

Police Aviation News

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Issue 316

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FARNBOROUGH BRINGS FLURRY OF ORDERS

STARS COMPLETES THE FLEET

UK SAR 2 WINNER ANNOUNCED

LATE NEWS FROM RENO

EDITORIAL

Be careful what you wish for. Last month I indicated that rumour suggested that the officers at West Yorkshire Police were going to approach their recently installed Mayor, Tracey Brabin, to plead for an extension of their time in charge of NPAS the England and Wales police air service. Having had a year to get their situation improved it seemed that they needed more. No one really expected an extension but, blow me, the lady acceded! This tawdry tale just goes on and on, meanwhile they remain restricted hours—life or death only for launch—and no clear vision on a future path in sight.

Bryn Elliott

LAW ENFORCEMENT

AUSTRALIA

QUEENSLAND: The week before the opening of the Farnborough Air Show in the UK Bell held a media briefing at which some initial sales announcements were made. Although the whole matter was carried in the March 2022 edition of Police Aviation News it was stated that the Queensland Police are to operate Bell 429 helicopters.

The March article was based on stated intentions to order the helicopters. The latest from Bell is presumably after the contract to deliver was signed. Delivery will take place late 2023 and equipping for service is to be undertaken by the owners - Surf Life Saving Queensland (SLSQ).

Queensland Police and the Queensland Government announced on February 21, 2022, that a new contract had been signed with SLSQ for the provision of three Bell 429 helicopters for a 10-year period from 2024. SLSQ are the current provider of QPS POLAIR helicopters and pilots, with QPS providing sworn police officers to perform TFO roles. As the current contract expired last month a new interim agreement was made ahead of that.

The 2-year agreement saw the existing BO105 helicopters being replaced with two EC135's pending the arrival of the Bell 429s in 2024. [PAR/SLSQ/Bell]

CANADA

WINNIPEG: Most smaller emergency helicopter operations find themselves under threat from time to time and it is election time in Winnipeg so their Eurocopter EC120B Colibri based operation has appeared in the sights of at least one candidate. Mayoral candidate Glen Murray says he'd like to replace the city's police helicopter with less expensive surveillance drones. He says that if he's elected this in October, he will ground Air1, the Winnipeg Police Service's EC120 C-GAOL.

The city purchased the helicopter in 2010 for \$3.5M and now spends about \$2.2M a year keeping it in the air. Murray said it is too expensive to operate and is now obsolete, given the improvements to remotely operated aerial drones. The cost of keeping the helicopter represents less than one per cent of the police service's \$320M budget. In 2020 the helicopter attended 2,446 events, helped find 738 suspects or missing people, and took part in 101 vehicle pursuits that year. The police credit it with saving 13 lives that year – that is seven suicides prevented and six people from a house fire.

Perhaps fortunately, Murray who has already served as a mayor in the past, does not have powers to direct the police on what equipment they should use. He also has to get around the other eleven candidates. [CBC]

COVER IMAGE: This image covers a number of stories in the past month. The helicopter is a Specialist Aviation Services Leonardo AW169 G-PICU wearing the colours of the Children's Air Ambulance but operating for the Essex and Herts Air Ambulance. The AW169 is seen taking off from the Abbey Gardens, Waltham Abbey on DATE after attending a nearby fire. The helicopter was back landing nearby in a different spot in the Abbey Gardens on July 23. This time for a collapse in the street.

To great fanfare, at the Farnborough Air Show Leonardo and the Essex and Herts Air Ambulance announced that they were purchasing a new AW169 to replace the MD902 they currently use as their second machine. Meanwhile their first AW169 remained in maintenance.

Elsewhere on the air show grounds, Sloane Helicopters were announcing the arrival in country of their Children's Air Ambulance – a helicopter with the same colour scheme as G-PICU and its direct replacement after the parting of the ways between the original supplier and the charity. Image by Matthew Bell

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CYPRUS

POLICE AIR WING: The Cyprus Police have issued a European Tender for the provision of piloting service training on its Bell 412 helicopter for the Years 2022 – 2023

The training and simulation services in the fields of defence and security are to be delivered at the premises of the successful Tenderer. It is expected to have a value of approximately €230,000 plus tax.

The Contracting Authority will soon launch a tender procedure around the provision of Services for Cyprus Police Aviation Unit Pilot Training on Bell 412 helicopter for the years 2022 – 2023 and invited operators to submit their interest in writing in the tender procedure, by July 7.

It is expected that the completed contract will cover thirty (30) trainees at a rate of fifteen (15) per year.
[TAD]



GERMANY

BUNDESPOLIZEI: Although the type has long been dismissed by senior sources in the German Federal Police, in a recent on-line pre-Farnborough press conference the Bell 525 was still being promoted as for consideration by them. This has been fed by the images of the example being inspected by a local politician while parked in an exhibition venue close to the police HQ in Berlin. Unfortunately it appears no-one in the police HQ admitted to knowing it was there.



At the Farnborough Air Show itself Airbus Helicopters announced that the Ministry of Interior of Rhineland-Palatinate has ordered two five-bladed Airbus H145s for its police force, following a European tender launched earlier this year. The helicopters will replace the state's current H135 fleet and will be operated by the police helicopter squadron in Winnigen. The first delivery is planned for early in 2024.

“We’d like to thank the Rhineland-Palatinate government for its continued trust in our helicopters”, says Wolfgang Schoder, Managing Director of Airbus Helicopters in Germany. “These five-bladed H145s will be outfitted with highly sophisticated equipment in order to further enhance the mission capabilities of the police force. We have seen with the flooding last year that law enforcement operators need to be able to rely on helicopters that can perform these demanding and essential missions and the H145 does just that.”

There are more than 200 helicopters from the H145 helicopter family deployed for public services and law enforcement missions around the world.

TURKEY

NATIONAL POLICE: The Bell presence at last month’s Farnborough Air Show was a little muted but they did have their law enforcement Bell 429 demonstrator on scene being promoted in the booth by German completion experts ESG and suitable stories about the confirmation of the Australian police order and another story about the availability of the Bell 429 in Turkey.

Bell has announced that the Turkish Directorate General of Forestry (DGF) has achieved 95% operational readiness for nine years with its fleet of Bell 429 helicopters.

The Turkish National Police (TNP) has also operated the model 429 over a similar period.

With more than 30,000 total fleet hours, the TNP have maintained this superior standard on their Bell aircraft, kits, and components. For 10 years, the TNP Aviators have protected Turkish citizens, provided public safety, and ultimately, saved lives.

The TNP were the first major fleet Bell 429 customer in Europe. There are over 100 Bell helicopters used in police, forestry, military, EMS, and corporate missions every day in the skies over Turkey. [Bell]



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UNITED KINGDOM

NPAS: On June 29 it was announced that a series of consultations between the NPAS National Strategic Board (NSB) the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners (APCC), National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC) the Home Office, the Mayor of West Yorkshire, Tracy Brabin has agreed to extend the deadline to withdraw West Yorkshire from the role as lead local policing body for the National Police Air Service (NPAS).

The leading role carried out by West Yorkshire was due to cease on June 15, 2022.

The new extension, to June 1, 2024, will give the Strategic Board of NPAS, made up of Police and Crime Commissioners and Chief Constables from member forces, time to properly explore alternative hosting arrangements and transition the service to a new host.

Tracy Brabin, former soap actress and now something of a hard line Mayor of West Yorkshire said:

"I recognise the crucial importance of this service and the vital work it does.

"The National Police Air Service has huge capability and is a complex organisation and a lot of work is on-going to find an alternative solution.

"I recognise the efforts that have been made by the NPAS Strategic Board and Gold Group to seek an alternative lead and host force for NPAS and acknowledge the challenges that have arisen in achieving a solution by the notice expiry date.

"I am reassured that work is underway to consider alternative hosting options and recognise that adequate time must be afforded to this work to allow the Board to take an informed decision and ensure a smooth transition to the new arrangements. "That work continues and that is why I believe the extension is necessary.

"I have therefore agreed to extend the deadline that was set out in my withdrawal notice to 1st June 2024 to allow the board adequate time to explore potential alternative hosting arrangements and transition the service.

"This is on the understanding that the Board will have taken a decision and informed me of the new hosting arrangement by 1st June 2023, with a full transfer of responsibilities from the West Yorkshire Combined Authority to the new hosting arrangements by 1st June 2024.

"I want to take this opportunity to thank the brilliant staff and officers at NPAS for their continued support and commitment.

"During this extended period West Yorkshire Police will continue to deliver NPAS to the same high standards in supporting policing and helping to keep our communities safe throughout England & Wales."

Ed: There must have been a quite a few fingers crossed, and tongues bitten in creating that press release. Whoever wrote the phrase "same high standards in supporting policing" should be ashamed of themselves. As for recognising "... the crucial importance of this service and the vital work it does" if deeds were anywhere near as strong as the words NPAS would not be in this position now.

Few expect that having taken a year to divest NPAS to a new host, and failed miserably, there will be any more success in the coming 10 months. True there is that buffer period of nearly a year to June 2024, but it is going to take a lot of smoke and mirrors to hide the almost inevitable failure to get the plan on the table one year ahead of the actual transfer. Perhaps the team are assuming that everyone will have forgotten the mayors wishes by then?

It appears that even the management team are acknowledging they are in a fix now. There has been a shuffle at the top and the running of the organisation has been deferred downwards – it appears that Vikki White – the lady who 'solved' the fixed wing question [but see later] has now been moved from running the Transition to being the replacement for ACC Scott Bissett as the Chief Operating Officer/Accountable Manager. Unfortunately I guess that lady may be a patsy for what may come next. The Metropolitan Police has already declined to take NPAS on, they are already in "Special Measures" themselves and clearly will not be too eager to take control of even more grief.



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UP FOR AUDIT

Last year the editor wrote a series of letters and other documents to Government Organisations, Government Ministers, Members of Parliament and local authorities. There were some replies but generally these documents fell on infertile land. Even where there was a reply the recipients showed they plain failed to care about UK police air support. There was an exception in that the National Audit Office (NAO) said they would look into the four broad allegations I made against NPAS. That was a year ago in August 2021.

Then a month ago, too late for the last issue a letter appeared in the mail from the NAO. It was a comprehensive three-page reply to the allegations I had made – these were:

1. NPAS had not addressed or resolved the findings and recommendations of the 2017 report by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Police, Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS), *Planes, drones and helicopters: an independent study of police air support*.
2. NPAS was insufficiently transparent for a publicly funded body, for example, not publishing National Strategic Board minutes in a timely manner and not publishing an annual report since 2017-18.
3. Concerns about NPAS's procurement and management of four fixed wing aircraft and the costs relating to these; and
4. NPAS staff had experienced bullying and poor mental health as a result of how the organisation has been managed.

The National Audit Office was at pains to point out that it is not the auditor of NPAS; this function is carried out by West Yorkshire Police's external auditors, Mazars LLP. Although they felt themselves restricted, they saw themselves able to focus on money injected into NPAS by the Home Office. This annual capital grant totalled £11.5M in 2021-22. NPAS submits to the Home Office monthly assurance returns as part of the Grant Agreement and a Home Office official routinely attends the regular National Strategic Board meetings, as an observer, to provide input to the Board's discussions and decisions.

In the case of NPAS reaction to the HMICFRS report NPAS developed actions against nine of the 19 recommendations while the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) took responsibility for the remaining 10. By January 2022, NPAS assessed that it had completed, or subsumed into other activity, actions against eight of these recommendations. Some might disagree but in general the NAO does not have a remit to review or oversee the implementation of HMICFRS recommendations. It would also seem that the HMICFRS has a similar problem in ensuring its recommendations are heeded.

The NAO agreed that the main part of the allegations that fell into their remit related to the publication of minutes and reports.

The NAO raised this issue with the Home Office and subsequently this situation has now improved somewhat, with minutes for meetings from January to September 2021 now available on the NPAS website. That leaves a yawning ten-month gap although the NAO have had sight of the content of at least two of the meetings.

There may be future movement too on the matter of Annual Reports. NAO enquiries revealed that NPAS was set up under a collaboration agreement in August 2012 under section 22a of the Police Act 1996. The Agreement sets out, among other things, the role of the National Strategic Board and NPAS's governance and assurance framework. Section 10.2.5 of the Agreement specifies that:

"... an annual report on performance of NPAS is prepared and published"

This is further underlined by Section 10.11, which asserts:

"The NPAS Strategic Board shall produce an annual report on the performance of the Service, including financial and operational performance, in accordance with the terms of the objectives of this Agreement... [t]he report shall be published within three months following the end of each financial year".

There does not appear to be a clause in the Agreement that enables the National Strategic Board (or NPAS) to cease publishing an annual report either on a temporary or permanent basis.

I am assured that at the May 2022 meeting of the NPAS National Strategic Board the lead force (West Yorkshire Police) accepted that the publication of the NPAS annual report should be recommenced. Perhaps it will be a fitting Christmas present for someone.



Much of the content relating to the year-old allegation about the fixed wing contract has trickled into the public domain in recent months. As we are aware, at its March 2021 meeting, the National Strategic Board decided to dispose of two of the fixed wing aircraft, primarily on the grounds of cost. The remaining two aircraft were to be used to provide air support in the North East; We know that plan was discarded from minutes subsequently issued.

What we did not know, because the minutes remain unpublished, was that at the January 2022 meeting the National Strategic Board voted on whether to retain or dispose of all four fixed-wing aircraft. While a majority of members voted to dispose of the aircraft, the number fell short of the 75% of all members required to dispose of an asset. Therefore, NPAS will retain the four aircraft and continue to review their performance. The original story suggested that it was a great deal more positive and straight forward than that so thank you to the NAO for clarifying that aspect. (Oliver Lodge Director, Home Affairs NAO)

75%

The NAO were unable to look into the allegations of bullying under their remit but recommended that they should be submitted through the standard channels. As PAN has outlined there have been several instances of such allegations been submitted and foundering or at least not resulting in an outcome acceptable to the alleged victims.

Ed: Time and again over the last decade police and the various 'complaint' procedures have not been found to result in acceptable outcomes. Senior officers simply reappear in some improved position with promotion – or in the recent instance apparently bail out of the NPAS Chief Operating Officer/Accountable Manager in time to be squeaky clean when the whole organisation implodes. The internal investigations have a primary aim of covering up for the organisation, whatever that takes. They are experts at this and know every trick in the book. Nothing particularly new in bullying or avoiding the consequences of ill-advised decisions. It has long been the case in British policing and it may be worse in other organisations. Perhaps the earlier generations simply knew how to do it more methodically, or perhaps the recipients of earlier generations were more resilient.

LONDON: In late June a member of the London Assembly, Unmesh Desai, put in a request for information after receiving a number of complaints from members of the public on Brewer Street, in the Soho District of central London. He was asking on average how many Police helicopters are there flying over London per day and how often do they fly past Brewer Street?

The Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, replied that although the Metropolitan Police advised that it is not possible to indicate how many times a police helicopter has transited specifically over Brewer Street (a street in the centre of London's, Soho). In contrast NPAS stated they spend limited time over central London due to the extensive Closed Circuit TV network that can provide similar imagery overview.

However, the Mayor was provided with information regarding deployments of NPAS helicopters to Westminster postcodes between January and May 2022 inclusive:

January	1
February	5
March	1
April	2
May	0

Ed: It is fair to say that those people with knowledge of police helicopter flights over central London 'a few years ago' were horrified at the low numbers. Doubtless the availability of CCTV might have some effect in depressing the need for some overflights but (especially in view of last month's comments of the poor NPAS London efforts over the Jubilee celebrations) the real reason may well be mechanical and management.

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The airport from the north showing new housing developments and plenty of green fields fit for further development © DSA

SOUTH YORKSHIRE: The operators of Doncaster Sheffield Airport (DSA – also known as Robin Hood Airport) have announced that they may need to close the operation as it is not viable.

Most of the resulting furore focusses on airlines and holiday flights but the airport is the base for NPAS fixed wing and 2Excel who operate Coast Guard flights. Those operations are riding on the back of a high-grade airport flight aids infrastructure that would certainly be in danger of being downgraded if the airport were closed. Based on past operations by the Peel Group it could be worse

More than 25,000 people have signed petitions calling for the airport to be saved after its future was plunged into doubt. Directors of the operating company Peel Group said the business may no longer be commercially viable in the wake of the Covid pandemic and airlines pulling flights from there.

The airport opened as an international commercial airport in 2005, handled more than a million passengers annually and flew to 50 destinations. It is also a DHL hub.

Ed: As a group Peel have operated and closed airports before and the police have been detrimentally affected when the closure took place.

Both the Peel Group and Sheffield have been unlucky with airports. Peel Group invested heavily in airports with Liverpool's John Lennon Airport, Doncaster Sheffield, Sheffield City and Teesside all featuring in its business dealings at one time or another. They would have closed Teesside had not the regional elected mayor, Ben Houchen not stepped in and taken Teesside International Airport back into loss making public ownership. Police air operations remained there until closed by NPAS.

A new airport was built in the Tinsley area near the city late in the last century and opened in a blaze of publicity in 1997. The short runway airport welcomed airlines such as KLM, Sabena and British Airways with regular passenger services briefly operating to Belfast, Amsterdam, Brussels, Dublin, Jersey and London.

Unfortunately, it opened just as the low-cost airline revolution began in the UK, a change that rapidly made the high-fare short-hop business flights model obsolete. In addition, the length of the runway limited the range of aircraft types that could use Sheffield making the operation ripe for take-over. After initial fixed wing flights were undertaken the project was downgraded to being a heliport into



which the South Yorkshire Police helicopter operation moved its AS355F2 helicopter in June 1997. Peel Group were heavily committed in the conversion of RAF Finningley to be opened as what was then called to be called Robin Hood Airport, Sheffield City was close by and undoubtedly at least a potential commercial distraction, they purchased the site in 2002. By then, the airport was declining, and terminal interior had already been converted to office accommodation. Ultimately it lasted only 11 years and is now a business park, but it retains aviation features.

South Yorkshire Police are still at Tinsley. In addition to their helicopter operation (closed by NPAS) they set up the South Yorkshire Police Operations Complex at the appropriately named Letsby Avenue, Tinsley, Sheffield.

There is little doubt that DSA cannot survive on the rental received from NPAS and 2Excel, but they are not the only groups with an interest in the airport. A letter emerged on Twitter from the Mayor of South Yorkshire to the local MP that suggests that others have a strong interest in the airport. Apparently, Peel are trying to get a £20M loan off the local authority, discussions were paused while Peel opened their books. Or, it seems, did not open its books. A source told The Yorkshire Post that the loan to support DSA's development required the books to be open "so we could satisfy ourselves that there was a reason they were asking for the money. "They didn't want to show us their accounts, that's why this loan has stalled. We are not just here to offer cheap loans."

It seems that there are other loans out there £3.5M by the "MCA" in 2018/19 and another £5.02M in March 2020. These significant amounts are in addition to the multi-million local investment in infrastructure, the Gateway East Site and the impressive Great Yorkshire Way which acts as the entrance to the airport.

I assumed the 'MCA' was the Maritime and Coastguard Agency, but it turned out that was a coincidence in initials. To local politicians MCA relates to the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority. Another Yorkshire Mayor is dragged into the mire.

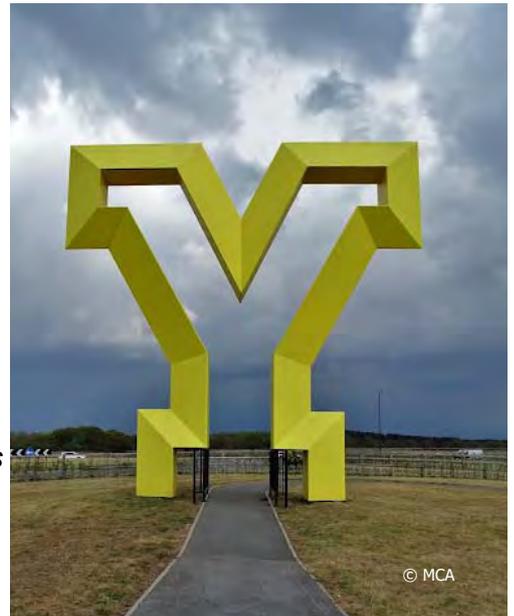
Whether the recent award of future SAR to Bristow, 2Excel and Nova (which see) will increase pressures on the need for DSA in a positive manner remains to be seen.

Having lost its MD902 helicopter operation to NPAS management South Yorkshire Police has tended to concentrate its resources on drones.

They claim to have undertaken over 1,400 operational drone flights last year with a fleet of 15 drones supporting the work of officers and teams from across the force.

South Yorkshire Police introduced drone capability to the force in 2019, launching with five aircraft and 19 trained staff. Three years later they have 24/7 cover with 45 trained staff and 15 aircraft. The 'pilots' are officers from across a number of teams including roads policing, firearms, tactical support group, airport policing group, and each district's tasking, response and neighbourhood teams.

The aircraft, they mainly use the DJI Mavic Enterprise and the Evolve Sky Mantis, are also available for supporting other emergency service needs.



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UNITED STATES

CALIFORNIA: The long-promoted Demo Tour with the Diamond DA62MPP started with a quick 30 minute flight that covered the 80 miles from Sacramento to Oakland on the east side of San Francisco Bay. Four 30-minute demo flights were carried out from Oakland before the DA62 returned to Sacramento. Total fuel used was 30 US gallons of Jet A.

Two helicopter pilots that have never flown a fixed wing aircraft experienced just how easy this aircraft is to manage and fly on one engine, how quiet and fuel efficient these modern diesel twins are to fuel and maintain. Later, the aircraft flew to Reno, Nevada, to join the static exhibits on the floor of the annual APSCON.

© John Nielsen



© Bryan Smith

FLORIDA: A recent delivery to the Gulf coast of Florida is this Airbus Helicopters H125 N43SD for the Pinellas County Sheriff's Office unit operating out of the Clearwater Coast Guard base and covering the popular holiday peninsular including St. Petersburg (St Petes Beach).

The completing of the aircraft was managed by Airbus but undertaken at Metro Aviation in Shreveport. CNC



© Bryan Smith

Technologies managed the mission equipment installation. It has a full Garmin 500TXi, 750/650 panel with the new Garmin autopilot. L3 Harris/Wescam MX-10 camera, AeroComputer 6000, Troll downlink and Trakka searchlight. The rear seats have a monitor, keyboard and second control head for the Technisonic radio so the unit can work as a three-person crew or conduct training with a training officer in the back seat who has control over the mission systems if needed.

The unit selected a Boost Human External Cargo (HEC) system to do long line rescues and Tyler fast rope system. They had not had either capability in the fleet prior to this aircraft. This aircraft, N43SD, replaces the 1991 AS350 B2, N53SD, reputedly one of the first law enforcement AS350B2s in the US. The unit operates two additional AS350s, built in 2012 and a 2015, in addition to our Cessna 208B Caravan.

Bryan Smith the unit Chief Pilot and recently the APSA Safety Officer (replacement pending) is full of praise for the new arrival "It's a beautiful aircraft. Airbus, Metro and CNC did an amazing job."

AIR AMBULANCE CANADA

ALBERTA: The final new Airbus Helicopters H145 air ambulance has been delivered to the STARS organisation.

STARS officially welcomed the new H145 to its Edmonton base early last month. STARS president and CEO Andrea Robertson welcomed the development saying "With Edmonton being our last base to implement the H145, today is also about celebrating the fact that our ambitious fleet renewal program is now a reality."

The milestone event was marked with a celebration in the STARS base hangar at the Edmonton International Airport that included provincial, and municipal government representatives, community partners and allies, executive, board, crew and former patients. In honour of National Indigenous Peoples Day, a special presentation was given by Dancing Cree.

In 2018, STARS unveiled a multi-year capital campaign to renew its fleet with new, medically equipped Airbus H145 helicopters, at a cost of CAD \$13M each. The bulk of the ageing fleet were earlier model BK117s and Sikorsky's and no longer being built with detrimental effects on the costs and sustainability faced by STARS.

Thanks to government, community and corporate support, the not-for-profit charity began taking delivery of the state-of-the-art H145 helicopters in 2019 and has since flown hundreds of life-saving missions in the new aircraft from other bases. When STARS starts flying missions from Edmonton this summer with the H145, all six bases across Western Canada will be operating the new helicopter model.

EUROPE

GERMANY: The DRF Luftrettung Operation Centre at the Karlsruhe/Baden-Baden airport will once again be a meeting place for helicopter hoist specialists from across the world on 7 and 8 September 2022. The 2nd International Helicopter Hoist Operation Symposium, with a motto of 'Safe Hoist Operation', will this time have a focus on the way crews collaborate. What do modern training concepts for helicopter crews look like? What does the legal environment involve? Why is crew coordination an important factor in safety? These questions and more will be discussed by established experts from government authorities, hoist manufacturers, hoist operators and training organisations.

FRANCE: Announced at the recent Farnborough Air Show, Oyonnair, a company specialising in medical and cargo transportation, has signed an order for a new Piaggio P.180 Avanti EVO through its financial arm Investairs.

The new P.180, which is expected to be delivered by the second quarter of 2023, will be set up in medevac configuration, with an enlarged door (from 24 to 29 inches wide) and an additional fuel tank, to offer better performance and mission flexibility.



Oyonnair, founded in Lyon in 1990, started operating its first Piaggio P.180 in 2015. With this order, Oyonnair's P.180 fleet reaches eight units.

"We are very excited to announce the purchase of a new Avanti Evo, the perfect fit aircraft for medevac operations," said Daniel Vovk, Chief Executive Officer of Oyonnair. "The Avanti Evo is fast, versatile and an efficiency champion, thanks to the lowest fuel consumption in its category and the option of flying SAF, thus reducing carbon emissions. With the new configuration, we can offer to our clients even better performance: for this reason, and according to our growth strategy, we are now aiming at ordering three more aircraft by the end of this year".

At present, with its 42 employees, Oyonnair is a leading European medical evacuation operator, with a yearly average of 5 thousand flight hours and over 1,200 missions. In the years 2020 and 2021, the company helped the French government with the Covid crisis, by evacuating approximately 250 patients from saturated hospitals to less busy ones. Oyonnair's team has also recently decided on the modification in retrofit of two of the seven older P.180, in particular with the setting up of the enlarged door. The first retrofitted aircraft was delivered by Piaggio Aerospace last June. A second one is planned to be retrofitted starting from October 2022.

Ed: Despite its ongoing problems with ownership Piaggio Aerospace is one of the main players in the world for executive turboprops, both in VIP and special mission configurations. The company operates from its aerospace centre of excellence in Villanova d'Albenga, Italy, while its Customer Service Department is based in Genoa. In December 2018, the company entered the Extraordinary Administration proce-

ture by appointing Mr. Nicastro as Extraordinary Commissioner. The same applied later to its subsidiary Piaggio Aviation.

Piaggio were exhibiting at the Farnborough Air Show in July. Vincenzo Nicastro, Piaggio Aerospace's Extraordinary Commissioner states that the company is close to identifying a new owner.

NORWAY: The Norwegian Air Ambulance Foundation was the very first operator to receive the new five-bladed H145 at the end of 2020. In close collaboration with Airbus, the Foundation uses it for various research projects all aimed at improving Helicopter Emergency Medical Services (HEMS) in Norway. For more than 40 years, the Norwegian Air Ambulance Foundation has been working on providing new and innovative air ambulance solutions. With backing from more than 300,000 support members and companies, the Foundation acquired the new five-bladed H145.

Working closely with Airbus, the Foundation is using it for research, development, and training with the goal of improving HEMS services. As far as NAAF know, it is the only helicopter in the world dedicated to HEMS improvement alone. It allows them to conduct testing on new procedures and equipment, collect data for research projects and provide training without relying on rotating a helicopter out of the emergency services. The Foundation is made up of more than 120 employees ranging from medical researchers, engineers, designers and HEMS crew members with many ongoing projects looking at specific ways to improve HEMS.

POLAND: The public air medical rescue operator LPR's (Lotnicze Pogotowie Ratunkowe) fleet of Airbus helicopters has now accumulated 100,000 flight hours.

The impressive milestone highlights just how many times the lives of people have been saved in the country.

SAUDI ARABIA

HEMS: In late July at a ceremony attended by His Excellency Minister of Health, Eng. Fahad Al Jalajel, the Saudi Red Crescent Authority and The Helicopter Company, fully Owned by Public Investment Fund (PIF), an agreement was signed for inauguration of the Saudi Air Ambulance Service in the kingdom illustrating efforts of raising the level of quality and efficiency of ambulatory services as a contribute of rapid saving of lives and alleviate pain and suffer.

The agreement was made due to deep realization by the Authority of the importance of the Air Ambulance in rapid responding to save lives of the injured, especially in emergency cases and critical situations where time plays essential factor in dealing with the case and providing emergency health care in locations that ambulances are incapable to reach.



Signature time for the Red Crescent and The Helicopter Company for yet another iteration of a HEMS in Saudi. [supplied]

Under the agreement a 24/7 coverage EMS service capable of responding to incidents such as road traffic collisions on highways as well hospital-to-hospital transfers. The service has been launched in Riyadh and will expand throughout the Kingdom in several phases.

The aircraft will be supplied by The Helicopter Company in response to critical cases in the sacred sites among other services dedicated by SRCA to the Guests of Allah in Hajj season 2022.

The Helicopter Company was established by Public Investment Funds in 2019 as the first commercial helicopter operator. The company owns 17 Helicopters to provide Air Ambulance services, aerial works, tourism, and private transportation

Ed: If you have been paying even half attention the situation relating to HEMS in Saudi Arabia may come across as something of a stuck record. Yes we have been here before – several times. The history of Saudi Air Ambulance is an inconvenient chapter in a country where they chop up journalists and then wonder why confusion reigns about truth.

Nonetheless Saudi Air Ambulance has provided successive members of the government an ever-repeating chance to bring out the finery and sing mutual praises.

For years those intent on setting up a Saudi HEMS operation faced just the same air space restrictions that have beset helicopter operations in oppressive areas of the Middle East, China and Asia regions. The Royal Family in Saudi stated a desire to overcome those problems and to provide

an efficient air ambulance but often the outcome was anything but straightforward. To that mix should be added the problem of Mecca.

For the Saudi Arabians the 'simple' Qatari solution of importing the staffing to give local skills time to catch up was not going to happen. All because of Mecca and the Haj – the religious festival at the centre of Muslim religion. One of the primary uses of Saudi HEMS was always going to be in support of the Haj Pilgrimages that have a history of involving periodic major loss of life. Anyone with a little knowledge of the region will realise that there was a real 'problem' with just anyone doing HEMS at the Haj, let alone turning up in Mecca as a non-believer medical practitioner.

So the first attempt at a Saudi HEMS was based on two second hand former German BO105 helicopters and a crew that had a primary skill set called Muslim. The rest, the ability to save life and to be a good pilot, was trained into the selected politically acceptable crew. It was HEMS guided by the Quran rather than pilots notes. What could possibly go wrong?

In January 2007 one of the two Bolkow BO105LS operated crashed outside Madinah killing its three crew members. The copter's Bosnian pilot Najat Dastog and Syrian doctors Abdussalam Al-Sheikh and Mahmoud Al-Howail died in the air crash.



Photo Copyright: Kyle Fagin.

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Some time later another attempt was made using six MD902 helicopters provided by Action Aviation. Suffice to say that they ended up dumped in the desert still marked in their Saudi Air Ambulance colours.



Moving on there was a general media disinterest in these 'pop-up' HEMS operations until 2012 when an operation based on Bell helicopters was noted. The Bell based operation existed ten years ago and evolved into one based on the AW139 that operated as recently as five

years ago. If the words spouted at a recent press conference are to be believed it is long gone, but I suspect it was actually just conveniently forgotten. Nothing like past failure to spoil a good launch day. No publicity hungry minister wants to front an event that is just a repeat performance.

On the first day of HAI Heli-Expo 2022, in Dallas, Texas, a major helicopter order was announced that was linked to HEMS in Saudi Arabia. The order included 20 Airbus H145s and six H160s, with options for a further 10 H145s and four H160s; and 16 Leonardo AW139s and an AW109 Trekker, with options for another six AW139s.

All of the H145s and 10 of the AW139s were said to be destined for the ambitious and unprecedented project of building a comprehensive nationwide helicopter emergency medical services (HEMS) sector from scratch within the space of three years. As we know 'scratch' is not an appropriate word in this case.

The HEMS program — to be known as Saudi Air Ambulance — was being developed together with Saudi Red Crescent, and will see 23 bases used (requiring 20 to be established). This will allow Saudi Air Ambulance to cover 90% of the population.

The words spouted at the launch event were probably similar to those heard at the earlier launches over the last two decades.

"We'll be starting with 12/7 operations in the daytime conducting inter-hospital transfers, then moving up to primary mission, and then to night time [with] NVGs [night vision goggles]"

"That requires a dedicated focus in terms of training equipment, platform, SOPs and crew resourcing. On the medical side a partner with the Red Crescent". The same Red Crescent that had been front and centre in all the earlier best forgotten launches.

The first (of the new batch of) AW139s were scheduled to enter service in May and the first H145 was to be delivered in July, with the rest of the fleet arriving at regular intervals over the next two years. The completions are being handled by the OEMs, using Air Ambulance Technology interiors. But the question might be "Did any of it actually happen?"

SWITZERLAND

REGA: Swiss Air-Rescue Rega has signed an agreement with the State Council of the Canton of Geneva. This agreement between Canton Geneva, Geneva University Hospitals (HUG) and Rega marks the continuation of a decades-long partnership for the benefit of patients and will further improve aeromedical care for the local population. Rega will station a new five-bladed Airbus H145 helicopter in Geneva.



In order to do so, it first needs to enlarge and modernise the existing hangar. During the conversion of the helicopter base, bedrooms for the crews will also be built, so that in future the crew members will also be present at the base at night. This will in particular increase the operational readiness after darkness has fallen and means that the helicopter can also be in the air within a few minutes during the night.

Rega's air rescue services will not incur any costs for Canton Geneva. Rega is funded by its patrons, including numerous Geneva residents. The agreement regulates the cooperation with Geneva University Hospitals (HUG), which, among other things, will provide the

medical personnel for the base. The new agreement does not change anything in terms of calling out the rescue helicopter, which is stationed at Geneva Airport.

The cantonal 144 emergency call centre (CASU) decides whether or not a rescue helicopter should be deployed. If the CASU requires the assistance of a rescue helicopter, this is called out by the Rega Operations Centre, which then also coordinates the mission.

A helicopter base was established in Geneva as far back as 1971 and the parties signed their first cooper-



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ation agreement in the mid-1980s. Since 2003, the Geneva crew have been flying missions in the region with a twin-engine EC135 helicopter. Whether accident, illness, search flight or water rescue, the scope of missions performed by the Geneva base – which flies around 400 missions a year in the region using the radio code, “Rega 15” – is broad.

UNITED KINGDOM

MIDLANDS: You might think everyone would welcome an air ambulance especially as a new project. The truth is though that the United Kingdom is well served by air ambulances and it is often a matter of debate whether there is a major need to add yet more. The Children’s Air Ambulance was once in the category of ‘not needed’ but it overcame that.

There is a new fundraising operation in the Midlands that is causing concern. Centred on a hospital in Stoke on Trent they have a website (www.stokeairambulance.org), a logo based on the AW109 and little else besides clear aspirations to take a share of the often lucrative air ambulance charity fundraising money-go-round.

According to the web site their market research they found overwhelming support for the new Stoke Air Ambulance, and to paint their helicopter blue to differentiate it from the existing ones which tend to be red or yellow. The choice of colour was based on local preferences, apparently world recognised, linked to the industrial past of Stoke on Trent – the Wedgwood blue after Wedgwood’s most famous blue jasperware and to name the helicopter Jasper.

The company behind this project is Helicopter Emergency Service Equipment (HEMSE) and been quite low profile until recently. The CEO is Phil Copeland a local man who claims to be something of a local entrepreneur. One of the Trustees first started involvement with HESE in 2015, when the air ambulance charity was nothing more than a project. Sources tell me that their accounts last year showed a turnover of a few thousand pounds. Early days.

They state on their website that they are not connected with their near neighbours Midlands Air Ambulance to the South and primarily covering Birmingham & surrounding area, or to the North West Air Ambulance situated to the North covering the Manchester & Liverpool areas.

Stoke on Trent sits in an area already served by these other air ambulances a situation that existing air ambulances have faced before just as they had relatively recently with the national funding efforts of the Children’s Air Ambulance. Further back in time there were several instances of new air ambulances attempting to raise funds in the areas of existing operations, the financial clashes between the well established East Anglia AA and Magpas were a story at the time. Now both coexist and flourish.

Stoke are clear, they will NOT share any funding that they raise in their name with other air ambulances. That suggests that finite charity funding from the public might mean Stoke are reducing others income.

Stoke on Trent and the surrounding areas have never had their own dedicated Air Ambulance, have always had to rely completely on helicopters which also serve 6 million people in Birmingham and 3 million people in Manchester and which are all based a relatively long way away at Cosford (Telford), Tatenhill

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(Burton on Trent) or Barton at City Airport (West Manchester) With such a massive area to cover it is understandable why they are often busy saving lives elsewhere when there is call for them in Stoke.

Stoke clearly have a long way to go to ensure they are set up to the standard offered by the existing operations. For a start they will need to ensure that they can work with the same local health authorities that the existing operations do. It is not just about fundraisers, pilots and aircraft local health authorities can provide expensive medical staff if they believe in the project. On their website they speak of collecting the injured party and finding room in the cabin to fit in a next of kin. Modern practice leans towards getting doctors to the scene of the medical emergency, few are about taking the casualty to hospital.

A new lifesaving service has been launched by Midlands Air Ambulance Charity in Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire, thanks to a £60,000 donation from the HELP Appeal – the only charity in the country that funds NHS hospital and air ambulance base helipads.

Following extensive research into patient need across the area, the charity has introduced a new critical care car service in the region which has already been dispatched to more than 80 incidents since May 2022, helping to save many lives.

The new northern critical care car, which operates from 10am until 10pm daily, is run by a critical care paramedic. They rapidly bring advanced skills, medicines and hospital-level equipment to the incident scene, giving patients the best chance of survival and good recovery.

The car is adding to the lifesaving service already provided by Midlands Air Ambulance Charity in built up areas such as Stoke-on-Trent and the surrounding areas. The service, which also has an air ambulance helicopter based at Tatenhill near Burton-on-Trent, is available to help patients in Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire on a daily basis.

The northern critical care car has been funded by HELP Appeal and is the third of its kind to enter Midlands Air Ambulance Charity's fleet of critical care cars. These are in addition to three helicopters covering six counties across the Midlands.



© Midland AA



The West Midlands charity is predicting a rise in demand for its pre-hospital emergency service with more than one million people expected to descend on the region for a summer of sport. The charity normally reaches and treats up to 12 patients every day in the region, but expects this level of care to rise during July and August as a result of the major sporting events in the area.

Meanwhile the new air ambulance base for the Midland Air Ambulance is being constructed on a green field site near the existing base at RAF Cosford. There is no expectation of this being ready for service before 2023.

CHILDRENS: Sloane Helicopters the Sywell, Northampton based operator have announced that they have extended their Distributorship Agreement with Leonardo Helicopters for the AW109 GrandNew, AW109 Trekker and AW169 for a further two years through to 2024

The agreement was celebrated and confirmed at Farnborough International Airshow last month as the latest AW169 delivery for the Children's Air Ambulance arrived for completion. The leased airframe is completed in similar colours to those supplied by Specialist Air Services aircraft assigned to the Children's Air Ambulance [see cover image this issue].



ESSEX & HERTS: At the Farnborough Air Show both Leonardo and Specialist Aviation Services (SAS) were proudly announcing the order of a Leonardo AW169 destined and to be operated for and on behalf of Essex & Herts Air Ambulance (EHAAT). This was the 11th order for the type arranged through the Staverton, Gloucestershire Leonardo and MD operator.

The new Helicopter, which will be owned by the Charitable Trust, will be delivered in late 2023, and will then receive its custom-designed and manufactured interior at the SAS heliport in Gloucester, before entering service in early 2024. This aircraft will replace the existing MD902 and create an all AW169 base.

Although its completion and official opening were delayed by the restrictions surrounding the COVID Pandemic the new Essex & Herts Air Ambulance base located at North Weald Airfield is now open to the public.

The Centre is open to individuals or groups of 6-20 people. Any individual interested in the work of the air ambulance can be added to other groups to make up the numbers. The tours are designed to be interesting, entertaining and fun for all. The 999 Experience, offers opportunities including trying out a helmet and sitting in the pilot's seat! Listen to interesting facts and a wealth of background and operational information provided by our volunteer tour hosts. Play our interactive game and test your knowledge with the quiz.

The content of the tours are partly dependent upon the presence of the helicopter but are designed to fill in where it is out working. Visitor Centre Tours, which must be booked in advance, are free of charge. However you will learn about the many ways in which you can help the charity raise vital funds. Public tours are aimed at an adult audience but children are welcome with their parents/carers in attendance.

Bespoke Tours for groups of 6 or more people can be arranged for a time to suit them.

The existing Earls Colne Visitor Centre, located in legacy buildings at the airfield near Colchester in eastern Essex is currently closed for refurbishment. The air ambulance hope to reopen its doors later this year.





LONDON: One of the oldest air ambulance operations in the United Kingdom the London's Air Ambulance Charity (LAAC) – the helicopter emergency medical service (HEMS) for the UK's capital – has ordered two Airbus H135 helicopters for the renewal of its fleet under a contract signed at the Farnborough International Airshow.

The two aircraft will be delivered in 2024 and will operate primarily from LAAC's helipad base at the Royal London Hospital in Whitechapel which is one of the highest in Europe. LAAC's advanced trauma team treated 1,713 patients in 2021.

The issue of ground safety is very important to LAAC and they have prided themselves in operating a helicopter into physically constrained street incident locations that called for tail rotor safety in the presence of the public and street furniture. That focus has led many of their equipment decisions. Starting with a Fenestron equipped Dauphin (as the Virgin HEMS) they rejected other types including the then EC135 and moved on to the NOTAR tailed MD902 design for its small footprint and safe tail.

The MD902, or its development, is no longer available as a new equipment option so LAAC needed to reassess its options. The compact size of the H135 plus its Fenestron tail rotor and high ground clearance are attractive features offering minimal airframe size.

In terms of operational flexibility LAAC has chosen the simplest of medical fits. Where most UK air ambulances are fitted to pick up the patient and undertake a transfer to hospital, the London operation is primarily aimed at taking the doctor to the patient. The patient carry scenario is a low priority – under 10% - compared to say Essex & Herts where the numbers are nearer 45%. The new LAAC H135s will have a basic rear cabin stowed stretcher similar to those in use 30 years ago where operations with different priorities take up a much more sophisticated role fit.

The H135 is the market leader in emergency medical services (EMS) worldwide and can be fitted with a wide range of EMS configurations, providing direct access and ample room for patient care. With the lowest operating and maintenance costs in its class, the proven H135 family of aircraft incorporates Airbus' Helionix avionics suite and has recently received an alternate gross weight increase for an additional 265lbs (120kg) of useful load.

Ed: It will be interesting to see in the fullness of time whether the operation needs two maintenance light 135 airframes to meet its commitments.



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FIRE EUROPE

It is summer in the Northern Hemisphere. The USA is on fire and Europe is on fire so there is nothing new there. People are dying and land and buildings are being consumed. Again there is nothing new there ... but. The fires are supposed worse than ever and it is getting hotter. We know it is getting hotter because the media are telling us it is getting hotter and the weather people are now painting their charts red rather than green. It must be much worse.

Except for those inconvenient old people who remember the 'summer of 76' and the 'winter of 63' – each a precursor to devastation to come. The world is getting hotter they told us then but then they confused the message and warned that the world is getting colder – beware the new ice age.

Regardless of the truth the politicians will briefly pay attention and promise to throw public money at the problem but by the time it happens most will have forgotten whether it is stave off global warming or the new ice age.



NEW AGE PROJECT FEAR: June 2017 and June 2022. Similar temperatures but the map changed colour!



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Six months ago the green lobby were winning hands down until Putin invaded Ukraine and now politicians are looking to reopen coal mines as a temporary measure.

In Britain there was little to worry about with fires, a bit of gorse and a few trees here and there until this year several houses on the edge of urban areas were consumed by fire. Surely only something that happened in America where they foolishly built wooden houses and parked mobile homes next to tinder dry forests. How silly of them!

Now we British know that sturdily built brick houses next to nothing more threatening than a dry domestic garden will be consumed just as easily! No panic but a lesson has been learned.



Additional resources may be required. A new option is that the Airbus A400 recently proven to be less than perfect as an air vehicle for searching for Migrants in the English Channel, is able to put out fires.

Airbus has successfully tested a removable firefighting demonstrator kit on the A400M new generation airlifter during a flight test campaign in Spain.

The test campaign took place in daylight conditions with a minimum operating height of 150ft, flight speeds as low as 125 knots and drops involving up to 20 tonnes of water from the current tank in less than 10 seconds. The main objective of the campaign is to validate the drop water quantity and time as well as the ability of the A400M to carry out this new role with the kit.

The Airbus firefighting solution created for the A400M is a roll-on/roll-off (RORO) kit that requires no modification to the aircraft and therefore is interchangeable to any aircraft in the A400M fleet. The water is stored in a fixed tank in the cargo hold, and retained by two independent doors. These doors are connected to two flood pipes, so when the discharge is triggered, the water is expelled through two sections at the end of the ramp. The introduction of this RORO solution allows a rapid reaction to unforeseen fires and reconfiguration of the aircraft to any of its other roles.

SEARCH & RESCUE

BALTIC

Since the beginning of May EMSA RPAS have been flying over the East Baltic Sea region following a coordinated request for enhanced maritime surveillance from the Finnish Border Guard, the Estonian Police and Border Guard Board and the Latvian Coast Guard Service. The regional scope of the operation enables cross-border flights over the Gulf of Finland and the exclusive economic zones of both Estonia and Latvia.

The service increases situational awareness for a wide range of coast guard functions, but the focus of the operation is on maritime safety and security, environmental protection, fisheries control and search and rescue.



EMSA is providing this service through its contractor Nordic Unmanned, deploying a Textron Aerosonde which uses a catapult for take-off and a recovery net for landing. The Textron Aerosonde unmanned fixed-wing aircraft can stay in the air for 10 hours and can fly up to 140 km within radio range and further depending on the ground relay stations. The aircraft is equipped with a gimbal with optical and infrared sensors, AIS receiver and IMSAR radar.

CARIBBEAN

HATO: Bristow Group Inc., is teaming with Nova Systems, a leading provider of engineering services and technology solutions, for next generation mission system and aircraft modification solutions on AW139 helicopters that will be equipped for deployment with the Dutch Caribbean Coast Guard (DCCG).

Nova Systems was set the challenge of providing a next generation mission system solution that would expand operational capability and ensure aircraft availability within a compressed delivery schedule. Drawing on the expertise of a multi-disciplinary

team, Nova Systems developed a solution that incorporates leading-edge technologies and operator interfaces that will expand Bristow's Search and Rescue (SAR) capabilities, which will be delivered in a compressed timeframe and will ensure aircraft availability via credible through-life support.



Nova Systems is being contracted for a turnkey solution including mission system selection, design and architecting, complex procurement, production, modification design, certification, systems level operator and engineering training, systems level documentation, installation support, flight testing, and through-life mission system support.

GREECE

COAST GUARD: Frontex Executive Aija Kalnaja, visited Crete early in July to attend a demonstration of an unmanned aircraft deployed by Frontex that will soon start patrolling the Eastern Mediterranean to help Hellenic authorities detect cross-border crime and save lives at sea. Hellenic officials, including Secretary General for Insular Policy and Aegean Emmanuel Koutoulakis and the Vice Admiral of the Hellenic Coast Guard Georgios Alexandrakis attended the event.

The aircraft will be part of Poseidon, one of the agency's largest operations at EU's external borders. At the moment, there are 429 Frontex officers and staff in Greece along with 14 boats, two aircraft and 40 vehicles, including patrol cars, transport and thermovision vehicles. It will strengthen the operational capabilities of the Hellenic Coast Guard in border surveillance. The aircraft carries surveillance equipment, including thermal cameras and radars.

A similar aircraft deployed in Malta has contributed to saving thousands of lives at sea. In the first half of this year, there were more than 17 900 detections of illegal border crossings on the Eastern Mediterranean route, 125% more than in the same period of last year.

INDIA

COAST GUARD: The Indian Coast Guard has commissioned 835 Squadron the security sensitive Gujarat region. It is commanded by Commandant Sunil Dutt and manned by 10 officers and 52 men.

Commissioning of ALH MK III boosts Coast Guards' self-reliance in the field of SAR and maritime surveillance, in line with the government's vision of Atmanirbhar Bharat

ALH MK III helicopters have been indigenously manufactured by Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) and features state-of-the-art equipment, including advanced RADAR as well as electro-optical sensors, Shakti engines, full-glass cockpit, high-intensity searchlight, advanced communication systems, automatic identification system and search-and-rescue homer.

These features enable them to undertake maritime reconnaissance and carry out search and rescue at extended ranges even while operating from ships, both by day and night.

ITALY

MARITIME: The European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA) has been operating from the air base of Sarzana, over the Gulf of Genoa. The flights are being used to enhance general maritime safety and security, as well as to assist in search and rescue missions. Protection of the marine environment is another important aspect of the operation and flights will be used to monitor whale migration within the Pelagos Sanctuary, a protected area for marine mammals.



The aircraft being used is an AR-5 Evo unmanned fixed wing aircraft and it is under contract to EMSA from the REACT consortium, comprising the companies CLS and Tekever. It can fly more than 10 hours and beyond radio line of sight using satellite communications. It has several features making it suitable for performing both day and night operations including optical and infrared cameras, a maritime radar, an AIS receiver and an emergency position-indicating radio beacon (EPIRB) antenna. The aircraft can also be equipped with an inflatable life raft for eight persons to be dropped in support of Search and Rescue operations.

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UNITED KINGDOM

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At the Farnborough Air Show the winners of the new 10-year SAR contract were announced.

The Bristow-led consortium is to begin transitioning to new contract beginning September 30, 2024 through December 31, 2026, to ensure a continuation of critical lifesaving search and rescue aviation services across the whole of the U.K.

Bristow Helicopters Ltd., has been awarded a £1.6 billion 10-year contract for the Second-Generation Search and Rescue Aviation (“UKSAR2G”) programme by the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA), an executive agency of the Department for Transport.

Bristow will work in partnership with 2Excel Aviation, a leading specialist in fixed wing aerospace services, and Nova Systems, the consortium’s innovation partner, to deliver the contract for the MCA on behalf of Her Majesty’s Coastguard. The new contract will see the U.K. search and rescue region benefit from innovation and advances in technology to save more lives, even more quickly.

The contract combines the existing two separate aviation contracts for fixed wing aircraft and rotary aircraft and will include the use of unmanned aerial systems (UAS). Since 2013 and 2019, respectively, Bristow and 2Excel have operated search and rescue services for the U.K. in the original SAR and Aerial Surveillance contracts. During that time, the companies have displayed exceptional quality, innovation, and skill in their work rescuing over 4,500 people over the past seven years.

As part of the new contract, Bristow will continue to operate from their current 10 bases and will launch two new seasonal bases in Fort William and Carlisle, to serve areas around two of the busiest locations for summer tourism. The Fort William and Carlisle bases will operate 12 hours a day from April to Septem-



© 2Excel

ber. All other helicopter bases will continue to be operational 24 hours a day.

There will be significant changes in the deployment of aircraft and helicopters. The number of Sikorsky S-92s will be reduced to reflect demonstrated need in the UK SAR role.

The partners will operate eighteen helicopters, including nine existing Leonardo AW189s and three existing Sikorsky S-92s augmented by the introduction of six new Leonardo AW139 helicopters;

Six King Air fixed-wing airplanes, including the B350, B350ER and the B200 at Doncaster, Prestwick and Newquay; and one mobile deployable Schiebel Camcopter S-100 UAS will complete the fleet. The current contract was focussed on helicopters and has evolved into the current mix that includes the aircraft of 2Excel.

Through the new contract, Bristow and its partners 2Excel and Nova Systems will work to deliver greater innovation in the provision of search and rescue services across the U.K. region, providing even greater levels of support to those at risk.

Bristow will provide a new state-of-the-art search and rescue helicopter simulation training facility at Solent Airport next to the Coastguard Training Facility, which will house a synthetic rescue hoist and helicopter suspended over a large training pool. Another innovation includes the use of sustainable aviation fuels, reducing the carbon footprint in the delivery of these services.

To illustrate the relative tasking from each base, in April to September 2021 there were:

- 220 taskings from Caernarfon base
- 101 taskings from Humberside base
- 221 taskings from Inverness base
- 156 taskings from Lee-On-Solent base
- 152 taskings from Lydd base
- 173 taskings from Newquay base
- 268 taskings from Prestwick base
- 157 taskings from St Athan base
- 94 taskings from Stornoway base
- 101 taskings from Sumburgh base



Ed: The fleet of the UK Coastguard is very different now to that envisaged in the original contract. Based on a decade of experience of real operations the make up of the fleet has changed considerably from helicopters to a mix including an increased reliance on fixed wing and even the addition of unmanned craft.

Bristow started experimenting with fixed wing assets they owned – including a BAE Jetstream 41. The result was that 2Excel entered the sector with a mix of often elderly surveillance twins and we now see them accepted for the new contract with the King Air as the standard twin. Whether there will be a migration to the smaller, more efficient and greener Diamond DA-62 2Excel recently ordered only time will tell. The S-92A with its ‘fierce’ downwash was never popular with the mountain rescue teams and could be problematical when landing on at hospital helipads. Some of the ‘customers’ will be happy to see the S-92A being replaced with the smaller AW189/139, but the reason for the move will revolve around the demonstrated need for long range rescue using the type rather than opinion. It may be a while before we know where the need for the much reduced fleet of S-92s is greatest.

COASTGUARD: Only one Schiebel Camcopter S-100 features in the announced line up of the new contract. Earlier in the month Bristow released a text that laid out the brief history of their use of the type.

In January 2019, Bristow received delivery of a Schiebel CAMCOPTER® S-100 system, consisting of two aircraft, a Ground Control Station and engineering and logistic support at Caernarfon airport.

Bristow’s team of Uncrewed Aircraft System (UAS) is on the verge of expanding its services in support of search and rescue (SAR) in the United Kingdom using the Schiebel CAMCOPTER® S-100.

Bristow recently trained seven new pilots and engineers to maintain the fleet of CAMCOPTER S-100 that are based at Lydd Airport to support HM Coastguard SAR operations. Bristow has a team of operators and engineers to support those operations.

In 2016, a small team of specialist operators began working in an embryonic industry with the goal to establish Bristow as a professional UAS service provider. As with all new technologies, there was a steep learning curve to overcome before Bristow commenced flying operations using Small UAS (SUAS). These initial operations focused primarily on offshore asset integrity inspections. Bristow UAS quickly established a role as a key UAS stakeholder and influencer with the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) and continued to enhance the company reputation for excellence in rotary operations.

Bristow UAS continued to operate a modest sized fleet of SUAS for aerial surveying of Helicopter Landing Sites, and in 2017 focus turned to positioning Bristow as a market leader in complex UAS operations.

With the strategic aim to develop an uncrewed capability for search and rescue, discussions began with Schiebel – the Austrian UAS manufacturer. The technically complex Camcopter® S-100 had never operated in UK airspace, and the team began to craft a safety case to support a UK demonstration.

In 2018, Bristow was the first company authorized to operate the Camcopter® S-100 Beyond Visual Line Of Sight (BVLOS) in UK airspace. A series of successful capability demonstrations were held at Llanbedr airfield in North Wales, attended by senior stakeholders from the Maritime and Coastal Agency (MCA), CAA, law enforcement agencies and Bristow's executive leadership team. The five-day event showcased not only the capabilities of the aircraft and its' sensors, but more importantly demonstrated the safe interoperability of UAS alongside manned SAR(H) assets from Caernarfon SAR Base.

Swiftly following on from the success of the capability demonstration, Bristow established the UAS Prototype Service (UAS PS), with the intention to fully evaluate the potential platform and sensor utility to contribute and enhance SAR operations.

The CAMCOPTER S-100 is tasked just like the AW189 helicopters by the HM Coastguard Regional Control Centre to respond to SAR events.

DOVER: The Border Force, which polices the UK's borders, may have made the small boats crisis in the Channel worse, an independent report, commissioned by the Home Secretary Priti Patel has found. The report described the overall approach as "ineffective and possibly counterproductive".

The review found the Border Force Maritime command had been "drawn into a challenge that it is ill-equipped to deal with and yet all-consuming". Its efforts were seen as short-term and broadly focused on the next crisis, meaning it was always running to catch up. The resources required in the Channel were "not sustainable".

The Royal Navy now controlled operations in the Channel, including commanding Border Force vessels but it is said the Navy feel their capabilities and reputation are being damaged by an inability to resolve the problems. The report said Border Force urgently needed clear leadership on priorities and purpose. It had been lacking consistent leadership for the last year to 18 months and was still not stable.

UNITED STATES

WYOMING: Search and rescue backers are trying to raise \$6.6M in private donations to buy and outfit a helicopter that would ensure year-round access for rescues while asking the county to commit public dollars to monthly operational costs.

Teton County Sheriff Matt Carr unveiled the Teton County Search and Rescue Foundation campaign, dubbed "Mission Critical," during a meeting with the Teton County commissioners. Carr described year-round, reliable access to a helicopter as "vital" amid rising calls for aid with more people recreating on surrounding public lands. In 2021, the team received 105 calls for service, the most ever.

Currently, search and rescue leases a helicopter for eight months, from October to May, Lockhart said. The lease costs \$41,000 per month for eight months (\$328,000), paid for by the sheriff's department budget. Having a year-round heli could cost the county about \$600,000 to operate annually. The county does get reimbursed by the state and National Park Service for heli rescues, according to the proposal.

Even during contracted months, the helicopter may not be available due to federal operators withholding helicopters to fight fires. Also, in peak tourism season, June 1 to Sept. 30, search and rescue does not have a readily available helicopter as Jackson Hole Fire/EMS and Grand Teton National Park have first dibs. [Jackson Hole News & Guide].

INDUSTRY

Vita Inclinata (Vita), developer and producer of precision aerospace and industrial stabilization devices, announced the completion of its Vita Rescue System (VRS) demonstration to Squadron 751 at Air Base #6 in Portugal. The VRS litter attachment demonstration in Portugal underscores the global interest—and need—to improve the safety and efficiency of helicopter hoist rescues. As lawsuits mount and injuries continue to increase due to out-of-control basket spins during rescues, more organisations are expressing interest in Vita's VRS that prevents spins from occurring. All U.S. military branches, domestic search and rescue (SAR) responders, and organisations in Chile and Japan have requested demonstrations. Caleb Carr, CEO of Vita, travelled to the Ukrainian war zone to personally train the country's Medevac crews in the Lviv and Kyiv region; the State Emergency Service of Ukraine has formally requested 30 VRS systems.

At the cutting edge of automotive research in the UK, **Thatcham Research** has a unique role in shaping the design of new vehicles and influencing ever higher standards of safety, security and repair. With a Crash Laboratory, Repair Technology Centre, Training Academy, Track Testing Facility and Crime Lab near Reading, Berkshire their research expertise is driving some of the very latest automotive developments in technology, materials and standards in this fast moving and highly technical industry. Following our recent purchase of the airfield they will be operating Gamston Airport as a joint airport and car testing facility offering a range of services to diverse and demanding customers. They are seeking an Airport Operations Controller. The Airport Operations Controller will play a new key role in the delivery of Gamston's Dual Operations facility (aviation and automotive testing), for which construction is now underway. The candidates are required to have experience in airport/aviation operations with an understanding of safety and regulatory environment/requirements and have a salary in the range of £26,000.00-£30,000.00 per year

Bristow Group Inc. announced it has signed long-term maintenance support agreements with Leonardo Helicopters for airframes and Pratt & Whitney for engines on the Company's global fleet of AW139 helicopters. The legacy Era AW139 fleet was previously covered by a limited power-by-the-hour ("PBH") support agreement with Leonardo for the airframes, while the engines were maintained on a time and cost of materials basis. The legacy Bristow AW139 fleet was covered by multiple, disparate PBH support agreements with Leonardo for the airframes, and the engines were covered under a PBH agreement with Pratt & Whitney. The new agreements result in consistent, global maintenance support programs for Bristow's AW139 helicopters, both the airframes and the engines. In addition to the AW139 agreements, Bristow has also signed long-term maintenance support agreements with Leonardo for the AW189 airframe and with Honeywell for the AW139 avionics suite. Bristow has also signed a long-term maintenance agreement with General Electric for support of AW189 and S-92 engines. The Bristow Group Bristow provides commercial search and rescue (SAR) services in several countries and public sector SAR services in the United Kingdom (U.K.) on behalf of the Maritime & Coastguard Agency (MCA). Additionally, the Company offers ad hoc helicopter and fixed wing transportation services.

In Sweden the Sjöfartsverket (**Swedish Maritime Administration**) is responsible for ensuring that there are rescue helicopters for state maritime and air rescue. Helicopters and their crews are based at bases in Umeå, Norrtälje, Kristianstad, Visby and Gothenburg. The Swedish Maritime Administration has seven rescue helicopters of the model AW139.

A contract has been awarded for the Service and repair for Goodrich Hoists system model 44316 for the fleet of Leonardo AW139 rescue helicopters. The value of the contract excluding VAT: was 9 000 000.00 SEK (US\$855,379).

Only one tender was received and that from the selected contractor RUAG AG, Emmen, Switzerland.

<http://www.sjofartsverket.se>

The UK **National Police Air Service** is seeking a pilot Systems Support Manager. The person selected will provide a service to NPAS through SME advice to Technical Services and wider NPAS. The permanent post is for 37 hours weekly and will attract a salary in the range of £44,748 to £48,048. Applications closed on July 17.

The role includes supporting the airworthiness and pilot interface systems and processes such as Fleet-Keeper, EasyWeigh and the Aircraft Handover as part of the maintenance fleet management process and UK CAA regulatory requirements. The role requires the individual to be able to positively impact the efficient and effective operation of the aircraft in accordance with the highest level of safety standards and

with Civil Aviation Authority and the Operations Manual. They will act as the Technical Services Department Lead for investigations into airworthiness or safety findings relating to deviations from the above by NPAS pilots, bases or NPAS staff and investigate any incident in line with the Safety Management System as requested by Line Manger or Head of Aviation Safety. In addition is a requirement of being legally responsible for the Electronic Flight Bag (EFB) administration.

The current incumbent is Matt Roberts a former British Army flier and for the last 8 years a line pilot with NPAS, he is retiring on age limit.

The role is normally one you would expect to be included in the duties of a Chief Pilot but the tasks were devolved to John Carr some years ago and Matt has carried on from when he retired.

Due to the invasion of Ukraine, Norway's **Police Security Service (PST)** reallocated resources from counter-terrorism to counter-intelligence, with people who worked on terrorism being moved to counter-intelligence.

After the invasion of Ukraine in February, the fight against Russian activity in Norway has moved to the top of the PST's agenda according to the newspaper Klassekampen. Earlier this year, the PST and the police received extra funding in response to the invasion of Ukraine. (Norway Today)

A contract has been awarded by the **Statens vegvesen** (the Norwegian Public Roads Department) to Visinor Fjell AS for the purchase of two helicopter based avalanche control systems at a cost of .just under 4 Million Kroner (US\$400,000).

The Paravalanche devices are to be located at Førde and Svolvær. The contract consists of delivery, training in the form of courses, as well as a service agreement that includes maintenance every other year for a total of 6 years.

The successful tenderer (the only company to tender), Visinor Fjell AS, is based in Nordland, Norway.

Paraclete Aviation Life Support continues its upward momentum with the announcement of the company's new office location, increasing its square footage by 84% to accommodate the helmet manufacturer's increasing demand for its DOI-USFS certified helmet product line of its research-based Aegis and Aspida helmets as the company increases its presence into diverse segments of civilian and military markets --- air ambulance/HEMS, agriculture, law enforcement, wildland firefighting, and federal and state agencies -- - as well as expanding its distributor connections throughout the world, with the company's recent decision to secure a distributor in Germany, Commercial Helicopter Services [CHS].

Paraclete further strengthens its global presence in the rotor- and fixed-wing helmet market, extending the company's international footprint with the recent expansions into South Korea, Brazil and Australia, as well as its continued relationships in Europe, South America and Asia. Emerging as a global provider of civilian aviation helmets, Paraclete continues to build strategic partnerships in 30 countries throughout the world in commercial and military markets since its launch in 2014.

The new address for Paraclete Aviation Life Support is: 1760 Jardco Drive, Clarksville, TN 37040, USA. Located in an industrial park complex, north of Nashville, Paraclete is located in one of the fastest growing cities in the state of Tennessee which reflects the marked business growth, including Paraclete's expanding operations.

Paraclete is the only helmet manufacturer in which all helmets, in every size, are certified to the DOI-USFS Aviation Helmets Standard; Paraclete is also an ISO 9001:2015 certified manufacturer that provides Aviation Life Support Equipment [ALSE] education and training services. As a committed member of Helicopter Association International [HAI], Association of Air Medical Services [AAMS], Airborne Public Safety Association [APSA], and the National Business Aviation Association [NBAA], Paraclete continually provides associations with data and critical research in the spirit of a safer rotor industry for all.

A consortium of **Atkins, Vertical Aerospace, Virgin Atlantic, Skypoints, Heathrow, NATS, Bristol and London City airport** and more announced a new project to develop and test the world's first end-to-end 'ecosystem' or network for electric air flight, to be tested by air taxi flights into London Heathrow and Bristol Airport, with Government funding to accelerate Advanced Air Mobility in the UK.

This will be a scalable Advanced Air Mobility ecosystem: a newly constructed vertiport and the development of infrastructure, systems, technology and processes, culminating in demonstration flights of Vertical's eVTOL, operated by Virgin Atlantic into major airports.



As part of its collaboration with Fire Boss to provide the best aerial fire prevention and suppression systems, **Air Tractor Europe** has announced an order for eight Fire Bosses with an option for an additional eight. This joint announcement was made during the Aerial Fire Fighting Europe 2022 Exhibition held in Nîmes, France. The Fire Boss is an AT802F Air Tractor modified to improve its operability and has Wipline 10000A amphibious floats designed and built by Wipaire.

Since 2003 Air Tractor Europe have delivered more than 75 across Europe. With the new order, they are positioned to expand further into markets that recognize the advantage of fast and accurate initial attack and want lower operating costs than other tankers on the market.

Air Tractor Europe is the exclusive distributor of Air Tractor for Europe, North Africa and the Middle East. It has a long history of experience, having been founded in 1965, and has been an official Air Tractor distributor since 1996.

It has aircraft facilities in Castellón, Spain, which include an EASA145 maintenance centre and an AT802 repair facility with avionics, engine and propeller capabilities.

Savback Helicopters, the independent helicopter and fixed wing sales specialist, has entered into a new sales representation agreement with Mayman Aerospace, the US-based manufacturer of the innovative Speeder, Air Utility Vehicle (AUV). The deal, effective immediately, will see the Sweden-based company market and distribute the compact, high-speed, eight-turbine, heavy-lift vertical take-off and landing (HSVTOL) aircraft, exclusively in the Nordic countries.

Savback will be targeting defence, forestry, oil and gas, and civil applications for Mayman Aerospace, a newly introduced brand of JetPack Aviation Corporation. JetPack are better known for the personal flying suits.

Speeder is currently in advanced development, aiming to begin US FAA certification by Q4 2024, and begin series production for civil applications once certified.

The company's Speeder engineering is fundamentally changing the way designers and customers think about VTOL flight. New and never-before-imagined applications are rapidly emerging for this disruptive technology.

The yet to fly Speeders are designed to be compact, about the size of large motorcycles; fast, meeting speeds of up to 500mph in cargo mode; powerful, can lift up to 1000 lbs; long-range with flights of up to 300nm possible; and are said to be operationally efficient and cost-effective. Speeder can fly in autonomous, remote, or piloted configurations in challenging environments and weather, where other aircraft may be grounded. The main power source is the small jet packs also worn on the arms of the personal flying suit.



Unlike some nations where you get medals for simply completing a course of work or for being in the room at the right time, getting a bit of metal on a ribbon is difficult at times in the United Kingdom. One hundred years ago everyone got a medal for being in public service at the time of a Queens Jubilee or a Kings Coronation but that was stepped back considerably by the 1930s. Now you get selected because your face fits or you have rank.

In Parliament a question was asked relating to how many emergency service personnel engaged in providing charitable helicopter emergency services are eligible for the Queen Elizabeth II **Platinum Jubilee Medal**; and when the eligibility criteria were changed to include them. The official reply given was that the National Health Service had agreed that emergency service personnel engaged in providing helicopter emergency medical services (HEMS) meeting the criteria for the Jubilee Medal could receive an award, irrespective of whether they have an employment contract with an NHS organisation. Emergency service personnel who respond to 999 calls and potentially placing themselves in danger were eligible for the Medal and an estimated 630 HEMS staff of both NHS and charitable employment status were eligible. [Hansard]



Sepura Limited has been purchased by London-based private equity group Epiris. The group's Epiris Fund II purchased Sepura from Hytera Communications.

The sale comes as critical communications supplier Sepura marks its 20th anniversary, having become market leader in over 20 countries with over two million devices deployed worldwide. Its portfolio of TETRA radios and accessories is used globally by public safety users in the police, fire and ambulance services. It has also successfully expanded into the commercial space, supplying transport, mining, oil & gas, and utility companies.

Mesa, Arizona, USA based **MD Helicopters Inc**; has received Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) certification to install a new "slimline" advanced glass cockpit that modernises the MD 500E platform for increased visibility and field of view.

The slimline cockpit is now standard in all new MD 500E aircraft and includes four inches of additional visibility on both sides of the instrument panel when compared to the traditional configuration. The design features the Garmin G500H TXiTM dual touch-screen integrated display system with screens serving as Primary Flight Display (PFD) and Multi-Function Display (MFD). Helicopter Synthetic Vision Technology (HSVTM) and Helicopter Terrain Awareness and Warning System (HTAWS) capabilities are also available via the Garmin G500H TXiTM. Dual Howell Instruments displays serve as the Engine Indicating and Crew Alerting System (EICAS), while the liquid crystal display Garmin GTNTM 650H provides navigation and communication functions, while also including moving map for airway and approach procedures.

Babcock International Group PLC (Babcock) has entered into an agreement with funds managed by Ancala Partners, a mid-market infrastructure investor, for the sale of certain of its aerial emergency services businesses for a gross cash consideration of €136.2 million (which equates to around £115 million), subject to closing adjustments and before transaction costs.

These businesses provide aerial emergency medical services, firefighting and search & rescue to customers and communities in Italy, Spain, Portugal, Norway, Sweden and Finland. They employ over 2,400 highly trained employees and operate a fleet of 232 aircraft across 164 operational locations in the six countries. Babcock will retain its aerial emergency services businesses in its focus countries of the UK, France, Canada and Australia, where the Group also operates defence businesses.

The sale forms part of Babcock's portfolio alignment programme, designed to focus the Group and reduce complexity. Proceeds from the transaction will be retained for general corporate purposes.

The businesses being sold are part of Babcock's Aviation sector. For the year ended 31 March 2021 they reported revenues of £407M and a loss before tax of £177M, including a £6M contribution before allocated overheads, exceptional items and other one-off adjustments arising from the Contract Profitability and Balance Sheet review.

Completion of the agreement is subject to certain regulatory and other conditions. The deal is expected to complete by the end of the calendar year.

L3Harris Technologies has introduced a new Extra Lightweight Data Recorder (xLDR) designed especially to address the growing light eVTOL and unmanned aircraft systems market. The equipment meets global mandates for lighter in-flight recorders on smaller aircraft, it weighs 50% less than current industry standards for Flight Data Recorders.

It captures large amounts of audio and flight data into crash-protected memory for analysis

This same flight data can be easily retrieved using the built-in web server and analysed after each flight to identify component failures, safety risks and evidence-based training.



CarteNav and Meta Aerospace announced at Farnborough International Airshow their integration of the MMD Spectral Tactical Data Link (TDL) software with the AIMS-ISR Mission Management System. This integration enables ISR platforms to participate in the live Link 16 network with access to enhanced situational awareness, command and control and additional communication capabilities – accelerating operational and tactical decision-making, when every second counts.

Daher is now marketing a new more capable version of the Kodiak, the 900, as the latest entry in its stable of turboprop singles. The \$3.487M Kodiak 900, which received FAA certification last week, is a variant of the company's Kodiak 100 utility turboprop, with a 3.9-foot fuselage stretch, 210-ktas maximum cruise speed, higher useful load, and 1,129-nm maximum range. Deliveries are planned to start in January. The 100 Series III will remain in production.

Powered by a 900-shp Pratt & Whitney Canada PT6A-140A engine, the new model has been in development since 2016, with the prototype flying since February 2020.

Airbus Helicopters and **VRM Switzerland** are co-developing a Virtual Reality (VR) training device for the twin-engine H145 helicopter. This innovative new training tool will offer H145 operators an affordable, compact training solution with realistic flight behaviour and full-body immersion, as well as the 3D vision and high resolution scenery of VR technology.

VRM Switzerland and Airbus Helicopters established their collaboration in 2021 to bring the EASA-qualified H125 VR training device to the market, enabling pilots to train realistically and execute complete proficiency checks on the simulator.

LCI, a leading aviation company and a subsidiary of the Libra Group, has ordered up to six H175 super-medium helicopters from Airbus, valued at over US\$125M. An order for two confirmed aircraft is set to be delivered later this year. The agreement provides for a further four options, and builds on LCI's previous order for new H175s.

LCI's fleet currently includes around fifty Airbus helicopters and fixed wing aircraft. They are deployed by 14 operators in 10 countries across the globe on a range of missions including emergency medical services, search and rescue and offshore wind.

Ed: The H175 is a slow seller compared with competitive Leonardo products but it does have a Chinese version, AC352, which recent news states is certified in China where the Airbus version is not!

ACCIDENTS AND INCIDENTS

26 June 2022 Bell UH-11B/204B N9970F Northern Pioneer Helicopters LLC near Clear Airport Clear, Alaska The Division of Forestry & Fire Protection (DOF) contracted helicopter crashed on landing and caught fire. The sole pilot, Douglas Ritchie, 56, of Wasilla, was fatally injured. The accident happened near mile marker 280 off AK Hwy 3 (Parks Hwy) The airframe was formerly ex-military 60-3568

1 July 2022 Bombardier LearJet 35A LV-BPA of Air ambulance operated by Flying America SA. The aircraft crashed on take-off from Río Grande Airport, Argentina. Both pilots and two medical personnel were killed. The aircraft had departed San Fernando Airport, in the morning on a medical transportation flight to Comodoro Rivadavia Airport, and Río Grande Airport. The accident occurred when the aircraft was returning to base. Video footage from the accident shows the aircraft rolling left and descending before it hit the ground. [ASN]

13 July 2022 Mil Mi-8 MTV-1 ER-MH Fire fighting aircraft of Valn ICC (believed Ukraine) Crashed into the sea off area given as Plaka Beach or Agia Marina Beach while working a fire on Samos Island, Greece. Helicopter operating off Samos with a multi-national crew of a Romanian pilot, two Moldovans and a Greek translator. Two people died and two rescued. The aircraft had been leased by the government to fight forest fires.

16 July 2022 Air Tractor AT-802 Fire Boss CS-EDY amphibian Fire fighting. A Portuguese pilot André Rafael Serra, aged 32, was killed after the aircraft came down in a vineyard in Castelo Melhor, Foz Côa, while fighting a fire at fighting a fire in Torre de Moncorvo Portugal. The aircraft was destroyed in the resultant fire.

Initial details state that the amphibian was filling up on the Douro River, by Castelo Melhor. With the plane water tanks replenished, it appears to have attempted a take off but was unable to rise sufficiently> The aircraft climbed-out in a right-hand turn, and having already cleared the top of the hill on the left bank of the Douro River, with a height of about 330 metres, began an abrupt nose and right wing down movement, followed by the emergency release of the water load. Still out of control it hit the first terrace of a vineyard, and then hit two more before coming to rest around 45 meters later. [Media/ASN]

16 July 2022 Bell UH-1H N911SZ Bernalillo County Sheriff's Office. Three police officers and a Bernalillo County firefighter were killed when the 52 years old Huey crashed near Las Vegas. Those onboard Metro 2 were heading back to Albuquerque after assisting firefighters with the East Mesa Fire. The dead were Undersheriff Larry Koren, Lt. Fred Beers and Deputy Michael Levison from the sheriff's office, and Rescue Specialist Matthew King of Bernalillo County Fire and Rescue.

21 July 2022 Boeing CH-47D Chinook N388RA. Fire fighting helicopter operated by Rotak Helicopter Services for the US Forest Service crashed in Idaho killing its two pilots. It came down in the Salmon River adjacent to the Indianola Work Center approximately 11 miles west of North Fork, Idaho on the Moose Fire. The aircraft sustained severe damage, the pilots were extracted and transported to hospitals but both sustained fatal injuries. The pilots were employees of the Anchorage-based ROTAK Helicopter Services,

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which was contracted to help fight the Moose Fire burning about 21 miles (34 kilometres) north of Salmon. Killed were 41-year-old Thomas Hayes of Post Falls, Idaho, and 36-year-old Jared Bird of Anchorage, Alaska.. [Media]

26 July 2022 Eurocopter AS365N3 Dauphin 2 N520CF Air ambulance of Miami Valley Hospital, Montgomery, Ohio (Premier Health Care Flight operated by Air Methods). The helicopter was responding to the scene of a fatal car accident at US127 and Eaton Road in Milford Township, Butler County in southern Ohio when it fouled wires at the scene and crashed while attempting to land. It landed nearly upright and there was no fire but there was severe structural damage. The three persons in the helicopter were transported to a hospital with non-life-threatening injuries. [Media/ASN]

SAFETY

UK air accident investigators have published a report into a crash of a ZeroAvia Piper PA-46 electric aircraft during flight test in 2021, when power to the electrical motors was lost.

The publication comes as ZeroAvia prepares to launch flight testing of a twin-engine Dornier 228 equipped with the hydrogen powertrain that it hopes to bring to market in 2024.

The company say that they have tightened their procedures in response to the report by the AAIB.

The Piper PA-46, registered G-HYZA, was carrying out experimental flight tests at Cranfield airport in the UK on April 29, 2021, when the battery was turned off as part of the test procedures to leave the single-engine aircraft powered solely by the hydrogen fuel cell.

However, the windmilling propeller generated a voltage high enough to operate an inverter protection system, which locked out power to the motors. Attempts to restart the system and restore electrical power were unsuccessful and the pilot made a forced landing in a field near to the runway at Cranfield airport.

The two people on board were not injured, but the aircraft sustained serious damage, including a detached left wing, collapsed landing gear and nose cowl distortion.

The investigators said sufficient ground testing had not been carried out and an emergency procedure to clear an inverter lock-out was not effective. The report also highlighted that an investigation had not been carried out into a previous loss of power from an inverter lock-out on a previous flight, and the risk assessment had not been reviewed. In addition, ad-hoc changes had been made to the flight test plan.

The report noted that the chief executive and the flight test director had taken on the day-to-day management of the programme, despite neither having safety and flight test experience. They were focussing on project targets rather than having technical expertise.

As the aviation industry is being pressured to cut aircraft emissions, several manufacturers see hydrogen power as the solution to zero-emission. ZeroAvia was founded in 2018, now, just four years later, the company is preparing to start flight-testing of a Dornier 228 aircraft within the next few weeks, before bringing its product to the market by the end of 2024.

ZeroAvia hopes to bring the developed powertrain to aircraft such as the Cessna Caravan, DHC-6 Twin Otter, Dornier 228 and HAL-228 aircraft.



UNMANNED

Inzpire Limited and Callen-Lenz have announced that the companies are forming a team to deliver operational turn-key Uncrewed Aerial Systems (UAS) services to militaries, governments, emergency services and national infrastructure customers in the UK and beyond.

The two companies will provide bespoke capabilities which will enable their customers to establish and conduct UAS operations in austere conditions using systems such as the Callen-Lenz VTOL Koios and Fregata Tactical S2 uncrewed aerial vehicles which are currently in use with a range of customers worldwide.

With 15 years' of UAS experience across the military and civil domains, Callen-Lenz provides in-house air system design, manufacturing and integration services for UK and global customers. The company's experts deliver operationally proven UAS and market-leading avionics including flight control and mission management systems, as well as aviation services and consultancy.

As part of the collaboration, Callen-Lenz will provide the fully capable 'turnkey' ISR platforms, Koios and Fregata, as well as pass on the company's expertise developed over the years in UAS operations. Callen-Lenz will prepare Inzpire's experts to operate the platforms and their concepts of use, which will enable Inzpire to develop a structured training programme to train militaries and leverage the team's joint capabilities for the global defence market.

Experts from across Inzpire's Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) and Mission Training Devices (MTD) Divisions will combine their experience to ensure that customers get the benefit of years of ex-military ISR and training experience in both the live and synthetic domains.

MOVE ALONG THERE

It was initially reported as an in flight incident but it became clear it was not. On June 27, 2022 Beechcraft King Air 200 N. Air ambulance of Physicians Air Transport was hit by a bullet. Initial reports state it was on finals for landing at Hawkins Field in Jackson, Mississippi but later reports mentioned it being in a hangar. A significant difference by most measures!

Apparently a dispute over the city's garbage collection contract has led to people on the ground taking pot-shots at passing aircraft. "I don't think it helped that they put the garbage trucks on the airport's property. It's a lot of hate now for the airport, and some are shooting guns at planes.

The company that owns the airplane says it's likely out of action for awhile and suffered hundreds of thousands of dollars in damage. A random shot was fired from about 700 feet that way on the eastern boundary of Hawkins Field, and the trajectory hit this airplane on the upper cowling.

If being copied is the sign of success then it seems that NPAS has arrived.

The RAF has a squadron, number 216, that is set up to operate unmanned aircraft but has not got any unmanned aircraft in service, nor has it undertaken trials with unmanned aircraft over the four years it has been set up. In its favour though this "ghost" Squadron only employs a handful of people.

Other operators of non existent drones are available! (Daily Telegraph)

...and reading the NAO report quoted earlier under the super long NPAS item one bit tickled one of PAN's correspondents...

" If you are in contact with anyone who has been the subject of the alleged behaviours, I would suggest directing them to the West Yorkshire Police professional standards unit³ or alternatively the Independent Office for Police Conduct"

Well good luck with that one

Recently on Twitter

The NPAS crews based on the edge of Husbands Bosworth airfield are housed in a building close to the each of the borders of the county constabularies it once served as the East Midlands Air Support Unit consortium (Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and Warwickshire). I saw that building go up span by span nearly 28 years ago and know how proud the original unit were of their home base. In its interior is painted a rendition of their former unit badge, a large a spectacular bit of artwork. Like much art the work harks back to the past and reminds those beholding it of different times and colleagues. Several now departed senior ranks within NPAS tried unsuccessfully to have it torn down. Clearly they were of the book burning inclination, not able to heed the lessons of the past.

The good people of Husbands Bosworth recently exchanged Tweets with the police air unit in the Cayman Islands, mentioning that people often comment on why, despite being a proud & dedicated NPAS base they retained the EMASU crest displayed centre stage in the hangar.

"In October 1998 our AS355N, G-EMAU, crashed shortly after take-off, killing one PC Stuart Ross and critically injuring the other two crewmembers."

The aircraft was replaced with an EC135, G-EMAS, which proudly memorialised the name of the observer who lost his life on the tail. The aircraft was sold to the Cayman Islands where it served well for a number of years as VP-CPS until it was written off in an accident following mechanical failure in 2019. Throughout its service it retained the conspicuity colour scheme it had worn in the EMASU but with the name of Stuart Ross obscured. With the memorialisation restored, the top of the tail is preserved by the Cayman Islands as a lasting marker to a police officer from a far off land.

"We are very grateful to the Royal Cayman Islands Police for this thoughtful gesture."



#... bad leaders have a propensity to lose even when they command great teams.

Farnborough opened with the announcement of a project delivering an aviation revolution focussing on greener aircraft, airspace management and drone carried medical supplies. Seventeen projects sharing £73M of funding to “develop, test and evidence the safe integration and operation of drones.”

The projects include the ones already highlighted for delivering mail, medical samples or short life drugs by air to remote islands but also includes research into a typical Airspace BVLOS solution using advanced drone system.

What was clear about this round of funding was a lack of input from most emergency aviators, NPAS even. The majority of those involved were academics in universities and utilities with only the Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service representing the emergency services.



One of the projects was a continuation of the drug transfer drone being promoted by the National Health Service and others. The routing of the drone from an Isle of Wight hospital to a facility on the former RAF Thorney Island is quite complex and ignores the apparent shorter straight line connection between Solent Airport (Lee on Solent) the same point o the island. No doubt when all the drone flights are fully automatic point to point it will all make sense..

FUTURE EVENTS

Long standing plans to run the next PAVCon Europe Police Aviation Conference in Luxembourg are on hold.

Previous conversations with the police air unit in Luxembourg had settled on an event as soon as they had their new aircraft in service and the new unit hangar built. This pathway was affected by the recent Pandemic but has been advertised for some time as 2023.

In recent days it has been learned that the unit no longer see next year as a possibility, and they are now planning on 2024. The site is owned by Luxembourg Air Rescue and any future moves will need to be in coordination with them.

Meanwhile the team at PAVCon Europe are exploring other possibilities including Bilbao, Spain. As this option was only first talked of during the 2022 event it cannot be taken as a serious contender yet. The fact that we have been there before in 2011 will greatly assist the process but a great deal of up-to-date research will need to be undertaken in coming months. The important part is that there is a desire and a

will.

September 2022 The Emergency Services Show at the NEC Birmingham. The Emergency Services Show is the UK's leading annual showcase of the blue light sector, featuring over 450 exhibitors, live demonstrations, unique learning opportunities and unrivalled networking.

Taking place in Hall 5 at the NEC in Birmingham, the two-day event brings together all disciplines from the emergency services sector to discover innovative technology and operational solutions, share their experiences and unite in their collaborative approach to public safety.

If the emergency services or their partnering agencies buy your products or services (or you feel they are missing out on their unique advantages by not buying them!) then The Emergency Services Show is for you. Exhibitors can choose from a range of options, from complete stand packages to floor space only and even outside space. Organised by Broden Media Ltd., Robert Denholm House, Bletchingley Road, Nutfield, Surrey, RH1 4HW <https://www.emergencyuk.com/>

Helitech, the poor British brother of the once great but now split event that became European Rotors [Cologne in November] and Helitech [revived] via Vertical Lift.

It is noteworthy that the show is using the same advertising this year as it did last and is wheeling out many of the same speakers' names and faces as appeared last time out. We can be sure that there will not be 300 exhibitors and that many of the listed speakers will fail to turn out. Seeing the list led me to directly asking 2-3 of the speakers if they are speaking. They are not, and it is not worth ringing everyone.

So, I might assume that the marketing is yet again built on a pack of lies. Perhaps as 'lies' might bring about tears I will call them 'untruths' – they mean the same but may be less hurtful. Whatever they are they devalue the whole event. Helitech should be sold for what it is not some delusion of grandeur that dreams up 200 exhibitors and several speakers that are simply not there. As I wrote last time, when you get over the lies there is some good stuff to take on board. The full report on the show is still online at the back of the November 2021 edition of PAN but some details from it are

(The Helitech) event worked on many levels but I tend not to congratulate the organisers – it worked despite the organisers simply because it was an event of its time, a long overdue post Covid opportunity to Network.

There are caveats, but Helitech was certainly not a business disaster, it put potential customers in the path of several exhibitors.

Based on current advertising, with their illusory 300 exhibitors and more, the organisers have not been listening again. But I have booked a visit.

FARNBOROUGH SHOWCASE



Farnborough 2018. Unfortunately the outside scene of Farnborough 2022 was something less inhabited. Plenty of airlines and military aircraft but the usual staple of the PAN market, small ISR airframes, were sadly missing © Farnborough



Thanks to the US military there was a great line up of military hardware at Farnborough 2022 but the recent Covid break has had its effect and unfortunately the outside scene in the static was somewhat less inhabited than in the past. Plenty of airlines but the usual staple of the PAN market, small ISR airframes, Diamond, 2Excel, Viking were sadly missing. Only Airborne Technologies represented the sector with the familiar Twin Otter, itself only recently released from a two year Covid incarceration in New Zealand.



Not quite a completely new star on the aeronautical scene, Nova Systems sprang to the fore and major programme announcements at the Farnborough Air Show © PAR

The flying programme, such as it is, was cornered by the airliner industry this year as it tries to extricate it from a large hole that was only partly down to the issues created by Covid. © PAR





The centre of attention was on the RAF replacement of the Puma helicopter fleet with front runners arguably being the Airbus H175 and the Leonardo AW189 (above). The Leonardo booth was closest to the cooler parts of the show and its Day 1 press call attracted a lot of attention even if it was from the relative safety of the Press Lounge where this show was taken from!
© PAR

It was lonely on the front line! George Decock (Airborne Technologies and other ports of call) would normally be surrounded by familiar faces in the ISR sector but not this year! Yes it was hot but other forces changed the face of Farnborough. Hopefully only a temporary glitch and we will be back to near normal in 2024. © PAR



UPCOMING EVENTS

6-8 September 2022 Commercial UAV Expo Americas, Las Vegas, Nevada, USA This event defines and showcases the global commercial UAV industry, with a special focus on solutions in the Americas region and a tie-in into the world of advanced air mobility. In 2021, after a 2-year pandemic related absence, it was held live again and registered 2,700+ attendees from 61 nations, with 2,000 actually making the trip to attend (both at 85% of the previous record totals). As of the end of July there are 193 exhibitors and the organisers hope for 200 on the day they open in September. www.expouav.com

It was a triumph - measured against most other tech events which had not exceeded 30% of their previous live audiences. Regular readers will recall there was a comprehensive post event report appeared in PAN and we hope for something again in the October edition.

The event draws the power buyers and global influencers and sets the pace for the industry, with innovative formats, cutting-edge content. It is a must-attend event and aims to convene 3,500 delegates and exhibitors from six continents. www.expouav.com

LATE NEWS FROM RENO

A flurry of news stories arrived in the office as the annual get together of Airborne Public Safety Association (APSCON) opened in Reno, Nevada.



PAC International recently upgraded a Bell 407 for Michigan State Police. Believed N696ST c/n 54068 , 16 years old example of the type. The team converted the aircraft's original analogue display to a true glass cockpit with a new Aeronautical Accessories/Garmin G1000 NXi retrofit kit.

The G1000 NXi Integrated Flight Deck offers simple digital displays for reduced pilot fatigue and exceptional dependability, accuracy, and situational awareness. The upgrade features new avionics, including Dual Navigation, Communications, Air Data, Attitude, and Heading Reference Systems (ADAHRS), and Wide Area Augmentation System (WAAS) GPS. Also included in the package are synthetic vision and a Helicopter Terrain Awareness and Warning System, or HTAWS.

PAC also installed an Aeronautical Accessories enlarged instrument panel and Genesys Aerosystems HeliSAS autopilot system. Upgrades to the original mission suite included Wulfsberg & Motorola tactical radios, Shotover ARS700 mapping system, and Airborne displays.

The Michigan State Police Aviation Unit works closely with all Michigan law enforcement agencies, the Michigan National Guard, and the United States Coast Guard air stations. The Aviation Unit has a fleet of aircraft based out of Lansing's Capital Region International Airport, with satellite offices in Saginaw and Ypsilanti. Aircraft include a Beech King Air 90, Cessna 182R, Bell 206L3, two Bell 407s, two Bell UH-1H Hueys, and three Aeryon SkyRanger Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UASs). The Aviation Unit also uses a downlink truck, which receives live video feeds from the helicopters or UAS, providing ground commanders with increased situational awareness of critical incidents.

PAC International, officially known as Paradigm Aerospace Corporation, is a subsidiary of Metro Aviation, Inc. PAC's capabilities range from maintenance and avionics to paint, component repair, and overhaul.

Bell Textron Inc., announced the signing of a purchase agreement for two Bell 407GX_i helicopters to Volusia County Sheriff's Aviation Unit. This makes a total of five Bell 407 aircraft to serve in multi-mission special operations in their fleet.

Operated out of DeLand Municipal Airport in Orlando, Florida, Air One operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year to support the sheriff's office's aerial operations to include, law enforcement, search and rescue (SAR), fire suppression and monitoring, and special missions such as SWAT team fast rope insertions.

The Bell 407GX_i is outfitted with the new Rolls-Royce M250-C47E/4 dual-channel FADEC turbine engine delivering exceptional hot and high performance, fuel efficiency and the ability to cruise at 133 kts/246 km/h. Garmin's G1000H NX_i Integrated Flight Deck, complete with high-definition displays and faster processors, offers increased brightness and clarity, faster startup and map rendering, as well as connectivity to tablets and smartphones.



Bell announced that two 505 helicopters have been sold to Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC). The two Bell 505 will aid in multi-mission law enforcement operations for FWC's Division of Law Enforcement.

Headquartered in Tallahassee, Florida, and established in 1999, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission manages fish and wildlife resources for their long-term well-being and the benefit of people. The FWC Division of Law Enforcement is responsible for patrol and investigative law enforcement services over more than 8,400 miles of coastline, 13,200 square miles of offshore waters, and more than 34 million acres of land.



The aircraft delivered was equipped with Wescam MX-10 Sensor System, Troll Downlink, Churchill ARS700, Luminator Orion Searchlight, Genesys Autopilot, Rhoteta radio surveillance system, Aircomm AC and Heater system, Aerodynamix NVG Modifications, AEM Loud Hailer, Donaldson inlet barrier filter, Macro-Blue Display, various Garmin and PS Engineering mission capable systems and various AAI upgrades including new tinted windows, high visibility doors, polycarbonate windshields, sliding rear door kits, rappelling fixtures, and law enforcement instrument panel.

Wysong Enterprises recently completed a new Bell 407GX_i helicopter for the Clayton County Police Department Aviation Unit, Jonesborough, Georgia. The aircraft, N297CC, was customized in collaboration with Clayton County personnel and Wysong Enterprises technical staff.

Having delivered the 407 Wysong is currently working on the county's Bell 206. The Clayton County Police Department has operated Bell aircraft for more than 25 years.

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