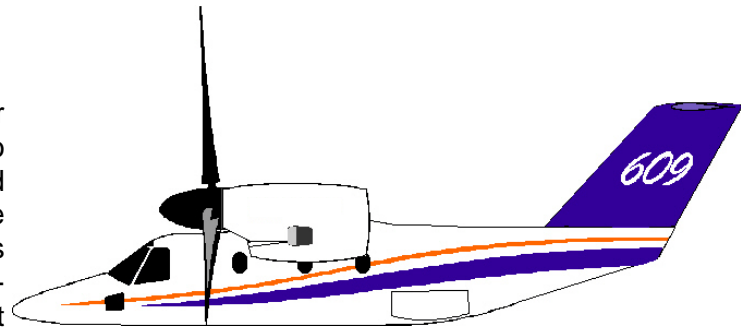
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ITALY

At a promotional event for their BA609 tilt rotor Finmeccanica Chief Executive Pierfrancesco Guarguaglini claimed that AgustaWestland should sell about 500 of the new BA609 despite its €20M per unit price tag. Furthermore it was said that Italy could kick off orders by buying between 40 and 50 for the police. The statement was made in the north Italy town of Cernobbio, where Guarguaglini was hosting a demonstration of the aircraft.

Ed: In the weeks since this announcement many have pulled disbelieving faces but no-one has yet issued a rebuttal or claimed a factual error in this statement.

The majority of police aircraft in Italy are old and overdue for replacement and there are continuing difficulties with the breach of EU competition rules over aircraft contracts going to Agusta built conventional helicopters. Whether the unique BA609, at four times the cost is an answer to the problem, remains debatable.



JAPAN

AgustaWestland and Mitsui Bussan Aerospace have announced that the Japan National Police Agency (JNPA) has ordered another medium lift AW139 helicopter to replace the Chiba prefecture's 20-years old AS332L1 helicopter. The selection is endorsement of the popularity of the AW139 and supports the growing views that the multi-role AW139 can perform the mission requirements of older heavier class helicopters. This addition to the JNPA fleet increases the number of AW139 helicopters operating in the law enforcement role in Japan to three, with the first two helicopters being selected by the Tokyo Metropolitan Police Department.

Keisatsu-cho Chiba took delivery of the AS332 in early 1988 and also operates a ten-years old BK117C1.

MAURITIUS

The Government of Mauritius has taken delivery of a new Hindustan Dhruv helicopter for police operations.

The Dhruv will be responsible for rescue operations and surveillance of our the Exclusive Economic Zone. Until the arrival of the new 14 seat helicopter police operations were reliant upon a pair of Chetak [Alouette].

Currently only two members of the police are trained to fly the Dhruv - Deputy Assistant Superintendent of Police (DASP) Sachin Santuck and Assistant Superintendent of Police Danesh Jawaheer. A third trained pilot died in August from a heart attack.

Ed: This independent member of the British Commonwealth has an area of 2,545 sq.mls. The Police Air Wing was formed in 1974 with one Chetak flown by two French pilots and engineers. The new Dhruv was first reported as ordered in late October 2005 Dhruv aura pour mission des opérations de sauvetage et la surveillance de notre zone économique exclusive.



SWEDEN: The attacks, real and supposed, on police aviation resources continue. Hard on the heels of the severe damage to the Surrey and West Midlands helicopters in the UK the criminal fraternity has taken note in Sweden.

On September 23 Cheeky thieves in Sweden, made a dawn swoop that seemed to draw its inspiration from the movie industry. The thieves were lowered from a helicopter onto the roof of a G4S cash deposit depot building in Vastberga, near Stockholm where a huge amount of cash - no one will say exactly how much - was being held awaiting distribution to Stockholm's ATM machines.

The helicopter, said to be an Bell 206 JetRanger SE-HOK c/n 1693, had been stolen from a local airport and appeared at about 4am when there were few witnesses to report on the thieves activities. The reports talked of the white helicopter swooping in and lowering two men onto the roof and the sound of the robbers blasting their way in from the top of the building.

Ground based police rushed in to set up a perimeter around a suspected robbery in progress as they awaited a SWAT team to arrive and deal with what was assumed to be a heavily armed team. Police access to the building was thwarted by the very defensive measures that obliged the criminals to make the roof attack in the first place.

Meanwhile the crooks were way ahead of them, hauling their take and heading back into their waiting helicopter, making good their escape some 20 minutes after arriving.

When police tried to get their own helicopter in the air to pursue the robbers, they were delayed sufficiently when they discovered a suspect package at the hanger where the aircraft they wanted to use was housed. According to media reports the package was said to be clearly marked 'bomb' and the crew decided not to fly. It was an inert hoax.

The thieves' helicopter was found abandoned some time later just 10km away. The perpetrators had vanished along with an unstated amount of money. They left no trail, just a lot of embarrassed police, in their wake.

A reward of seven million Swedish Kronor - about \$1M - has been offered for any information leading to the heli-crooks. Two persons had been arrested for questioning as PAN went to press. [Media]

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THAILAND

ROYAL THAI POLICE: At the Asian Aerospace show held in Hong Kong in early September Eurocopter announced the signing of a contract for the supply of three EC155 Dauphin helicopters to the Royal Thai Police (RTP). The 3 new medium weight twin-engine helicopters will be delivered in 2011 and will be dedicated to VVIP missions.

Captain Chesda Indrasthitya, Aviation Commander of Royal Thai Police added, "This is not the first time that we are buying the EC155 helicopter. There are already 2 EC155s in our current fleet and our past experiences have shown that it is a truly versatile helicopter which fully meets our mission requirements."

Editor: The existing EC155s [TYPE 29] 2901 and 2902 were delivered over five years ago. They were the first Eurocopter helicopters purchased and, according to reports, are well thought of in Thailand. Many law enforcement authorities in the world are currently operating the EC155 helicopter, these include the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, China, Japan, Germany, and United States.



UNITED KINGDOM

PSNI: Pending the arrival of their second helicopter – an EC145 is on order - the PSNI has been obliged to hire a second helicopter to help in the fight against dissident republicans who set up an illegal checkpoint in south Armagh.

The unidentified Eurocopter AS355 Twin Squirrel helicopter joined army Westland Gazelle helicopters based at Aldergrove in the hunt last month for a masked gang that stopped motorists in Meigh. [Media]

WESTERN COUNTIES: Last month's story relating to Ian Kingston, a pilot with the WCAOU contained a major error in stating that the offence he had originally been sacked for was an aggravated drink drive offence in which he had been three times over the limit. This should have stated 'aggravated driving offence in which he had been three times over the speed limit.'

The editor apologises unreservedly to Ian Kingston and his colleagues for this inaccuracy in the text.

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WEST MIDLANDS: Eurocopter UK announced the order for a new EC135P2 for West Midlands Police Air Support Unit at the recent Helitech show. The new airframe, due for delivery next year replaces the airframe destroyed last June when the operational helicopter was destroyed by fire.

In the meantime Eurocopter will be providing a fully equipped EC135T1 police helicopter to take over the duties of the destroyed aircraft. The temporary replacement will remain in service until delivery of the new aircraft next summer.

Eurocopter has managed to source a replacement airframe for the fire destroyed EC135 earlier than originally predicted. It was feared that replacement would take at least two years. The delivery schedule of the ongoing six aircraft order [of which EC135P2 G-SUFK on display at the Helitech show was the first] is unaffected by the addition of the new airframe into the completion schedule.

What has changed is the final form of the replacement aircraft. The destroyed airframe was a pod equipped high skid P2 variant, its replacement is to be 'identical' to the batch of six airframes being completed as follow on examples to G-SUFK.

The 'fully equipped EC135T1 police' helicopter scheduled to act as stand-in is G-SUFF the former Suffolk Police airframe. It now sees an unexpected extension to its UK police career. Arranging all the details took some time partly because of difficulties arising over the use of the stand-in airframe. Eurocopter UK is not in the business of long term leasing out part-exchange airframes so the expedient was to sell G-SUFF to the West Midlands Police to bide them over the few months between now and the delivery of the new helicopter. As all the aircraft in this batch are to attract a minimum £1M trade-in price the price charged to West Midlands was also £1M. The expectation is that it will be traded back to Eurocopter for a similar sum. In effect 'something for nothing' and a very good deal under the circumstances. Flight training on G-SUFF started during Helitech week and the aircraft should be operational as these words are read.

It is not known whether the elderly aircraft is to be re-registered to a more appropriate sequence for operations from Birmingham Airport. When operated by Suffolk the aircraft was equipped with a LEO 2 camera whereas the burned airframe had the FSI Star Safire HD. The latter survived the incident but it is unclear whether it could be transferred across.

Meanwhile there has been some activity in the background to decide the future of the air unit at Birmingham International Airport. After the attacks on the Surrey Police EC135T2 that unit moved out to take advantage of the added security at RAF Odiham, a change of base remains an option for West Midlands. A part-owner of Birmingham Airport is a Canadian pension fund and they were unsure whether they wanted the additional risk posed by the police air unit to remain. The decision on this is imminent and in its wake the police will decide upon how the aircraft is to be protected on or off site in the future.

Ed: In September 2007 a 48.25% share in the airport was sold to the 'Airport Group Investments Ltd' (AGIL). AGIL is a limited company owned by Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan and Victorian Funds Management Corporation. The current shareholding arrangement is as follows: Seven West Midlands district councils (49%), Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan and Australia's Victorian Funds Management Corporation (48.25%) and the Employee Share Trust (2.75%).



UNITED STATES

NATIONAL: According to FAA data some 900 instances of lasers being directed at aircraft were reported in 2008. The problem has been more intense in some areas than others. In the period just eight instances were recorded in Massachusetts. Three strikes were against commercial airliners landing at Logan International Airport, a State Police helicopter and the blimp floating over a Red Sox playoff game.

Near accurate reports only date back to 2005 when the Transportation Department announced that the growing threat meant it was going to require pilots to immediately report laser contacts to air traffic controllers, who would then notify law enforcement.

There have been no accidents or permanent injuries from the laser contacts, and it is not known why they do it, some of those arrested in the incidents had been consuming alcohol and others were teenagers. Some contacts could also be accidents caused by amateur astronomers who use lasers to help them aim their telescopes or to point out constellations.

Laser contact reports have been on the rise in the USA recently, with more than 730 reported by July of this year. California was the leader in laser contact reports in 2008, with 276. In Alaska, Iowa, Michigan, Montana, Nebraska, Rhode Island, South Dakota, and West Virginia, there was only one report.

The vast majority of the pilots reported seeing green lasers; these can be seen at a greater distance than red lasers and their price has gone down in recent years. [Globe]

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CALIFORNIA: The Ripon Police Department recently received a Justice Department grant to acquire a powered parachute at no cost to the City. The grant provided \$30,000 in equipment and training from the Rural Law Enforcement Technology Center. This is not a new technology, but a new use by law enforcement. There are only six others in the United States used for this purpose, and Ripon is the seventh - and the only one in California.

The powered parachute will help in searching along the Stanislaus River -- one pilot in the air can do the job of several officers on the ground. Every summer, the Department receives several calls to find lost and missing rafters along the river. They will be able to cover a large area in just a few minutes. The powered parachute will also be used in built up areas.

The aircraft weighs just over 400 pounds and can carry both officers, taking off in less than 100 feet. It can fly at 35 mph in calm weather. It has a 10 US gallon capacity fuel tank and costs about \$30 an hour to fly, including fuel and maintenance. The powered parachute is stored in a trailer and can be deployed in 15 minutes once it arrives at a scene.

Ripon PD is looking at getting PA system and camera to downlink images to the operations room. The rudimentary craft also has a role in searches for marijuana grow activity in and around the city of Ripon.

CALIFORNIA: Seven police departments in Tulare County central California have banded together to enter an agreement with Blue Sky Aviation in Tulare for helicopter support. The operator has a core business of flight training on Robinson helicopters.

The agreement between the police in the cities of Dinuba, Exeter, Farmersville, Lindsay, Porterville, Tulare and Woodlake gives each of them an opportunity to use the helicopter as a resource that would otherwise be too expensive or too remote. The helicopter will be available on demand.

'Each police department on their own does not have a need for a full-time helicopter' Blue Sky Aviation Chief Executive Officer Ron Overacker said 'but when you add the others in the group you have enough people to support the costs'.

The helicopter will see use during vehicular and foot chases, in locating missing people and in other high-risk police actions. Overacker's helicopter pilots have the use of a high-powered searchlight and infrared camera and are attending the police academy to become familiar with law enforcement procedures.

Tulare police estimate they will only use the helicopter about 10 hours a year, and only in special circumstances. [Media]



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CALIFORNIA: Corona 1, the Corona Police Department Bell 407 helicopter, has an asking price of \$900,000 after City Council members voted unanimously to sell it at their meeting last month. The city had paid about \$950,000 for it in 2002 but it has been out of service for a year now although it was pressed into service to assist with a SAR mission in March 2009 to look for an aircraft crashed near the airport.

The move ends the city's 7-year-old helicopter operation and means more officer hours and slower response times for some incidents. Four officers in the helicopter unit have been assigned other duties.

When police need a helicopter for emergency situations that require air support, they call on Riverside police and county sheriff's departments but many times their calls go unanswered as surrounding areas deal with their own budget shortfalls.

The Corona helicopter was running up bills of nearly \$13,000 a month for loan payments and contracts for a pilot and hangar rental, and spent about 25 to 30 hours a week in the air when operating.

Role equipment such as night vision, a GPS-based map system and a Lo-Jack tracker are being removed before sale.

MARYLAND: Eurocopter, the manufacturer of Maryland's current medevac helicopters is protesting the state's effort to replace the ageing fleet, alleging that the bidding process favours another company and would add to costs.

State officials have budgeted more than \$50M to buy new helicopters, and bids from manufacturers were due last month. American Eurocopter has filed a formal protest with the state Department of Transportation.

American Eurocopter opted not to submit a proposal to supply new helicopters citing that the process was flawed because the requirements appeared to be written around an AgustaWestland design – apparently a reference to the AW139.

The contract has not yet been awarded and everyone other than AEC is declining to comment on the procurement process on grounds varying from state regulations to deafness.

AEC has suggested that rather than buying a larger faster helicopter Maryland should upgrade its existing fleet, thereby assisting its budget shortfall. [Baltimore Sun]

MARYLAND: The state Department of Natural Resources is auctioning a Bell 206 BII Jet Ranger helicopter, N16717 one of four aircraft in the unit, which was disbanded amid budget cuts this year.

The opening bid for the helicopter - which went by the call sign "Natural One" - was \$125,000, this had risen to \$168,000 later in the month.

The helicopter comes with \$65,000 worth of spare parts, and there are about two dozen other aviation-related items up for auction, too.

When the aviation unit was active, police used their three helicopters and one fixed wing to enforce natural resources laws, including catching fish poachers and illegal hunters. The aircraft also were used for SAR and to help police officers in rural counties.

Now Natural Resources Police officers work with the Maryland State Police to do air missions. The pilots are being reassigned to other jobs within NRP.



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N16717 has over 13,000 hours on its airframe, the RR/Allison A250 engine time being under 8,000. Police role equipment – to be removed if not purchased by a law enforcement agency – includes NAT Tactical Radios, an SX-16 searchlight and a FLIR 2000 sensor feeding front and rear monitors.

Two of the helicopters owned were DoD surplus, only one was actually in service at the time the NRP aviation unit was cut. Both those helicopters were returned and ended up with police in Montgomery County. The fixed wing remains to be sold through the state Department of General Services via a web auction at GovDeals.com

The auction was destined to run until September 30, winners being announced the first week of October

NORTH CAROLINA: Two months later than expected, the Brunswick County Sheriff's Office took delivery of its Bell OH-58 Kiowa helicopter, donated by the military.

Officials had announced in late June they expected the helicopter to be ready in two weeks, but the need for parts and pilot training delayed the arrival. The parts issue related to the rejection of some items where the paperwork was unclear or suspect.

The preparation for service and maintenance of the helicopter was undertaken in Elizabethtown before it moved to Fayetteville to get the police radio installed. The helicopter is free but the sheriff's office spent almost \$30,000 in repairs, parts, hangar rental and insurance prior to entry into service. Drug seizure money is being used to maintain and operate the helicopter.

Brunswick officials say getting their own helicopter was cheaper than staying with SABLE, a partnership between the Wilmington and Leland police departments and the sheriff's offices in Pender and Brunswick counties that started in January 2007. Brunswick County pulled out of SABLE in the spring. The New Hanover County Sheriff's Office has had its own helicopter since 2006.

Wilmington spent \$161,000 for its two helicopters, not including maintenance and operation. But each SABLE partner pays for its own hours.

When Brunswick's helicopter will be stored at the Ocean Isle Beach airport and flown by the department's in-house pilot, Detective Jim Barr. Barr is licensed to fly piston engines, and the insurance company required him to build up turbine time before the operation started.

OHIO: A police helicopter in Dayton International Airport's tightly restricted airspace without permission violated Gerald and Peggy Little's right to a reasonable expectation of privacy, Ohio's 2nd District Court of Appeals decided.

The ruling overturns the couple's convictions on charges of drug trafficking and marijuana cultivation.

The helicopter was working with the Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation and Identification and local deputies on drug eradication when it spotted what officers suspected was marijuana on the Littles' Karns Road property in southern Miami County on August 2, 2007.

More than two years later the court decided that as the helicopter was in the airspace without permission from air traffic control, the search of the property during which marijuana was found inside and outside the house was warrantless and forbidden by the Fourth Amendment.

Because the aerial surveillance was illegal, incriminating statements have been eliminated from evidence.

The ruling states that in future, law enforcement agencies should take precautions to avoid the violation of FAA regulations when performing aerial surveillance of rural properties in order to ensure that they are acting within the confines of the Fourth Amendment. The Miami County Prosecutor plans to appeal the decision to the Ohio Supreme Court. [Media]



TEXAS: McLennan County Sheriff's Office received a free 1971 Bell OH-58 military surplus helicopter in 1995 [probably N9240N c/n 41558 71-20697], one of several similar helicopters owned by the operation.

Federal guidelines require that its engine be overhauled after 1,700 hours of flight, a procedure costing \$85,000. Last month the sheriff's office and county commissioners came to an agreement to spend money with savings from this year's fuel budget.

TEXAS: It has been learned that a major order achieved by MD Helicopters in 2007/08 has turned sour. The City of Houston ordered nine MD 500E helicopters in two batches to replace its existing fleet of MD 500 helicopters. After one was ordered in October 2007 the 2008 ALEA Conference and Exposition in Houston was used as the launch pad for a further order and another eight machines were announced.

The Houston Police Department was expanding its airborne law enforcement operation to enable two aircraft to be in the sky up to 21 hours per day.

To meet the new police coverage requirement, the Helicopter Patrol Unit was to increase its fleet size to thirteen MD 500E helicopters. At that time the Houston Helicopter patrol Unit flew in excess of 6000 flight hours per year in support of law enforcement and homeland security missions and had already accumulated more than 170,000 hours of flight time on MD500 series aircraft. The plan was to have all the new aircraft in service by June 30, 2009.

As the MD press release of June 2008 clearly stated MD had a contractual obligation to deliver all nine before July 2009 but they did not meet that requirement. Even with additional time [through to October 1] it appears that only six of the aircraft will be delivered and the three remaining machines stand to be cancelled.



AIR AMBULANCE

POLAND

Last month the Polish Ministry of Health took delivery of the first of 23 EC135 helicopters ordered from Eurocopter in June 2008. The new fleet will be assigned to the country's nationwide Emergency Medical Services (EMS) network. This on-time delivery represents a major step in Poland's efforts to modernise its Helicopter Emergency Medical Services (HEMS).

The new helicopter, scheduled to enter into service at the beginning of January 2010, will be based in Warsaw. Five more EC135s are slated for delivery in 2009, with the remaining 17 to follow in 2010. The fleet will be spread around all 17 Polish bases, and will be flown by



the Warsaw-based Polish operator Lotnicze Pogotowie Ratunkowe (LPR). The new EC135s, which will replace the existing fleet of Mi-2s, will bring Poland up to date with the latest European standards.

Technical support for LPR's EC135s will be provided by the Warsaw-based company Heli Invest – a Eurocopter Distributor and Certified Maintenance Centre that offers a full range of customer services, including a hotline with Polish-speaking operators available 24/7, full maintenance services and technical support at all bases throughout the country.

Since its market debut in mid-1996, more than 800 EC135s have been delivered to 160 customers in 40 countries. [ECD]

TURKEY

One of the existing UK EMS fleet of Agusta A109 variants, A109E Power G-MEDS c/n 11679 has been sold to Turkey as TC-HJT.

The UK fleet is due to be upgraded later this year and the operators, Sloane Helicopters, took an early opportunity to sell G-MEDS on while an offer was on the table. It is understood that this aircraft finalises the new fleet aspirations of the Turkish air ambulance service. [SH]

UNITED KINGDOM



ESSEX & HERTFORDSHIRE: Following two years of external consultations and appraisals the Essex Air Ambulance is to move away from the threatened site at Boreham near Chelmsford to its chosen new site at Earls Colne. The new base is located north and east of Boreham.

Representatives of the charity were on hand to hear Councillors vote in favour of granting planning permission for the "Air Ambulance Centre" at the Braintree District Planning Committee on September 22. This means that the existing Charity office and helicopter airbase will be able to stand side by side incorporating a helicopter viewing gallery and interactive visitor's area bringing the emergency helicopter closer to its supporters. Educational visits, tours and a new shop will enable people to help support the charity in different ways.

The decision arrived after over 3 years research, investigation and preparation by the Charity. The process has included public consultations about what facilities the centre should have through to an extensive options appraisal to find a new operating location in Essex that would enable the vital life-saving work of the County's emergency helicopter to continue. The planning process was lengthened because there were a number of local objections to the air ambulance moving in to Earls Colne.

The Boreham base – also occupied by the Essex police Air Support Unit – is threatened by ongoing gravel extraction of the former USAF Boreham air base. The two operators occupy the same former control tower building and have separate hangars [see above].

The police have yet to resolve their own relocation.

Essex and Hertfordshire Air Ambulance also have another base in the west of the county at North Weald. This other base serves west Essex and Hertfordshire using an MD900 but only on a five day basis as the newer partner in the fundraising builds up support in Hertfordshire.

The current EC135T2 G-SSXX helicopter used by Essex is to be replaced when its lease expires in 2010. The type of choice is to be an MD900 Explorer as currently operated from the North Weald base. The provider transfers from Bond Air Services Limited [BASL] to rival Medical Air Services. Both contractors are based at Staverton Airport, Gloucestershire. The base hanger at Boreham [see over] belongs to BASL so it may be assumed that they will not be building any of the required support infrastructure at the new Earls Colne facility before the contract completes. [MAS]

ISLE OF MAN: THE contract to run the Isle of Man's air ambulance contract is being put out to tender.

Woodgate Aviation, based at Ronaldsway, has operated the air ambulance contract for the past five years using a specially equipped Piper Chieftain aircraft to fly patients requiring emergency transfer to off-Island hospitals for specialist treatment. Patients who are not emergency cases but cannot travel on scheduled flights or ferries, can also be flown by air ambulance.

The Department of Health and Social Security is now seeking expressions of interest from qualified and experienced companies interested in providing the air ambulance service for the next five years from January 2010.

Woodgate Aviation had modified its Piper Chieftain aircraft with agreement from the DHSS but there were other companies in the UK that would be able to invest in specially equipping aircraft for use as an air ambulance.

Expressions of interest in tendering for the contract closed on September 25.

KENT & SUSSEX: It has been quite a busy year operationally at both bases. The Kent Air Ambulance has flown a total of 562 missions and carried 139 patients up to September 1 this year.

Of these, 38% were road traffic crashes and 17% medical emergencies.

WALES: North Wales's new £3m air ambulance has joined the all Wales air ambulance charity fleet based in Caernarfon.

Like its BO105 predecessor the spacious Eurocopter EC135T2 G-WASS is a side-loading aircraft with platforms the same height as a stretcher. The larger interior is designed to improve patient comfort, and be less claustrophobic than its predecessor. It is also a slightly faster aircraft, allowing a faster response to incidents.

The Caernarfon crew are one of the busiest in the UK over the summer months. They had 580 missions last year, and in June flew their 4,000th mission.



UNITED STATES

The National Transportation Safety Board has issued 19 recommendations regarding Helicopter Emergency Medical Services (HEMS). These recommendations address various safety issues including pilot training; safety management systems to minimize risk; collection and analysis of flight, weather, and safety data; flight data monitoring; development of a low altitude airspace infrastructure; and the use of dual pilots, autopilots, and night vision imaging systems (NVIS).

HEMS operations include an estimated 750 helicopters, 20 operators, and 60 hospital-based programs. They transport seriously ill patients and donor organs 24 hours a day in a variety of environmental conditions. "The pressure on HEMS operators to conduct their flights quickly in all sorts of environments makes these types of operations inherently more risky than other types of commercial flight operations," said NTSB Chairman Deborah A P Hersman. "Operators need to every available safety tool to conduct these flights and to determine when the risk of flying is just too great." For the HEMS industry, 2008 was the deadliest year on record with 12 accidents and 29 fatalities. In response to this increase in fatal accidents, the NTSB placed the issue of HEMS operations on its Most Wanted List of Transportation Safety Improvements.

Last February, the NTSB conducted a 4-day public hearing to critically examine the safety issues concerning this industry and the resulting input guided the recommendations.

The 19 recommendations issued include 10 directed at the FAA to address the issues of improved

pilot training; collection and analysis of flight, weather, and safety data; flight data monitoring; development of low altitude airspace in infrastructure; and the use of dual pilots, autopilots, and NVIS.

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Five recommendations are to public operators to improve pilot training, flight data monitoring; and the use of dual pilots, autopilots and NVIS. An abstract can be found at <http://ntsb.gov/Publictn/2009/AB09-HEMS.htm>.

MISSOURI: American Eurocopter has announced that LifeFlight Eagle has taken delivery of a new EC145 that will be exclusively dedicated Children's Mercy Hospital Critical Care Transport throughout the region.

The rightly-painted aircraft sports a 'Just for Kids' paint scheme that clearly demonstrates the hospital's mission of caring for children. The EC145 is equipped with state-of-the-art avionics and can be flown single-pilot IFR. Night Vision Goggles will continue to be used for night operations.

Children's Mercy Critical Care Transport has utilized Eurocopter aircraft for many years, relying on the BK117 to fulfill their mission objectives. This EC145 is an upgrade to that model and it is the first aircraft purchased directly.

Children's Mercy Critical Care Transport performs over 5,000 transports annually utilising ground, helicopter, and fixed-wing services. [AEC]

NORTH CAROLINA: Carolinas HealthCare System expects to spend \$16.5M to replace part of its ageing medical helicopter fleet.

Plans call for the system to purchase and equip three EC135 helicopters as air ambulances within 18 months. They will replace three Bell 430 helicopters purchased between 1996 and 2002 at a cost to Carolinas HealthCare \$4M to \$5M each. A fourth Bell-brand helicopter may be retained for back-up purposes.

They expect to save \$1.3M in operating costs by making the switch. It projects hourly costs of \$761 for the new helicopters 42% below the current operating expenses of the large type. [Media/AEC]

TEXAS: American Eurocopter has delivered an EC145 to Trinity Mother Frances Hospital's Flight For Life program based in Tyler, TX. The aircraft is slated for completion at Metro Aviation, based in Shreveport, Louisiana, where it will be completed and configured for its EMS mission. The EC145 will replace the organization's venerable BK-117 and is expected to enter into service during the first part of 2010.

Trinity Mother Frances Hospital's Flight For Life aeromedical program was started in 1985 to fulfill a need for rapid transportation for patients needing critical care in east Texas. They are based in Tyler and serve a 150-mile radius covering a 32-county area. Flight For Life averages 600 to 700 transports each year. [AEC]



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FIRE

UNITED STATES

CALIFORNIA: Weeks before the recent California wildfires started US Forest Service executives were warned that they risked losing the ability to fight future blazes by air because they had failed to identify a plan whereby the existing fleet of large tankers could be replaced. The fleet consists of old aircraft that up to fifty years old – most of which will soon will be unworthy for flight.

For decades large aerial tankers have been at the centre of the fight against forest fires, but a warning notice given in 2004 when half of the agency's fleet was grounded for safety reasons was not acted upon with enough speed in the five years since. The remaining 19 tankers are between 40 and 60 years old and are expected to be either unworthy for flight or too expensive to operate as early as 2012 – just three years hence.

Fire fighting in California brought about the Evergreen Aviation 747 jet in its first paid mission. The modified jumbo jet can dump up to 20,000 gallons of retardant at a time, and may yet provide an answer to the growing dilemma.

Evergreen started converting the 747 for fire fighting after older propeller jets began crashing over blazes but it has taken seven years and \$60M to reach the current position whereby it is in its first contract, helping drown the flames engulfing southern California.

Evergreen officials hope the fire fighting 747 is one day just “another tool in the forestry fire box” for the National Forest Service, California Department of Forestry as well as governments in Europe and Australia. Nine additional fire fighting 747s are being converted.



SEARCH AND RESCUE

UNITED KINGDOM: Soteria is a group formed to take part in the competitive process led by the Ministry of Defence (MOD)/Department For Transport (DfT) and Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) to create a single helicopter SAR entity in the UK.

At present SAR work is provided 24/7 from 12 bases around the country - four operated by Soteria's CHC on behalf of the Maritime and Coastguard Agency, and eight by the Royal Navy and Royal Air Force.

Together the bases cover 11,000 miles of coastline, 1.4M square miles of sea and regular overland work.

The process to create a single service - called SAR-H - will see a new harmonised service, operated under the joint auspices of the MOD and MCA, introduced on a phased basis across the bases from 2012. The bid is based on the aircraft of choice, the Sikorsky S-92. .



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Senior winch operator Kieran Murray has been celebrating a remarkable milestone at his home base in Shetland: 40 years in search and rescue work.

Kieran joined the Coastguard helicopter SAR service in 1979 after 10 years as a search and rescue diver in the Royal Navy, serving at Lee-on-Solent and Portland when they were Royal Navy SAR bases and on the aircraft carriers HMS Ark Royal, HMS Hermes and HMS Bulwark.

Kieran has been involved in hundreds of rescue - most memorably the loss of the fish factory vessel the Lunokhods in 1993 near the Bressay Lighthouse. Kieran and his fellow crew members rescued 56 from the stricken klondyker, which remains a record for the greatest number of individuals saved in one operation by a single helicopter.

Joining the Royal Navy at the age of 15 in 1964, he worked in the catering division before going on to train as a ship's diver. After working his way up to become a Navy search and rescue diver, he left the service in 1979 to join the Coastguard service.

Kieran has been involved in the rescue of 1,073 people and assisted with 4,909 people on tasks as small as a person on an inflatable lilo to the recovery of persons from oil platforms. His total helicopter flying hours, covering training and call outs, has reached 8,470hrs.

And there is another Murray behind him. Kieran's son, also called Kieran, has joined the same search and rescue flight as a pilot!

INDUSTRY

UK based operator and support organisation **Specialist Aviation Services** is set for a bumper year, despite the current economic climate. The Group which focuses on public service operations and which owns Police Aviation Services and Medical Aviation Services, is maintaining steady growth and a healthy financial position as it celebrates 25 years in business.

Henk Schaeken, Managing Director explains that the Group is in the fortunate position of having a robust business model and a resilient customer base.

"Even our UK air ambulance customers, who form a significant part of our revenue stream and who are funded by charity alone are generally faring well at present.

"Last year, on top of our routine contract operations, we put two new Explorers into service – for Herts Air Ambulance and Greater Manchester Police. This year, we have upgraded the role equipment and delivered back into service Explorers for Sussex Police and Dorset Police. We are also scheduled to complete a full upgrade on the Wiltshire Police Explorer by the end of December"

This work runs in parallel with a programme of CVR/FDR installations on Slovenian Air Force Bell 412s and Tetra radio installations for the UK Air Ambulance fleet. The company is now also gearing up for a series of aircraft deliveries for next year to service new contracts, details of which were released at Helitech.

Ed: This statement was issued to mark the company's 25th year some time before Helitech. In the event it was backed up by a number of success stories aired in releases at the Helitech Show—including the taking over of the Essex Air Ambulance contract [see page 15 this issue].





After a bad experience manufacturing for MD Helicopters aerospace components manufacturer **Kaman Corp.** has entered into a five-year contract with a potential value of \$53M to build composite helicopter blade skins and assemblies for Bell Helicopter.

From later this year the company will provide assemblies for 206, 407, 412, 427, 429, 430 and BA609 aircraft. Work will be performed Kaman's manufacturing support center in Bloomfield, Conn.

PZL Swidnik has unveiled two projects based on the further development of its W-3 Sokol utility helicopter design.

The Sokol-2 would maintain commonality with its predecessor, but feature enhancements including new five-blade main and four-blade tail rotors, new gearboxes and either LHTEC T800- or Turbomeca Ardiden-series engines, enabling improved hover performance. It will also have an open architecture glass cockpit and autopilot.

Maximum take-off weight would be 7,000kg (15,400lb), including an increased payload of 2,700kg, with a cruise speed of 150kt (280km/h) and an 870km (470nm) range.

Tests on the new main rotor design will start in 2011, and PZL Swidnik says all older Sokols could be rebuilt to the new standard.



Turbomeca has signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) with the Civil Aviation Flight University of China (CAFUC). Under the terms of this agreement, Turbomeca and CAFUC will work towards the development of a Turbomeca Maintenance Training Programs, for qualified engineers and an initial training program to qualify engines maintenance engineers at Chengdu.

The new training programs will initially provide advanced courses in line maintenance and inspection of Turbomeca engines, which power the half of Chinese helicopters fleet.

High ranked Austrian experts met to verify the capabilities of the **Diamond Aircraft** DA42MPP (Multi Purpose Platform) during a live demonstration at Diamond's facility in Wr. Neustadt. This event was the launch to prove brand new high tech airborne sensor equipment which was developed by the Joanneum Research University in Graz, Austria. The goal was to design airborne sensor equipment for the DA42MPP platform to create geo-referenced, high resolution pictures, combined with an infrared sensor system for all kind of civil protection missions.

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United Rotorcraft Solutions (URS), a premier full service aircraft completion facility, avionics shop and MRO has been awarded a Dealership by Cobham Avionics. Cobham includes Artex, Chelton, NAT and Wulfsberg.

"We at URS continually work to increase our dealership network. As a dealer we receive benefits and we like to share these with our customers." says David Brigham, President of URS.

This dealership award is added to the list of Ahlers Aerospace, Altair Avionics, Avalex Technologies, Avidyne, Avionics Innovations, BMS, Dart, Flight Displays Systems, Garmin, Goodrich, Honeywell, Max-Viz, Nivisys, Sagem, Shadin, Sky Connect, Spectrum Aeromed and WSI.

DART Aerospace Ltd., has received FAA certification of the Standard and Float Round-I-Beam™ Skidtubes for the Agusta Westland A119 / AW119MKII aircraft. Transport Canada and EASA approvals are pending.

For the A119/AW119MKII, DART designed both a standard skidtube and a one-piece float skidtube with extension. The float skidtube is pre-drilled for compatibility with Apical floats and the integrated extension eliminates the necessity for a separate float extension.



Aerospace Filtration Systems, Inc. (AFS), has announced a new partnership with Metro Aviation of Shreveport, La., on the development of an innovative Eurocopter EC135 Inlet

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AIRCRAFT



Barrier Filter (IBF) system. The new Supplemental Type Certificate (STC) approved product is scheduled for certification in time for the Helicopter Association International's (HAI) HELI-EXPO 2010.

The IBF system features multiple long-life filter assemblies that are internally mounted to the existing EC135 cowlings, resulting in no drag penalties and no potential for environmental harm associated with externally mounted designs.

ACCIDENTS & INCIDENTS

18 August 2009 Bell 430 N430UH. Air ambulance of AirMed University of Utah Health Care in Utah. Operated by Air Methods. While on initial approach to a referring hospital helipad the aircraft required more than normal force to move the cyclic fore and aft. Roll and yaw controls were normal. Hydraulic temperature and pressures were normal. Airspeed was maintained and a climb was initiated. During the climb the pilot attempted to troubleshoot the problem and the crew looked for a forced landing area. Forced trims were turned off. The problem persisted. After several circles the "resistance" released and controls returned to normal. The crew landed at the referring hospital with out further incident. The aircraft was placed out of service. Maintenance determined that the cyclic pitch trim actuator had malfunctioned. [Concern]

21 August 2009 Eurocopter EC135P2 N137KY. Air ambulance of Air Methods Kentucky based in Lexington. During the downwind approach to land of a repositioning flight a bird struck the nose of the aircraft and was deflected away. The helicopter landed and was shut down. No damage was found [Concern]

28 August 2009 Bell 430 N830SF. Air ambulance of OSF Saint Francis Medical Center Life Flight, Peoria, Illinois. During cruise flight to sending facility in IMC, the #1 hydraulic system failed. The aircraft let down into Peoria International Airport (PIA), and executed instrument approach to land. Upon inspection, a chaffed hydraulic was found and replaced. [Concern]

28 August 2009 Piper PA31T Cheyenne II N28CA. Air ambulance of CAL-ORE Life Flight of Brookings, Oregon. During a routine 100 hour inspection a 3"-4" crack was found on the nose gear trunion by use of a die penetrant. The trunion was removed and disassembled with all associated parts inspected and replaced as necessary. Part of the crack occurred underneath the nose gear placard denoting the turn limits which made the crack less obvious. [Concern]

31 August 2009 An unidentified medical helicopter responding to an accident in southeast Iowa was grounded after the rotor was hit by a fire truck. The Iowa State Patrol says the MedForce helicopter took off from West Burlington and landed north of Mediapolis to pick up a crash victim when it was struck by a Mediapolis Fire Department truck while shut down. The fire crews were responding to another accident and hit the helicopter with an upper deck lights.

2 September 2009 Bombardier LearJet 36 N361PJ. Air ambulance of Lifeguard Air Ambulance, Oregon. During an international transport, Aircraft stopped in Anchorage for a fuel stop. Upon departure, a high speed abort was initiated due to rear tire failure. The aircraft was brought to a complete stop on the runway. [Concern]

4 September 2009 Pilatus PC-12 N299AM. Air ambulance of AirMed University of Utah Health Care, Salt Lake City, Utah. Operated by Air Methods. During cruise flight at 27,000ft the pilot noticed a drop in oil pressure. The caution light illuminated moments later. During the turn to the closest suitable airport (Flagstaff AZ.) the oil pressure dropped to zero and

the warning light illuminated. The plane landed without further incident. The engine was replaced. [Concern]

7 September 2009 Helicopter. Kansas City Police. The crew heard a loud bang while flying to the Northland to assist with a call. The helicopter was about two miles northwest of the Wheeler Downtown Airport when the two officers heard the noise. They turned and made a "precautionary landing" at the General Motors plant in Kansas City, Kan. The officers inspected the aircraft and found evidence that they apparently had struck a bird. They didn't find any damage to the helicopter, so they resumed flying. [Media]

8 September 2009 Mil Mi-8. Kazakh border patrol. Helicopter crashed in a remote region in the south of the Central Asian state, with thirteen members of the state security service (KNB, ex-KGB) responsible for border security, on board. Workers of the Ugamsk forest service reported that the helicopter had crashed in the area of the Ugamsk Gorge in the southern Kazygurtsk region. The troops were headed to reinforce the border with neighbouring Uzbekistan after Kazakhstan received information from Tashkent about an illegal armed group operating in the area. [Media]

8 September 2009 Eurocopter EC135 N919WM. Air ambulance of WakeMed Air Mobile, Raleigh, North Carolina. Operated by Omniflight Helicopters, Inc. While in cruise flight to receiving hospital, the #1 engine starter segment light illuminated. The #1 engine was shut down and the aircraft performed a precautionary run-on landing at the Johnston Co Airport (JNX) without incident. Fault traced to a broken terminal wire on the #1 starter. [Concern]

11 September 2009 Bell 407 N720PH. Air ambulance of LifeFlight Eagle, Kansas City, Missouri. Operated by Petroleum Helicopters, Inc. Upon climb out of Blue Springs, MO. going to 2,500 MSL, encountered flock of birds at approximately 2,300 MSL. The co-pilot chin bubble was broken out and a precautionary landing was made in a field near Owens School. [Concern/Media]

11 September 2009 Bell 412EP. The rescue helicopter crashed into a mountain in Gifu Prefecture, Japan during an operation to rescue a climber. The Bell smashed into a rocky stretch 3,163 metres above sea level on a mountain in Takayama, Gifu Prefecture. [Media]

14 September 2009. Unidentified helicopter. Kenya Police Air Wing. Crashed under unknown circumstances. The accident involved an instructor and his student in Nairobi. Mr Maina Ireri Chege, the instructor who survived the crash with 45% burns, is one of only three senior pilots trained to fly and maintain all the Mi-17 helicopters in the force. He was retained as a consultant after retirement, having served as the air wing's commandant since 1995. [Media]

20 September 2009 Agusta A109E Power N91SV. Air ambulance of LifeFlight – Toledo, Ohio operated for West Michigan Air Care. Aircraft was departing a rooftop hospital helipad after a patient transfer when the pilot noticed a green laser illuminating the cockpit. A nearby police department helicopter was also targeted by the laser. The suspect was located and arrested. [Concern]

25 September 2009 Eurocopter AS350B2 N417AE. Air ambulance of Lifecare operated by Omniflight. Three people died in Georgetown County, South Carolina after the helicopter, traveling from Charleston to Conway on a positioning flight crashed 63 miles into its flight along a wooded area of Whitehall Road off of US-17. A pilot, paramedic and flight nurse died in the crash. [Media]

PEOPLE

Those in the UK police air support industry with links to police operations in the north west may remember Trevor Barton a Chief Inspector of police at a time when police air support in Lancashire and Greater Manchester were getting started.

Back in 1996 he was noted for a presentation on the intricacies of police command levels - Gold Silver and Bronze – Greater Manchester Police had been doing helicopter down linking for a few years even then. It was though too early for tiny hand-held screens but they did have TVs in Range Rovers being fed with live video from the helicopter.

Now Mr Trevor Halliwell Barton, he was made an MBE, recognising not his police air support skills but voluntary service to sport in Wigan. Now aged 65, he has been involved as a volunteer in the sporting life of Wigan and Leigh for 28 years. His key achievements include campaigning for Leigh Sports Village to be created. [www]

CONFERENCE

The first edition of the **PAvCon Police Aviation Conference** drew to a close on Friday 18 September after four days of related events.

Speakers and delegates drawn from around the world came together from September 15 at the Menzies Prince Regent Hotel east of London for a compact two day conference programme addressing a range of airborne emergency services issues. This programme drew together experts on operations and technology ranging from the difficulties of undertaking high rise rescue in a real world environment and predicting the future technology needs of operators. Along the way some pretty thorny subjects were aired including addressing the hopes and fears relating to volunteer air operations and unmanned technology. It was a mix of the challenging, the informative and the light hearted and delegates took a great deal from the event – absentees took away nothing. In some instances hopes of understanding and cooperation were returned to the back burner and continue to represent 'Work in progress' that will have to be addressed one day by those that missed the event. In some quarters a great deal of interest – bordering on excitement – was generated at this event, but there is still a long way to go.

There was good level of International police support for the conference but this was not reflected by a similar degree of support from local police — this in spite of the extremely low costs associated with attending.

Initial analysis of completed assessment forms suggests that the location and programme content pushed all the right buttons for an audience of almost industry experts, operators and consultants. The out of hours networking related to the event extended well beyond the daily 8 hour programme and provided an opportunity for the delegates and sponsors of the event to further extend their knowledge of the industry.



Menzies Prince Regent Hotel
Woodford Bridge, Essex UK





The fourth day of PAvCon saw a dozen of the delegates accepting the invitation of the Metropolitan Police to the Lippitts Hill police air support facility for a hands on briefing of their air operations. During the conference Sergeant Richard Brandon the Training Sergeant at Lippitts Hill had provided an accomplished overview of the likely air support operations for past events and future major events [2012 Olympics] to complement similar papers from France and the United States. PAvCon is currently planning future events both inside and outside the UK with other agencies.



Straight after the PAvCon event one attendee, Tony Cowan who has a commercial piloting background in the RAF [Falklands War, Nimrod], police piloting and a period as a police Unit Executive Officer set off to the United States on a Winston Churchill Memorial Trust Travelling Fellowship fact finding tour. His aim is to research and understand how the US undertakes its airborne policing and rescue services. Currently Tony is the President of the UK Sky Watch Civil Air Patrol [SWCAP] and one of his tasks is to improve the acceptance of SWCAP in the UK in the face of intransigence among police forces and some elements of the CAA. In the first few days of his month long quest he met up with many of the prime movers of US airborne law enforcement and their USAF based Civil Air Patrol in and around Washington DC.

He met up with Michael O'Shea at his office in central Washington. Michael, a former police officer now works for the US Department of Justice and is in charge of the programme that aims to introduce affordable aviation to those law enforcement agencies without any air support. You can regularly see the result of his efforts recorded in the pages of PAN. In the USA there are some 19,000 law enforcement agencies and so far only some 300 have aviation units.

Michael's job is to help those units that don't have an aircraft and can't afford a multi-million dollar helicopter. Those units that have recently tried out powered parachutes [see this issue] and very light aircraft have invariably been helped along their way by Michael's office. From Tony's perspective he can see a direct correlation between the aircraft now being promoted to US police and the service provided by SWCAP. Some of the aircraft being put into service include the Italian Sky Arrow, the Savannah and the Rans S6 - the very class of aircraft operated by SWCAP and available to support such as the police in North Yorkshire. As part of his tour with the DoJ Tony was able to fly in the Tecnam Eaglet, one of the types on offer, and meet up with Captain Paul Hurley Jnr the Chief Deputy Sheriff of the Dorchester County Sheriff's Department. This police department has 37 officers and now operates a IPC Savannah VG as part of the Department of Justice aviation programme - the direct operating costs of this type are just \$40 per flying hour and the role equipment limited to a Nikon digital camera but all things start somewhere and there was plenty of that around before the UK got high and mighty in its twin helicopters—and they were as thankful for it as the officers in Dorchester County are today. Even a small 2 seat aircraft can searching for missing persons and spotting the cultivation of illegal crops efficiently.

Tony Cowan's tour is scheduled to last a month and will take in meetings with the ALEA and others that were set up during the PAvCon event in September. www.wcmt.org.uk



DIARY

3-7 October 2009 The 116th Annual International Association of Chiefs of Police [IACP] Conference and Exposition Denver, Colorado, USA. Contact Erin Vermilye at Vermilye@theiacp.org.

20-22 October 2009 NBAA. NBAA 62nd Annual Meeting & Convention (NBAA2009) – Orlando, FL

26-28 October 2009 Association of Air Medical Services [AAMS] Annual Conference and Exposition. San Jose, California. The annual AMTC provides up-to-date information on the latest techniques and innovative approaches to air medical practice from community experts while giving attendees lots of opportunities to earn continuing education credits. Top-notch keynoters and expanded educational offerings (including mechanics technical briefings, special information exchanges, new clinical sessions, scientific abstracts and poster sessions). www.aams.org

28-29 October 2009 Secure 2009 The Guoman Tower, London, UK www.shephard.co.uk

11 November 2009 The Airborne Law Enforcement Association (ALEA) are hosting a Central Region Safety Seminar in Galveston, Texas Link: <http://www.alea.org/public/seminars/central/index.aspx>

17-20 November 2009 Milipol 2009 Paris Expo, Porte de Versailles, Hall 1. www.milipol.com Over the past 25 years Milipol has promoted the importance of the different aspects of internal State security. Right from its first edition, Milipol has made news by putting the spotlight on innovation. In addition, in response to requests from security professionals, Milipol is organising a conference on Monday 16 November which will cover key subjects and issues of internal State security. The conference will also be an opportunity to meet leaders and experts from the sector.

COUNTER TERRORISM AND SECURITY
Ensuring maximum protection against attack in an uncertain world
17 and 18 November 2009, Radisson SAS Portman Hotel, London, UK