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August 2024



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LAW ENFORCEMENT - AUSTRALIA



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SOUTH AUSTRALIA: The state police (SAPOL) has partnered with Babcock Australasia and the Department of Premier and Cabinet to introduce a new helicopter to its fleet.

The 2022 Airbus Helicopters H145 VH-8D3 c/n 21074, until a year ago US registered as N102HM, will take to the skies in the coming weeks, promising to revolutionise police operations across the state. One of the standout features of the Airbus H145 is its significantly reduced noise profile. This improvement addresses concerns raised by the community in the past.

The helicopter's EO/IR technology assists in locating missing persons, tracking offenders who break into premises, and monitoring high-speed vehicles endangering other road users. The role fit includes the Trakka searchlight. This month the Airbus H145 will initially undergo rigorous training, with pilots and aircrew honing their skills to ensure seamless integration into SAPOL's existing capabilities. Upon completion of training, the new aircraft will replace the current Bell 412EP, which will continue to operate alongside it during the training period. This strategic transition ensures uninterrupted service while embracing modern technology. The new helicopter offers a more modern airframe design that uses 35% less fuel, saving around 3.6 tonnes in CO2 emissions each year.



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Four new pilots have been recruited and trained by Babcock as part of its long-standing commitment to enhancing SRHS's operational capabilities. These additional crewmembers create a valuable third line of flying for emergency service personnel.

The Airbus aircraft is one of two replacement helicopters to be provided by Babcock this year, as part of an AUS\$150M, four-year contract extension with the SRHS. The second aircraft – a Bell 412 EP – will be configured specifically for SA Ambulance Service (SAAS) medical rescues and retrievals. It is scheduled to arrive in December.

Each year on average, the state's emergency fleet completes a combined 1,300 missions, equating to more than 2,000 flying hours. [SAPOL/Babcock/PAR]

APSCON STATIC ARRIVAL: the 2020 build Bell 505 N347CS c/n 6572 of the Leon County Sheriff's Office in Tallahassee, Florida and assigned to the Tallahassee Police Department Aviation Task Force arriving in front of the Hilton Hotel in Houston, Texas in time for the 2024 edition of the annual APSCON. [image by Alan Norris, Norrpress, on July 27, 2024]

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BELGIUM

RELIC: In late June, PAN reader Bob Rongé found the former Aerospatiale SA.330J Puma c/n 1237 operated by the Belgian police (Rijkswacht/Gendarmerie) from the mid-1970s to the late 1990s at a balloon event at Grobbendonk in Belgium. Since about 2021 this relic has been serving as the basis for an eye-catching mobile cocktail bar!!

This was one of three SA330J (GO1, GO2 and GO3) transferred from the military along with Sud Alouette helicopters to create what has now become a civil state police operation. In the late 1970s the type introduced the Marconi Heli-Tele to Belgium, originally in a fixed form similar to that in the UK military Westland Scout and later in the ball mount similar to the UK police Bell 222. This airframe was GO2/OT-GIB and served from around 1974 to 1998 before being disposed of. Both of the other SA330s suffered separate mishaps and are presumed scrapped.

CANADA

ONTARIO: In a major shift from the original position the police in the region are now to buy rather than lease its future air support provision.

It was already planned that the police in Ottawa would have eyes in the sky to help officers crack down on auto thefts, carjackings and street racing but the original plan was far cheaper than the one arrived at last month. The Ontario government is now spending \$134M to purchase five new helicopters for use in the Greater Toronto Area and Ottawa. As part of the new Joint Air Support Unit, Ontario Provincial Police will acquire two new H135 helicopters to provide support to police in Ottawa and Toronto in dealing with auto thefts.

The province initially said in March it would lease four police helicopters for the Toronto area for \$36M, plus \$10M to operate them. The Ontario Provincial Police will receive two helicopters to support Ottawa and Toronto police forces. Three other helicopters will go to Durham, Halton and Peel Regional Police services.

CYPRUS

POLICE: A recent non-tender transaction between the Cyprus government and Collins Aerospace in Anaheim, USA was for the overhaul of the hoist fitted to Bell AB412 CP-2.

The deal was negotiated without prior call for competition and reportedly cost €153,526 (£129,000 or \$166,500). [source Voluntary ex-ante transparency notice].

JAPAN

AICHI: At last month Farnborough International Airshow Bell announced that the Aichi Prefectural Police in Japan has placed an order for the Bell 505 helicopter for airborne law enforcement. When delivered, Aichi Prefecture will be the first in Asia Pacific to operate the Bell 505 for police work.

The operator has been flying helicopters for well over 50 years now and has traditionally selected Bell helicopter of various sizes to meet its aerial missions.

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Evenlode is a series of equipment providing capability for a range of **information exchange** requirements. The new video and data encoder enables police forces to react to evolving scenarios in real time thanks to the low latency of **<120ms**; equipment can be deployed for air and ground, which provides innovative video solutions for **police applications**

UNITED KINGDOM

NPAS TENDERS: I understand that a recent meeting of the NPAS Strategic Board arrived at a unanimous decision to cancel Lot 2 of the replacement aircraft programme – this covers the London (Metropolitan Police) element of the tender process. It was widely thought that the favoured type was the Bell 429.

I am awaiting a statement from NPAS as there is nothing 'out there' that I have found to confirm the position. They in turn are awaiting a comment from Blue Light who are handling the purchase on their behalf.

If you recall NPAS tried to delete this part of the tender before but ended up wasting money on barristers not planes before losing the case. HeliOperations is a British helicopter company based on the Isle of Portland, Dorset, England, at the old Naval Air Station of RNAS Portland (HMS Osprey) providing training and services.

Apparently, the decision was taken at the June meeting, by unanimous decision at the National Strategic Board (NSB) but then, due to the matter being a joint action with Blue Light it took a further two weeks to generate the letter to bidders early in July. It is said that the NSB didn't feel it represented value for money and were concerned over further cost escalation during the negotiating process.

A thought is that they may now simply seek to add three aircraft to Lot 1 for NPAS to operate on behalf of London. Nothing has been heard from Blue Light.

Editor: I suspect there will be challenges from HeliOps and/or Bell although not sure of any grounds. Meanwhile it seems that NPAS remain out of control of their own purchase process – leaving it to Blue Light who have never purchased an aircraft in their lives. Looks promising. I assume that this meeting was the one held in June. There is no longer an indication of when the meetings are held or are expected to be held on the NPAS website. Despite assurances in the past to government bodies and the National Audit Office the NPAS website still does not provide access to its meetings despite a proven need and duty. Since contacting NPAS this past month the minutes for the first two meetings in 2024 have appeared. Despite that, everything is about second guessing them. A list of the National Strategic Board Members on the website was last updated in December 2021 and is therefore as much use as a Chocolate teapot. Numerous members have retired, been voted off, got bored, or been removed through one misdemeanour or another. Until this month, the minutes published were over 12 months out of date.

NPAS FIXED WING: Thanks to the unit for publishing these images of their P68R aircraft in their latest home at East Midlands Airport. The two images of the fixed wing appeared with others including the Husbands Bosworth based EC135P2 G-SUFK.

Looking back on their relatively brief past, NPAS fixed wing has had an inordinate number of bases.



©NPAS



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AIRPORT MATTERS: Meanwhile the newer, pristine but abandoned Rubb hangar at the former RAF Finningley (aka Doncaster Sheffield Airport/DSA or Robin Hood) edges forward towards an assumed reopening on an as yet undefined date in 2026. Everyone is hopeful but nothing is yet set in stone. A new operator has been selected. The identity of the new people will be announced to a closed meeting of the local authority but is intended to remain secret to the wider world in the meantime.

Meanwhile there are no operational aircraft on DSA and 2Excel are reported to have let the now permanently grounded Avro Vulcan take cover from the elements in their capacious hangar. At least until their own aircraft are allowed to return to take up residence there.

Meanwhile aviation continues on the site (the main company presence is at Sywell and Humberside). The company has been using the vast hangars to conduct interviews relating to a Graduate Recruitment effort, inviting potential Trainee Design Engineers to come in and meet 2Excel in the hope that they might wish to join the company. [19/7/2024]



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FIRST RESPONDER: The first UK operational flight of a 'Drone as First Responder' (DFR) took place over a festival on the Isle of Wight in late June.

The 2024 Isle of Wight Festival took place in Seaclose Park, Newport, Isle of Wight over the 19-22 June. The Thames Valley and Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary worked together to bring in the module contained system to support event policing.

DFR is a concept being developed and tested by the National Police Chiefs' Council Beyond Visual Line of Sight (BVLOS) pathways programme. DFR sees police drones launched and piloted remotely to provide a fast response to incidents, feeding back real time information to police control rooms and operational units.

The trial at the IoW Festival created a simulated DFR capability in addition to the force's routine police drones' resource and saw a drone being flown from an IDI Automated Deployment System (ADS) - essentially a remote box from which the drone is launched.

Pilot and NPCC Project Lead, Chris Stagg, led the experienced team running the trial which was stationed at a temporary heliport set up for the festival within a TFR.

In addition to the live view, the DFR capability was deployed in response to a request to check that road closures were correctly in place, freeing up officers on the ground to continue their public safety patrol duties.

Chris Stagg is part of the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary and Thames Valley Police Joint Operations Unit and is the NPCC BVLOS Project Lead. He said:

"This was the first time we've been able to put the DFR technology to use in a live environment and it gave us a great insight to just how effective it could be as part of a routine policing response in the near future, helping keep people safe and providing a dynamic and responsive view of the situation on the ground."
Editor: This trial, and the festival, was blessed with good weather. Throughout it enjoyed warm temperatures at daytime varying between 17° and 20°C (62° to 68°F), little wind and no rain. Therefore, not a typical operating environment for the British Isles as a whole but average for June and a good start for the flight trials of the project.



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UNITED STATES

ALABAMA: Henry County Sheriff's Office have acquired an elderly Bell OH-58C from Chambers County with the FAA registration N712SD - coincidentally both are located on the eastern border of Alabama with Georgia. Chambers County had originally acquired the aircraft in March 2019 as a DoD Surplus airframe. It is not known whether the airframe remains in flyable condition or is destined as a spares donor.

[Facebook/Parapex/PAR]

CALIFORNIA: Merced County Sheriff has recently acquired a Bell 206B JetRanger N206BG from nearby Stanislaus County, which will operate alongside their Robinson R44 Raven II and a Bell UH-1H. The recently transacted JetRanger is a 1972 built aircraft which had been acquired by Stanislaus County in January 2003 - and they continue to operate a Bell 206L1 LongRanger II and a Bell 407 alongside two small Cessna fixed-wings. [Parapex]

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA: Following the acquisition of a new Airbus H125 in May, the Metropolitan Police Dept of DC has now disposed of its 2001-build AS350B3 to NS Air Leasing during July [Parapex]

FLORIDA: Sarasota county Sheriff has picked up a new Bell 429 Global Ranger to replace one of its current fleet, a 2005 Bell 407, N407FL c/n 54357. The Sheriff received a go-ahead for the purchase last summer.

The Sarasota Aviation Unit is staffed with four deputy pilots and two mechanics. The unit also has seven part-time Tactical Flight Officers (TFOs) and is tasked with serving in a support role for different areas within the sheriff's office as well as surrounding agencies, with a focus on patrol operations. The Aviation Unit still operates another Bell 407, this one being a 2012 Bell 407 GX model N911VS c/n 53650. There are no details on the equipment on the new 429 yet but the existing fleet use a L3 Harris Wescam MX-10 EO/IR system, use an Aero Computers/Churchill moving map system, searchlight, and night vision goggles. [Christian Shepherd/PAR]

Pinellas County have, in recent months, acquired a new Airbus H125 helicopter for their Mosquito Control operation. The County seat is Clearwater, and the population numbers close on one million in an area of 608 square miles. The aircraft started operations in earnest on 2nd July and is based at St. Petersburg Clearwater International Airport - there is a current application to change the registration from N220MC to N14806, the latter being the same as the now-retired Bell 47G5A that the same unit used for many years. Completion of the H125 was done by Davenport Aviation in Columbus, Ohio. [Parapex]

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NEW MEXICO: The Bernalillo County Sheriff's Department Metropolitan Air Support Unit in Albuquerque has acquired a Bell 412EPI. This aircraft started off life in 2010 as a 412EP model, before becoming the development aircraft with Bell for the 412EPI standard. Clearly it no longer has a use with the manufacturer in Texas, and has now been sold to Bernalillo County Sheriff, replacing the UH-1H N911SZ that crashed in July 2022 with four fatalities. Additionally, they operate an Airbus AS350B3 N911ZZ. [Parapex/PAR]

TENNESSEE: The state Highway Patrol is expected to pick up its second Bell 429 Global Ranger later this year. The current airframe, delivered in June 2018, is N780HP. The rest of the fleet is based on Bell 206 JetRanger's and a UH-1 Huey.

The Aviation Unit is responsible for all air support and any other aviation related responsibility that assists the Department of Safety and Homeland Security and other public safety agencies. The unit utilizes its helicopter fleet for both criminal and non-criminal searches, hoist rescue, tactical operations, stolen vehicle location, marijuana eradication, and other tasks.

The helicopters are equipped with various types of equipment, including FLIR cameras, search lights, LoJack receivers, and a Downlink system. Helicopters and pilots are stationed in the THP Fall Branch, Nashville and Jackson districts. Aviation Unit pilots are recruited from within the ranks of the Tennessee Highway Patrol. The Department of Safety and Homeland Security, the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation, and the Tennessee National Guard collectively form the Governor's Task Force on Marijuana Eradication and fly missions across the State. [Christian Shepherd/PAR]



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UNITED KINGDOM

LONDON: The first of the two Airbus Helicopters H135 helicopters for London has now been completed. The completion at Airbus Helicopters UK in Oxford is said to be of a high standard and well within the weight guarantee. The customised interior is by Bucher and said to be superb.

Completed or not the two aircraft are not scheduled to replace the current MD902s in service before the Autumn (Fall) [Aerooptimo]

NORTH EAST: RAF Boulmer, situated near Alnwick, the county town of Northumberland is primarily a key station for the provision of surveillance of UK airspace and tactical control of combat and support aircraft.

Between 1978 and September 2015 Boulmer took on an additional role as a search and rescue station following the closure of RAF Acklington. It was equipped with Westland Sea King helicopters of 202 Squadron. The ambulance service was involved locally at Blyth with setting up one of the earliest charity air ambulances in Britain around 1990 using an AS355F1 G-NAAS but it did not stand the test of time and other operations took its place to serve the region.

North East Ambulance Service and Royal Air Force Boulmer has together responded to over 2800 999 emergency calls since 2004 in a joint initiative to serve the region

For the last 20 years, North East Ambulance Service (NEAS) have worked in close working with the RAF Boulmer volunteers to respond to emergency 999 calls when an ambulance is on route.

In total, they have gifted over 11,500 hours of volunteering in their community and attended over 2,800 patients when their resources are the closest.

Over 15 RAF volunteers have subsequently gone on to careers at NEAS from ambulance care assistants to paramedics and instructors which includes Paul Brolly who is part of the volunteer development team. Regrettably the scheme came to an end in May due to RAF operational changes on site.

SCOTLAND NHS: Gama Aviation has been awarded the next Scottish Ambulance Service Air Ambulance contract commencing in 2026. They are the current holders of the four year contract which provides fixed and rotary wing aircraft to serve across mainland Scotland and the islands.

The new contract is due to commence in 2026 and will see the introduction of brand new, more capable aircraft that will replace the existing fixed wing and rotary aircraft fleet based in Aberdeen, Glasgow and Inverness.

The new aircraft will have improved range and endurance which will reduce the reliance on re-fuelling requirements away from base locations. The new fleet will be upgraded examples of the current fleet consisting of two Beechcraft King Air 360C turbo prop and two Airbus H145 D3s. Strategically the King Air 360C hits the mark, providing good, direct operating costs and flight performance with a highly scalable mission platform that will be modified in house at Gama Aviation.

SCOTLAND CHARITY: An emergency response to a holidaymaker who sustained leg injuries after falling 15 feet from a coastal path near St Abbs Head marked the milestone 6,000th call out for Scotland's Charity Air Ambulance (SCAA) response from its Perth base to the east coast emergency, landing on the beach at Broadhaven Bay close to the injured woman.

The SCAA launched in 2013 with one Bolkow 105 helicopter and responded to 289 call outs in year one, The landmark 6,000th call out came at the end of the charity's 11th year of operations.

SCAA now operates two bases – at Perth and Aberdeen – with two larger H135 helicopter air ambulances and two Rapid Response Vehicles, crewed by a pool of 12 paramedics and four pilots.

Scotland has an NHS funded system in place offering both fixed and rotary wing air assets, the SCAA is a charity funded operation funded entirely to the generous support of the public and the many trusts, foundations, businesses and organisations who recognise the vital service provided – both acting in response to calls from the emergency telephone system (999).

WALES: Wales' lifesaving air ambulance service has reached its 50,000th mission, 23 years after the Charity was formed. The 24/7 service has touched thousands of lives since it was launched in 2001. The milestone highlights the support that the all-Wales Charity has received over the years from the people of Wales and the Charity is "incredibly grateful" to the public. Wales Air Ambulance has grown from a one-helicopter operation based at Swansea Airport to what is now the largest air ambulance operation in the UK, with four helicopters and a fleet of rapid response vehicles. The air and road operations are funded entirely by public donations and the Charity needs to raise £11.2M every year to keep the helicopters flying and its rapid response vehicles on the road.

UNITED STATES

NATIONAL: The National EMS Pilots Association is now accepting nominations for the NEMSPA EMS Pilot of the Year and the NEMSPA Lifetime Achievement Awards. Both awards will be presented at the annual Air Medical Transport Conference (AMTC) in Salt Lake City, UT November 2024.

Nominees should embody the best that the air ambulance industry has to offer in Professionalism, Technical Expertise, Safety, and Leadership to include being involved and having contributed to the air medical and aviation industries. Due to competition, it is highly recommended that all submitters provide specific details as to why they think their nominee should be chosen. While the quality of the information for the nominee is very important so too is the number of nominations submitted for each individual.

INDIANA: Rochester– Parkview Health announced the addition of a new medical helicopter to its Samaritan Flight Program fleet. The new aircraft – a Leonardo AW169 – has arrived at its base in Rochester, and area residents were invited to an open house event to get to know the helicopter that will become a familiar presence in the skies at the Fulton County Airport. Invited guests were able to meet the crew, be



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present for a traditional blessing of the aircraft and learn about its advanced technology and design features.

Set up in 1989, Parkview now has two Samaritan medical helicopters that operate from bases in Fort Wayne (Samaritan 1) and Rochester, Ind. (Samaritan 2). The Fort Wayne base is located at Parkview Regional Medical Center on the north side of the city. Both helicopters are called into action by Parkview Logistics Center located on the Parkview Hospital Randallia campus.

Currently, Parkview has two Eurocopter AS365 N-2 Dauphin medical helicopters—one based in Fort Wayne (Samaritan 1) and the other in Rochester, Indiana (Samaritan 2).

The arrival of the new helicopter coincides with the 35th anniversary of the Samaritan Flight Program's service to the region. Aircraft safety and operational efficiency have advanced across the decades, and the Leonardo's next-generation capabilities and patient-centred design will further support caregivers' expertise as they provide focused medical care in rapid response situations, according to the release.

Currently, about 40% of flights by Samaritan 1 and 2 are to pick up patients from the scene of an injury and 60% are to pick up from facilities referring patients to Parkview Regional Medical Center. Both helicopters are deployed by dispatchers at Parkview Logistics, located at Parkview Hospital Randallia. [Times]



TEXAS: Memorial Hermann Life Flight first in the world to use Airbus H160 for Emergency Medical Services

Memorial Hermann Life Flight® has placed orders for one H160 and four H145s to replace its current fleet of EC145 helicopters. The nationally recognised emergency medical services program will be the first in the world to operate the H160 for helicopter emergency medical services (HEMS).

Memorial Hermann Life Flight®, a service provided by Memorial Hermann Health System, was founded in 1976, and serves the community within a 150-mile radius of the Texas Medical Center in Houston. It has exclusively relied on Airbus helicopters since its inception and has flown more than 166,000 lifesaving missions.

The H160 is in service in the U.S., Canada, Brazil, Japan, Saudi Arabia, France, and other European countries and has been ordered for use in energy, private business aviation, HEMS, search and rescue, law enforcement and military missions. The H160 offers the largest cabin in its class, sliding doors, low levels of vibration, flat attitude in flight, and Blue Edge rotor blades, making it the quietest helicopter in its class and providing a more comfortable experience for patients and health care professionals.

In total, there are more than 1,675 H145 family helicopters in service, logging a total of more than 7.6 million flight hours. Powered by two Safran Arriel 2E engines, the H145 is equipped with a full authority digital engine control (FADEC) and the Helionix digital avionics suite. It includes a high performance 4-axis autopilot, increasing safety and reducing pilot workload. Its particularly low acoustic footprint makes the H145 the quietest helicopter in its class, while its CO2 emissions are the lowest amongst its competitors

The new H160 is to be registered N453MH, an identity currently carried by one of the earlier EC145 helicopter (c/n 9136) which is shown to be pending a registration change to N463MH

FIRE

AUSTRALIA

NEW SOUTH WALES:

The NSW Government is providing certainty for the state's aerial bush firefighting capacity, with a new 10-year aviation contract signed by the NSW Rural Fire Service (RFS) that will boost local jobs and home-grown skills.

Coulson Aviation Australia, which has managed the majority of RFS aircraft for the past five years, has been awarded the contract to oversee the management, operation and maintenance of the entire RFS fleet for the next decade.

The fleet includes eleven aircraft, seven rotary wing and five fixed wing. The helicopters are six Bell 412 and Boeing Chinook, the fixed wing a Boeing 737 air tanker, two Cessna Citations and a Beechcraft Super King Air.

It is expected that the new contract will help develop the next generation of aviation personnel in NSW, with an expansion of the apprenticeship scheme attached to the RFS fleet. Providing training for local crews in advanced firefighting techniques will also ensure the community is better protected.

During the 2022-23 bush fire season, RFS aircraft undertook more than 340 taskings and rescued 113 people. The RFS's 737 'Marie Bashir' was dispatched on 41 occasions to help battle 26 bush fires, dropping more than 600,000 litres of retardant.

The fleet is also used to support other emergency services, such as the NSW State Emergency Service for rescues during floods, when they are not being used for firefighting duties.

Coulson Aviation Australia has been the leading supplier of Large Air Tankers and Very Large Heli-Tankers to the Australian Government for the past decade [National Tribune]

EUROPE

Fires burning as July opened Milas, Western Turkey and near Athens in Greece Beaumont Enterprise. It was reported that in early July a total of 230 firefighters, 17 planes and 12 helicopters were trying to put out both fires.

GREECE

Diamond Aircraft has recently signed a significant contract for the supply of three DA62 MPP aerial surveillance aircraft for the Greek Ministry of Climate Crisis and Civil Protection. These aircraft will be used for firefighting and search & rescue operations as air operations centres and for aerial surveillance, using up to date electro-optical systems, a cell phone localization system and various datalinks, enhancing Greece's capability to manage and responds to emergencies efficiently.

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The comprehensive contract includes not only three DA62 MPP special mission aircraft but also ground stations, training, spare parts, and follow-on support. Each aircraft will be equipped with state-of-the-art technology tailored to the needs of aerial surveillance and emergency response missions. The configuration will include:

Trakka TC-375 EO/IR Camera: Providing high-resolution imaging for effective monitoring and identification.

Smith & Myers ARTEMIS Cell Phone Localization System: Enhancing search and rescue operations by pinpointing the location of mobile devices.

CarteNav AIMS-ISR Mission Management System: Facilitating efficient mission planning and execution. Beyond Line-of-Sight Datalink for near real-time data transmission from and to the aircraft.

4G/5G Data Link: Ensuring real-time communication and data transfer.

Maritime VHF Radio: Supporting maritime communication for comprehensive coverage during operations.

Diamond Aircraft looks forward to delivering these advanced aircraft and supporting Greece in its efforts to protect its citizens and natural resources. Delivery of the three DA62 MPP special mission aircraft is scheduled to be completed by the end of Q3/2025.

UNITED STATES

ARIZONA: The fire season is well underway in the areas surrounding Phoenix as air tankers and helicopters helped douse flames from the sky as nearly 200 firefighters on the ground battled a wildfire north-east of Phoenix threatening scores of homes and businesses late in June. Dozens of residents were forced to evacuate. The Red Cross set up an evacuation centre at a high school in Scottsdale, and shelters for horses and other large animals were established at several locations, including the rodeo grounds at nearby Cave Creek.

As authorities expanded the evacuation area on the northeast outskirts of Scottsdale, they closed roads and shut down part of a nature preserve as gusty winds continued to fan the flames in extremely hot, dry conditions. There were no immediate reports of injuries or structure damage.

Nearer Phoenix, where the temperature reached 43.3C (110F), about 60 residents evacuated homes in Boulder Heights overnight.

COLORADO: Three years ago local officials allocated \$30M to purchase equip and support its first "Firehawk," and it is now ready for action but not necessarily going to be sent up to deal with the first fire that takes place. Despatch will assess all the available resources nearest to the fire threat and send the nearest and most appropriate.

The state's second Firehawk, which was purchased last year, arrived in Colorado at the end of June and is expected to be operational by August 2025.

The purchase of Firehawk's was part of the state's push to rely less on rented aircraft to fight wildfires. In 2020, for instance, when Colorado had the three largest wildfires in its history, the state struggled to secure the aircraft it needed because there were also fires burning in California, New Mexico, and several other states. Colorado has several contracts with firefighting aircraft and positions them around the state depending on which area is seeing the highest frequency of fires and where people and homes are at highest risk.

When the first one was purchased in 2021, it was far from ready to fight fires. It was built in Poland, shipped to Texas and then taken to Colorado, where it had the military equipment removed and then rebuilt incorporating the latest technology fire attack role fit.

The delivery faced delay when it was found that one engine had to be removed and replaced.

The first Firehawk is stationed at Rocky Mountain Metropolitan Airport in Jefferson County, but can be moved anywhere in the state based on fire conditions. The best location for the second Firehawk is yet to be decided.

Based on a five-year average, Colorado expects to spend \$20M for large fires with 10% of overall costs going toward fire suppression.

The growing aerial firefighting fleet also plays a role in reducing the rising insurance rates across the state, residents are facing 50% to 100% price hikes for home and car insurance — or cancellation altogether — as climate disasters mount.

The outlook for this year is not looking promising. Above-average snowpack levels across the state and a very wet spring and early summer is good news, but that moisture will promote the growth of grasses that will inevitably dry out and become fire fuel. There are also a lot of dead ponderosa and lodgepole trees that have been killed by the nefarious, burrowing mountain pine beetles. With the dead trees and the excessive dry grasses it will not take a great deal to ignite fires. As a result it is thought that the south eastern parts of the state may have higher than normal fire risk this year.

SEARCH & RESCUE CANADA

AIR FORCE: The Airbus CC295 Kingfisher (formerly the CASA product manufactured in Spain) has completed the final cold soak test at McKinley Climactic Laboratory at Eglin Air Force Base, in Florida. This testing is being conducted to ensure the CC295 Kingfisher's ability to operate in the most extreme Canadian climactic environments.

This testing will confirm that Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) search and rescue teams are able to access the most northern reaches of Canada in the dead of winter with limited ground. The testing ensures the aircraft and associated equipment is functional between this range of temperatures. An open range testing campaign occurred in Yellowknife to validate the full take-off capability. This campaign served to collect data points that will be used to complete the certification of the aircraft, implement cold weather specific modifications, and qualify the aircraft in accordance with the contractual requirements.

FINLAND

BORDER PATROL: In late June Sierra Nevada Corporation (SNC), based in Sparks, Nevada, USA was awarded a \$170M contract to deliver two RAPCON-X jets to the Border Guard as part of its MVX programme. The aircraft type is based upon the Bombardier Challenger 650 and will modernise the fixed wing maritime and border patrol missions currently undertaken by the venerable Dornier 228 turbine twin.

Finland's security environment has changed fundamentally. The risks in the Finnish Border Guard's operating environment have increased. The Finnish Border Guard is preparing to control disturbances in border security on land and at sea, as well as manage maritime accidents and monitor the territorial integrity of Finland.

The current Dornier 228 surveillance aircraft, introduced in 1995, are reaching the end of their life cycle and are becoming increasingly difficult to maintain. The Finnish Border Guard has decided that only a manned aircraft can cope with varying tasks in demanding Finnish conditions. A versatile and adaptable solution is both operationally practical and cost-effective.

The Finnish Border Guard is responsible for Finland's border security, and border patrol aircraft are vital for the surveillance of Finland's extensive land and sea borders. The aircrafts' main tasks are to monitor land and sea borders, to search and rescue, to identify vessels in the Baltic Sea, and to detect, manage and combat marine environmental damage. In addition, the aircraft participate in the control of Finland's territorial integrity and support other authorities in monitoring the state of the Baltic Sea.

The Finnish Border Guard's aircraft also participate in obligatory international cooperation. The Finnish Border Guard also fulfils the requirements of the Convention on the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Baltic Sea Area

The fundamental change in the international and Finnish security environment, along with continuous and accelerating technological development, have also had a significant and long-term impact on the operating environment of the Finnish Border Guard. In its strategic process, the Finnish Border Guard has addressed the impact of these developments on its role and tasks and has published a new strategy:

<https://raja.fi/en/strategy-of-the-finnish-border-guard>
The document is in English.

The Finnish Border Guard held the MVX program contract signing June 27, 2024, in Helsinki, Finland.



Above: The Airbus CC295 Kingfisher is the new patrol aircraft for the Canadian armed forces and replaces the DHC Buffalo aircraft previously operated on Search and Rescue missions.



Right and above: The Dornier 228 has served the Border Guard in Finland for almost thirty years but a new jet replacement has been selected. The role fit interior of the Dornier dates from 1998.



SNC will continue work on the RAPCON-X aircraft from its integration centre in Hagerstown, Maryland, with aircraft delivery expected in 2026 and 2027 and to remain in service for around 30 years.

At the end of June the Finnish Border Guard issued a competition for the procurement of new Night Vision Goggles (380950-2024).

The operator currently uses ITT F4949, CLASS B, OBJ-AN/AVS-9 Night Vision Goggles with the following part numbers; 272557 & 264359-7. The subject of the procurement are Night Vision Goggles with compatibility for use in AW119, AS332 and B412 helicopters. Approved NVG for AW119 -ITT F4949F Gen III NVGs with Omnibus IV Tubes (MX-10160A 1600FOM) and Class B filters Approved NVG for AS332 - Harris (ITT) F4949 NVGs with MX-10160 (F9800 series) IITs (green phosphor) and Class B filters. Approved NVG for B412 - ITT F4949X-P2 272557 Class B III Green - ITT F4949; P/N 264359-7. This procurement request covers ten pieces.

SPAIN

AIR RESCUE SERVICES: A €134M contract for Air-rescue services in Spain has been let by Prestación del servicio aéreo de salvamento marítimo to cover the repair and maintenance services of helicopters, Air-sea rescue services, Aircraft-operation services, Pilot services, Aircraft operating services to Avincis Aviation España S.A.U.

The decision on the winner was made on May 28 and concluded on June 20. [TED]

UNITED KINGDOM



OFFSHORE: Offshore workers from around the UK and beyond can learn how to tackle helicopter and helideck fires in County Durham after a new training zone was launched on July 1.

The facility is based at County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service's (CDDFRS) training centre in Bowburn and features a helicopter simulator along with a full-size helideck. It is made up of a three-storey mock offshore platform rig with internal structures to mirror those on an offshore installation.

OPITO, the oil and gas industry training body, has given the training zone accreditation to offer a full range



of emergency response courses. It is a joint venture between 3t Training Services, the UK's largest energy sector training provider, and Vital Fire Solutions the trading arm of the Durham site.

The facility now features a helicopter simulator, along with a full-size helideck allowing new courses for offshore workers.

There are a number of similar training facilities available to the UK emergency services industry, many co-located with HUET (Helicopter Underwater Escape Training) dunker training. Although nominally aimed at the fire service and offshore, they are also used by police and air ambulance personnel. Many of them also incorporate helicopter underwater escape rigs which have a wider attraction to the industry. PAN has published reports from other similar facilities in the past.

New Government, New Ideas!

The General Election in the UK on Thursday, 4 July, to elect a new government, saw the Labour Party win by a very large margin, a landslide victory, capturing 412 of the 650 seats available. The Conservative Party came second with 121 seats, with the smaller political parties, including the new Party, Reform UK, accounting for the remaining 116 seats.

With such a large margin, the 'baton' for dealing with illegal migration, including 'stopping the boats' from crossing the English Channel, is now firmly in the hands of the new Prime Minister, Sir Keir Starmer and the new head of the Home Office (Department of the Interior) Ms Yvette Cooper MP. One of their first actions was to cancel the plan to deport illegal migrants, those who had crossed the Channel in a small boat, now an illegal route, to a third, safe country; to Rwanda in Central Africa, a member of the Commonwealth of Nations, for their applications for asylum to be processed offshore. Predictably, with the new government in power on the 5 July and without any deterrent to 'stop the boats' the numbers started to increase. In a little over 2 weeks, 5-21 July, 2,257 migrants were landed in the UK from 39 boats, by the Border Force and the Royal National Lifeboat Institution. The total number of migrants landed in the UK in 2024, by the end of July, is expected to exceed 16,000.

Nevertheless, for the first time, the Border Force returned 13 migrants to France, to Calais. This followed an incident in French waters on the 19 July, when a large inflatable boat with 86 migrants on board began to deflate and sink. Sadly, one migrant, a woman, perished. In total, 6 migrants perished in French waters in 3 separate incidents in the first 3 weeks of July 2024.

Prime Minister Starmer's new plan, to 'stop the boats' includes a new Border Security Command (BSC) to replace the former Home Office Small Boats Operational Command. Also, hundreds of special investigators, intelligence agents and cross border police officers to support the BSC across the UK and Europe. The Government's plan is to smash the criminal gangs, the people traffickers, by using counter-

terrorist style tactics as well as setting up a 1,000 strong Returns and Enforcement Unit to ensure that failed asylum seekers and others with no right to be in the UK are quickly removed; combating the problem at its source, by intercepting migrants, boats and other equipment used in the dangerous Channel crossing.

British Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer with the President of France, Emmanuel Macron. With the support of European leaders, the Prime Minister plans to smash the criminal gangs, the people traffickers.



The Guardian

Although it's too early to be certain, and the use of aircraft and air power has yet to be specified, these new tactics, returning migrants, those 'rescued' in French waters, back to France and returning failed asylum seekers to their country of origin, for example, to Vietnam, do seem to be gaining traction. There's been a noticeable shift from the previous, Conservative government's, policies of 'jam tomorrow' which were largely based in new legislation, legislation that has proved to be impossible to enforce. Today there is a new policy of direct action in the UK, in Europe and in the English Channel. Will these new tactics prove to be an improvement on earlier, failed policies? As always, time will tell.

The French Border Police, the Police Aux Frontiere, have been reported to be using a Vulcanair P68 Observer to fly occasional coastal patrols, along the beaches of northern France.



Blue Sky

In the last weekend of July, 27-28, in good weather, the result of an anti-cyclone, high pressure, over the UK, with blue skies and light breeze in the English Channel, in perfect conditions for the new generation of very large inflatable boats, a further 625 illegal migrants were landed in the UK by the Border Force. This brings the current total for this year, up to and including the 28 July to 16,456.

With the good weather continuing it is anticipated that the total may yet exceed 17,000 by the beginning of August. Sadly another migrant, another woman, who was rescued by the French from a boat intercepted near Calais and flown to hospital by helicopter, later lost her life. The French authorities have reported that the total number lives lost, by migrants in the English Channel, in the first 7 months of 2024, is now 23. In the previous year, in 2023, the total was 12.

There can be no doubt that when the boats are stopped, by the French, but also by the British, then the result will be that many lives will be saved. Far fewer migrants will drown in the cold waters of the English Channel, and far fewer will be crushed to death in the bottom of a large, grossly overloaded inflatable boat!

INDUSTRY

Metro Aviation is growing its list of capabilities with the creation of Metro Gulf, a new division that adds fixed wing aircraft to the company's extensive list of completion services.

The new division holds its own Part 145 Certificate and will provide maintenance, repair, and avionics services to Metro's existing fixed wing and rotor wing fleet, as well as external customers. Based in Lafayette, Louisiana, Metro Gulf provides software and equipment upgrades, inspections and engineering, avionics support, full airframe rewiring, structural modifications, paint services, and more.

With the creation of Metro Gulf, Metro Aviation now has three MRO (maintenance, repair, and overhaul) facilities to include PAC in Mount Pleasant, PA, Metro's headquarters in Shreveport, LA, and Metro Gulf in Lafayette, LA. Learn more at metrogulf.com

Columbia Helicopters is partnering with Piasecki Aircraft to deliver upgraded heavy-lift helicopters worldwide.

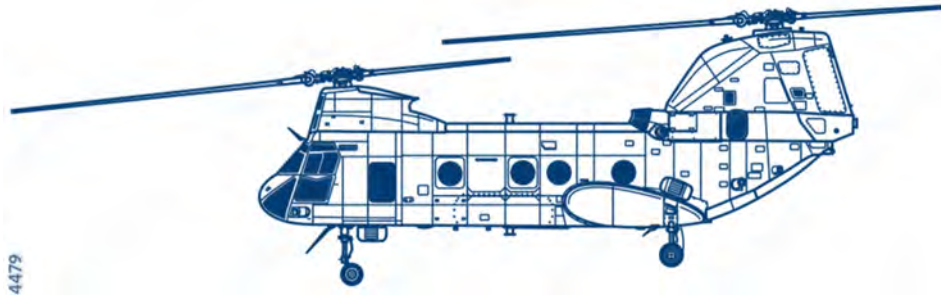
The collaboration will upgrade existing Model 107-II helicopters to a new, more fuel-efficient, powerful and robust Columbia Model CHI-107-III configuration. This partnership supports customers in essential services such as emergency response, aerial firefighting, forestry, infrastructure, and defence. The military variant of the 1960s Boeing Vertol Model 107-II is the CH-46E Sea Knight

(Phrog), which served with the U.S. Marine Corps and Navy, as well as allies in Sweden and Japan.

Modifications and testing will take place at Piasecki's 219,000-square-foot facility in Coatesville, Pennsylvania. The site was acquired by Piasecki last summer from Lockheed Martin Sikorsky after the S-76 and S-92 helicopter production lines at the site were closed down.

The Heliplex will also serve as CHI's new field site, expanding opportunities on the East Coast. The partnership covers the development of comprehensive product support plans for the Columbia Model CHI-107-III – including establishing an FAA Part 145 Repair Station at the facility.

Columbia is the OEM and FAA Type Certificate holder for the Model 234 Chinook and 107-II helicopters to provide responsive modifications, lifecycle support, and MRO services trusted worldwide by a diverse customer base.



Goodrich Hoist

Signia Aerospace is to acquire helicopter rescue equipment specialist Goodrich Hoist & Winch from Collins Aerospace.

Goodrich Hoist & Winch provides more than 50 proprietary models of rescue hoists and cargo winches for use by civil and military helicopter operators worldwide. The lifting gear is specifically designed for search and rescue (SAR) missions and other human external cargo flights.

Signia Aerospace is owned by Arcline Investment Management – a private equity firm with \$8.9bn in cumulative capital commitments.

China amphibian

China's multirole **AG600 Kunlong** amphibious aircraft has received early approval for its firefighting capabilities, paving the way for type certification later this year. Aviation Industry Corporation of China (Avic) announced the approval from the Civil Aviation Administration of China this week as it continues with the development of an aircraft that will also be used for various emergency response missions, including maritime search and rescue.

The latest test flights focused on a series of water-drop operations involving loads of three, six, and 12 tonnes (up to 26,400 pounds) of water.



Offshore Helicopter Services, provider of essential SAR services to the UK offshore energy sector are seeking a SAR co-pilot to join their team flying an AW139 from their base in Aberdeen, Scotland.. Ideally, they are after a pilot with previous SAR and AW139 experience.

Airbus has shortlisted eight sites in India for setting up its final assembly line for H125 (AS350) helicopters locally and the ground-breaking ceremony for the facility is expected later this year.

The facility, which will be the fourth Final Assembly Line (FAL) for the single engine H125, will initially produce up to 10 helicopters annually and the capacity will be ramped up depending on the market demand. India is the market of the future for helicopters. At present, the market is extremely embryonic, it is very small compared to what the potential could be. Olivier Michalon, Executive Vice President Global Business of Airbus Helicopters, said he expected that the ground breaking ceremony for the FAL is expected in October or November this year and the facility will be operational in 2026 and the delivery is anticipated to start towards the end of 2026.

Airbus, the AS350 series is currently the most-sold helicopter in India as well as the South Asia region. Airbus projects demand for H125 helicopters in India and neighbouring countries at 500 over the next 20 years.

There are around 350 civil and parapublic helicopters in India and South Asia (India, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Maldives). Out of them, less than 250 helicopters are in service in India. In India, there are about 100 Airbus helicopters, with the majority of them being H125 and 130s. Currently regulations are restrictive but the company is working as if those regulations are going to lighten up a bit and the skies become more open. (PTI)

In the **UK regulator Ofcom** has fined communication giant, BT £17.5M for being ill-prepared to respond to a catastrophic failure of its emergency call handling service last summer.

BT connects 999 and 112 calls in the UK and provides relay services for deaf and speech-impaired people.

On June 25, 2023, BT experienced a network fault that affected its ability to connect calls to emergency services between 06:24 and 16:56. During the incident, nearly 14,000 call attempts – from 12,392 different callers – were unsuccessful.

BT notified Ofcom of this issue, as required by law, and they opened an investigation to establish whether the company had failed to comply with its legal duties to take appropriate and proportionate measures to prepare for potential disruption to its network.

There were three key stages to this incident:

Phase 1, from 06:24 to 07:33 –

During the first hour, BT’s emergency call handling system was disrupted by what was later found to be a configuration error in a file on its server. This resulted in call handling agents’ systems restarting as soon as a call was received; agents being logged out of the system; calls being disconnected or dropped upon transfer to the emergency authorities; and calls being put back in the queue. BT was initially unable to determine the cause of the issue and attempted to switch to its disaster recovery platform.

Phase 2, from 07:33 to 08:50 –

The first attempt to switch to the disaster recovery platform was unsuccessful due to human error. This was a result of instructions being poorly documented, and the

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team being unfamiliar with the process. The incident grew from affecting some calls to a total outage of the system.

Phase 3, from 08:50 to 16:56 – The rate of unsuccessful calls decreased once traffic was migrated successfully to the disaster recovery platform. However, usual service was not fully restored initially as the disaster recovery platform struggled with demand.

It was adjudged that BT did not have sufficient warning systems in place for when this kind of incident occurs, nor did it have adequate procedures for promptly assessing the severity, impact and likely cause of any such incident or for identifying mitigating actions. It was also found that BT's disaster recovery platform had insufficient capacity and functionality to deal with a level of demand that might reasonably be expected.

Notes to editors

[1] Section 105A(1) of the Communications Act 2003, as amended by the Telecommunications (Security) Act 2021 – which came into force in October 2022 – and Regulation 9 of the Electronic Communications (Security Measures) Regulations 2022 require providers of public electronic communications networks and services to take such measures as are appropriate and proportionate, among others, to prepare for the occurrence of security compromises. Section 105A(2) of the Communications Act 2003 defines a security compromise as including anything that compromises the availability, performance or functionality of the network or service.

[2] BT must pay the fine within two months of this decision, and it will then be passed on to HM Treasury. It includes a 30% reduction as a result of BT's admission of liability and agreement to settle the case.



At the Farnborough International Airshow last month **Diamond Aircraft** had two exciting firsts for visitors. The first public display flight of the DART-750 aerobatic trainer, and a first public outing for the new DA62 MPP Guardian configuration!

Diamond Aircraft are currently exhibiting at the 2024 Farnborough Airshow, where we have presented two important 'firsts' to the visiting public, the Dart trainer and the latest configuration of the DA62MPP (multi-purpose platform) range of special mission aircraft.

The exceptional performance and cost-efficiency of Diamond's market-leading DA62 aircraft, the DA62 MPP Guardian is a state-of-the-art airborne reconnaissance platform that blends ultra-high-definition imaging with the latest in real-time augmented reality mapping, while offering unrivalled communication and data transmission capabilities.

Completing Diamond Aircraft's line up at the 2024 Farnborough Airshow was the DA50 RG Diamond Aircraft's luxury class, single-engine piston aircraft. With its large, five-seat cabin, the multi-award-winning DA50 RG moves more passengers farther and in greater comfort and style than any other aircraft in its segment.

Last month it was announced that **Gama Aviation** are to be the Authorised Sales Representatives for Textron Aviation Special Missions aircraft in the United Kingdom.

They will feature the Cessna and Beechcraft portfolio of utility aircraft in the Special Mission sector.

Fargo Jet Center, a provider of special mission aircraft modifications, and **Stellar Blu Solutions**, who specialise in next-gen satcom technology, have announced a strategic partnership aimed at revolutionizing special mission aircraft connectivity capabilities. This collaboration establishes an aircraft testbed modified for Stellar Blu's Sidewinder, an electronically steered antenna (ESA) based SATCOM terminal capable of delivering superior Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR) activities.

Cessna Citation Encore+ Aircraft Conversion | Exterior | Modifications Completed by Fargo Jet Center, with Stellar Blu Solutions Sidewinder Antenna Installation



The partnership of FJC and Stellar Blu has secured significant ISR contracts, including Bombardier Challenger and DeHavilland Dash-8 platforms, solidifying their expertise in the field. Together, they will enhance their capabilities with a large-cabin, wide-body business jet ISR program and other small, midsize, and larger aircraft special mission applications. This partnership underscores their commitment to advancing the aerospace industry through innovative solutions.

More information at their websites - stellar-blu.com and www.fargojet.com [Parapex]

Honeywell is joining the GoAERO Prize as a strategic partner and sponsor. The GoAERO Prize is a \$2+ million global competition catalysing the creation of uncrewed Emergency Response Flyers to perform critical response and rescue missions after natural disasters, medical emergencies, and other crises. Other aerospace companies involved with the Prize include NASA, Boeing, and RTX. Additionally, Honeywell will serve as a competition judge, as well as providing participating teams with mentorship, training, lectures, and software from technical experts throughout the duration of the three-year, global competition. The Prize challenges teams of innovators around the world to create a portable, versatile, and autonomy-enabled Emergency Response Flyer that can rescue people in crises and respond to challenges posed by medical emergencies, humanitarian crises, climate change, and natural disasters. The flyer must be capable of delivering first responders, providing emergency supplies, and aiding in humanitarian efforts. During the Final Fly-Off in February 2027, the judges will evaluate flyers on productivity, adversity, and manoeuvring. The competition consists of three stages - technical papers, building through a subscale or full-scale flyer and finally a Fly-Off, during which teams must use their flyers in five real-world emergency response missions.

Teams may still join the competition and compete for over \$2M in prizes by signing up at www.herox.com/GoAERO. [Parapex]

An advanced airborne 5G connectivity system has been successfully integrated to a **Britten-Norman** Islander aircraft, completing a series of demonstration flights.

The groundbreaking technology is being developed by a number of UK companies led by Stratospheric Platforms Limited (SPL), a leading Non-Terrestrial Networks telecoms developer, with design, integration and demonstration flights provided by manufacturer Britten-Norman.

SPL is at the forefront of developing airborne antennas to deliver widescale high performance 5G coverage. This technology offers numerous valuable applications, such as quickly restoring networks after major disasters like earthquakes or tsunamis, where traditional mobile network infrastructure has been disrupted.

On July 18, 2024, the project team were joined by distinguished guests from potential customers and investors to observe the installation of the array under real flight conditions during an event at Britten-Norman's Solent Airport aircraft maintenance (MRO) facility. The trial, conducted by Britten-Norman's Flight Test Organisation, aimed to demonstrate the aircraft's capability to operate safely with the large 5G phased array antenna installed. Key aspects of the flight test programme included assessment of aircraft performance and handling qualities, covering both normal and emergency operation. This will support full certification of the system, enabling integration in terrestrial telecoms network at connection speeds of up to 200Mbps over 15,000km².

The turboprop BN2T-4S Islander variant was chosen for its robust design, all-weather capability, excep-

tional endurance and payload capacity. In addition, the aircraft’s modular design makes it an ideal platform for integration of large mission system payloads, whilst retaining a rapid re-role capability for other tasks.

The next phase of the project involves demonstrating the technology via a connection to a private UK-based national 5G telecommunications network.



This innovative project represents a significant leap forward in airborne telecommunications, bringing reliable, high-speed 5G connectivity from the sky one step closer to fruition.

Editor: And just when UK Emergency Services communications using earlier technology (ESN) were getting within grasp....

A resurgent MD Helicopters (MDH), in the absence of a truly modern airframe to offer, will be again highlighting its upgrade options to the MD500 based airframes and they have seen limited success with that option.

The main product is rebuilds, mainly the E to F Conversion Kit upgrades, an option that can offer a “new” airframe for half the cost of a new helicopter. With US units often short on finance simply because the areas they serve are relatively small in terms of taxpayers if not area.



Upcoming options include three additional upgrades expected to receive FAA certification in 2025: the MD 520N to an MD 530N, also called the Super N, the MD 500D to a MD 500 Super D Upgrade, and the MD 500E to a MD 500 Super E Upgrade that includes F-model blades, tail rotor gearbox extension, and new vertical and horizontal stabilizers.

The popular APSCON Customer Appreciation Events MDH will host include an open beer bar for customers on the booth.



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ACCIDENTS & INCIDENTS

28 June 2024 Bell 212 C-FPMR Firefighting helicopter owned by Great Slave crashed at the Fort Good Hope airport, North West Territories, some 800km northwest of Yellowknife, Canada while fighting a 82 sq.km fire. Shortly after lift off from the Fort Good Hope Airport (CYGH), NT, the helicopter experienced a separation of one main rotor blade from the head. Shortly thereafter, the remaining rotor blade and head separated from the mast. The helicopter subsequently collided with terrain. The pilot, Australian Tom Frith, who was the only occupant, received fatal injuries. There was a post impact fire. [ASN]

9 July 2024 Bell 212 C-FTLR of LR Helicopters and a **Cessna 172 Skyhawk** of the Namao Flying Club were involved in a mid-air collision about 24 km northwest of Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. The Cessna continued to fly and landed at Edmonton/Villeneuve Airport, Alberta. The pilot of the helicopter was able to land in a field just northwest of Sandy Lake. [ASN]

10 July 2024 Air Tractor AT-802F Fire Boss N10122 Aero Spray Inc float equipped and operating on behalf of the Forestry Service from the Coeur d'Alene Airport/Pappy Boyington Field, Idaho, crashed into Hauser Lake, near Canyon Ferry Lake, northeast of Helena, Montana, while scooping water for fighting the Horse Gulch Fire. The pilot perished and the aircraft was written off.

11 July 2024 helicopter. The pilot of a helicopter that was responding to a small wildfire in central Idaho before crashing in the Sawtooth National Forest. The incident occurred during the initial attack of the Bench Lake Fire, he survived, called 911 and was able to hike to a waiting ambulance from Stanley. The U.S. Forest Service was unable to immediately release any additional information, including what role the helicopter had been taking in the wildfire response. [Custer County Sheriff's Office Facebook]

Ed: The only helicopter incident that may relate to this is a Bell 407 N21BH of Chemair Helicopters Inc. Jefferson, Wisconsin It was operating from Warm Springs Creek Airport, Lowman, ID when it suffered an as yet unidentified problem leading to substantial damage.

16 July 2024 MD Helicopters MD600N N609RP Harris County Sheriffs Office SWAT. Helicopter on an aerial patrol training mission was substantially damaged when it made a hard landing in scrub near Eagle Lake, Texas. The incident occurred at a training site located at 1021 Old Altair Rd. The remainder of the course was cancelled Five of the six occupants were injured. The airframe remained upright and largely complete with the MRBs damaged. [X]

21 July 2024 Leonardo AW119 Koala PR-CBG of the Corpo di Bombeiros Militar do Goiás, Brazil. The helicopter crashed into the banks of the Araguaia River in an upright controlled flight, receiving severe damage but no reported injuries.

22 July 2024 Sikorsky S-64S I-CFAG Vigili di Fuoco firefighting helicopter operating from Reggio Calabria-Tito Menniti Airport crashed on its return to the airport. The pilots were rescued from the aircraft, which was on fire, and were transported to the hospital for medical evaluation.

22 July 2024 Air Tractor AT-802 S5 BZR operating as a firefighting aircraft near Portoroz, Slovenia. When landing at Portoroz airport after a sortie suffered minor damage to the amphibian floats due to inadvertent landing on land.

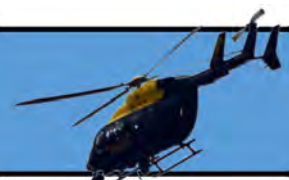
22 July 2022 PZL-Mielec M18B Dromader N455TG firefighting aircraft of A-S Ranch Inc. Suffered minor damage on landing after losing undercarriage wheel on take-off from Polson Airport in Montana for a firefighting mission. The emergency landing was at Great Falls International Airport, Great Falls, MT

25 July 2024 Eurocopter AS350B2 N6087C US Customs and Border Protection. Aircraft on border surveillance mission received substantial damage after an autorotation into undulating rough scrub on the Mexico side of the border near Nuevo Laredo. Landed upright but with damage to front cabin, landing skids and MRB. Crew received injuries and transported to USA medical facility. [Media]

25 July 2024 Air Tractor AT-802 N805DG Fire fighting aircraft operated by Wakefield Aircraft LLC went missing while fighting the Falls Fire in the Malheur National Forest Inear Seneca, Oregon. The pilot died in the crash.

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Keeping up with Emergency Services News



UNMANNED

This past two years have seen something of a sea change in opinions on war use of drones – that tends to read across to potential terrorist use of the craft as well.

Jammer guns are still promoted as a major remedy from stopping drones (along with conventional weapons) but they are increasingly seen as ‘no good’ against First Person View (fpv) drones and microcopters blessed with new transmission protocols. Their success market was early model drones and simple ‘toy’ drones.



Tekeverat Farnborough 2024 ©Tekever

TEKEVER unveiled their first entirely UK-made UAS. The long-range AR3 is designed for both land and maritime missions, it took pride of place in their showcase at the Farnborough International Airshow last month.

The more familiar long-endurance AR5 (left) was at the Royal Air Force stand, celebrating Tekever’s strategic partnership with the RAF. An upgraded version with new sensors for ISR missions, incorporating real-time feedback from Ukrainian forces on the ground was displayed.

TEKEVER was the first company to fly a drone at Farnborough International Air Show, in 2012, crossing airspace that had been traversed only by manned aircraft for decades. A few years later, they again made history by becoming the first company to fly two drones simultaneously, a previously unimaginable feat.

Farnborough was also the venue for the unveiling of the AR5, the surveillance drone that now regularly patrols the English Channel.

This year, 12 years after their debut, they surprised everyone once more by presenting their first system made entirely in the UK.



Tekeverat Farnborough 2024 ©Tekever



Tekeverat Farnborough 2024 ©Tekever



In recent years there have been a multitude of failures of start up drone manufacturers, generally few of the Styrofoam designs have survived the realities of the market. Many of the start ups were simply creating flying machines with few if any ideas incorporated for actual operational tasks. Even the most sophisticated of drones have their troubles.

Last month the German navy cancelled further development of their shipboard drone programme incorporating the UMS Skeldar V-200, a medium-range helicopter and UAV developed by the Swedish aerospace company Saab. The Skeldar was selected in competition with offerings from Diehl and Schiebel with the Camcopter.

In recent weeks, there has been repeated speculation in expert circles that the integration of helicopter drones on the German Navy's corvettes was facing major problems. The halting of the programme has now been confirmed. It is stated that contractually agreed milestones had not been reached.



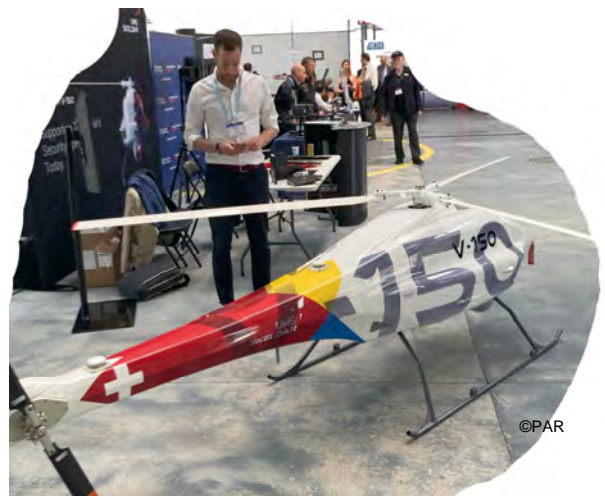
The Sea Falcon helicopter drone, known to the manufacturer as the UMS Skeldar V-200, was to be used on corvettes to enable the ships to conduct long-range reconnaissance over a radius of more than one hundred km.

After the development phase, the Navy was supposed to receive three Sea Falcon drone systems for its corvettes from this year. The Bundeswehr Procurement Office BAAINBw announced the conclusion of the contract with ESG.

The ESG (Elektroniksystem- und Logistik-GmbH) led a consortium consisting of the manufacturer and supplier of the aircraft, UMS Skeldar Sweden, the manufacturer of the corvette, NVL B.V. & Co. KG, and the aviation electronics producer CUONICS. The project was funded to the tune of €25M in April 2021 but was expected to cost at least €80M by the time it matured.

Where they will go next remains to be seen, the drone could make a comeback or a different model may fill the gap – several companies and groupings remain in the market. In 2020 ECA Group has awarded UMS SKELDAR a procurement contract to supply the Skeldar V-200 UAV as part of the naval mine countermeasures capability replacement, a programme led by Belgium Naval & a consortium called Robotics. This covered 12 new-generation ships (six each for the Belgian and Royal Netherlands Navies).

Editor: Although this storyline relates to the military the product and the smaller V-150 is also marketed at the law enforcement sector (it was exhibited at the 2023 PAVCon Europe in Bilbao, and the 2024 Home Office Security and Policing, Farnborough)

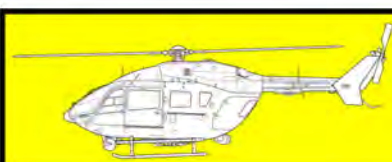


Late in June **HeliOperations** announced that their website now includes a feature for completing the Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS) permit form.

This form must be filled out before any UAS operations within the Portland Heliport Air Traffic Zone (ATZ) or Flight Restriction Zone (FRZ). This requirement is in accordance with the Air Navigation Order 2016, Article 94A.

Approval from HeliOperations is mandatory before conducting any UAS operations within the Portland Heliport ATZ/FRZ. UAS operations within the exclusion zones of His Majesty's Prison The Verne and Portland Young Offenders Institute are not authorised.

Operators must obtain authorisation at least 48 hours prior to the proposed UAS take-off time via phone +44 (0)1305 700001 or email bookings@helioperations.co.uk



WWW.PAVCONEUROPE.EU
Europes Police Meeting Space





For the first time, Royal Mail postmen and women will load and unload drones as part of the latest trial with Skyports and Argyll and Bute Council.

The multirotor drone, which can carry payloads of up to 6kg and is the same one used in Royal Mail's previous trial in Orkney, will deliver mail between two remote Scottish islands – Islay and Jura.

The drone will transport mail that is usually taken via ferry in a Royal Mail van. But as the weather and geography of the Inner Hebrides can impact the ability to provide an uninterrupted delivery service, it is hoped the use of electric drones for inter-island delivery can improve service.

Additionally, the drone also brings safety improvements, ensuring postal workers can deliver between ports and marinas without risk, as well as emission savings.

This is the sixth time that Royal Mail has trialled drones and the second using Extended Visual Line of Sight (EVLOS) flying, which allows drones to travel further than the standard Visual Line of Sight by making use of 'trained observers' along its route. These observers keep the pilot, who is flying the drone remotely, updated on critical information to ensure the drone maintains a safe distance from other air users, structures and any hazards.

In November 2022, the UK Government awarded Argyll and Bute Council a grant of £250,000 via the Regulators' Pioneer Fund (RPF) to work in partnership with Skyports to conduct a series of trials that will serve as a building block to showcase the potential of drones in enhancing vital public services.

Argyll and Bute Council, in collaboration with Skyports, is supporting organisations like Royal Mail which provide critical services in the area. This collaborative effort aims to demonstrate how these organisations can improve the safety, efficiency and sustainability of their operations and better serve customers by implementing electric drone services.

Again utilizing the Skyports VTOL drone design, the Scottish Ambulance Service (SAS) is set to carry out research with members of the public to test how drones can be used in response to cardiac arrests.

Project CAELUS, funded by Innovate UK, are a group of organisations aiming to develop the UK's first

drone enabled medical logistics network. SAS, a key partner in the project, is aiming to carry out a simulation study later in the month to better understand the feasibility of delivering an Automated External Defibrillator (AEDs) via drone technology.

Every year over 8000 people in Scotland have an Out of Hospital Cardiac (OHCA) arrest. This simulation study will investigate bystander interaction with the drone and also explore the protocols required to support SAS call handlers in navigating bystanders to a drone during simulated scenarios of OHCA's.

During each simulated OHCA scenario, a group of participants will be given instructions through a telephone compared to another group of participants who will be given video assisted guidance to retrieve a nearby drone-delivered AED. This study is building on existing research domestically and internationally, to better understand how drones could be used by an ambulance service in the future.

Editor: Like many ideas this relies heavily on the people on scene at the medical emergency reacting in the right way. Why would you ask for a drone mounted defibrillator?

For instance many/most/some/none (delete as appropriate) patients being treated for heart and blood disorders are supposed to carry alert cards in their pocket/bag/ wallet/purse (delete and appropriate) to alert first responders to the existing medical condition. Other good ideas suggest that a similar alert should be kept in the household fridge in a sealed plastic container.

So far no-one has explained why your average first responder would care to empty the severely ill patients pocket/bag/ wallet/purse or fridge whilst nominally attempting to save the life of the patient. I can say from experience that no-one ever sought to explain to serving and healthy emergency services workers that there was something mysterious and informative in a fridge besides milk and orange juice. Rifling through my wallet on a street while I sought to die has always been something of a criminal act.

FIRST RESPONDERS

Public safety organizations around the world are increasingly implementing "Drone as a First Responder" trials, also known as "DFR." Whether deployed for firefighting, search and rescue, natural disaster response, or another public safety operations, DFR have repeatedly demonstrated how they can increase accuracy, efficiency, and safety.

Given the many potential (but theoretical) advantages of DFR systems, many have advocated for increased adoption in public safety, emergency response, and law enforcement.

They are promoted – mainly by drone developers – as one of the most positive technology-driven changes to the safety of cities. In small areas they can demonstrate how 20%-30% of calls are being resolved without needing to send an officer when a drone arrives first. That demonstrates increased efficiency and keeps personnel safer but has a direct predecessor in the not so many years ago the same words were being used to extoll manned police air support..

Despite these advantages, fewer than 10% of the approximately 18,000 law enforcement agencies in the US have a drone-based operation. While the number of agencies considering the use of DFR drones is growing there are limits to how well operations will perform in bad weather or other negative conditions.



One of the latest US operations to announce the use of DFR is Elk Grove Police Department in California. Located 14 miles south of Sacramento they have a staff count of 257 with just 150 being sworn officers covering 42 square miles and a population of around 177,000. They will be served with three drones. Even smaller is the 88,000 population city of Champaign in Illinois they may be embracing the technology but this is not a movement that is yet going to change the world!

A prospective larger operation is expected in the Eastern state of North Carolina. A regional DFR effort has begun, agencies in New Hanover and Brunswick counties have come together to use drones equipped with 6K cameras to monitor traffic accidents and crime scenes, thermal drones to aid with fire calls and search and rescue, and smaller indoor drones to give officers outside an emergency area "a glimpse of what the scene looks like" before going in. The number of drones being acquired is not dis-



closed but only 10 million people live in a state that is over 53,000 square miles so there may be some gaps in coverage!

The US public safety drone market is expected to grow at a rate of 11.7% between 2024 and 2030, a percentage rate not too different from that predicted in Europe, but there with over 18,000 US agencies to make their own decisions over spending and thousands of miles of sparsely populated land it is going to be a slow process. The current expectation among some senior officers in the emergency services that DFR is going to replace patrols by humans any time soon is pure fantasy. Meanwhile there is at least another generation of manned helicopters to fund.



PEOPLE

In the USA the Officer Down Memorial Page has released heir 2024 half year report on law enforcement fatalities and shows a percentile comparison with last year.

- Total 74 +6%
- Gunfire 28 -7%
- Auto 26 +100%
- Medical 11 -45%
- Other 9 +29%

Although the overall rise is 6% it should be pointed out that countries other than the USA tend not to count deaths other than those showing a direct attack upon officers. Unfortunately there is no way these figures reflect the alternative view.

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In Australia, a well respected former Northern Territory senior police officer Neil Mellon has been sentenced to eight months behind bars after pleading guilty to a string of offences, including destroying evidence related to a 2022 helicopter crash that killed Netflix star Chris 'Willow' Wilson.

Mellon previously pleaded guilty in the Darwin Local Court to more than a dozen charges, including destroying evidence, obtaining a benefit by deception and six counts of disclosing confidential information. The destruction of evidence charge was related to the disposal of the mobile phone that belonged to Mr Wilson, who died when the Robinson R44 helicopter he was travelling in crashed during a saltwater crocodile egg-collecting mission in West Arnhem Land in February 2022.

The other charges were for a series of unrelated offences over the course of several months in 2022. Mellon, a senior sergeant, attended the scene of the crash of a Robinson R44 VH-IDW on February 28, 2022 alongside his co-accused Matt Wright and bush pilot Michal Burbidge. The R44 was undertaking its mission when it lost its engine and the pilot released his human cargo Chris "Willow" Wilson a star in National Geographic's Outback Wrangler and Netflix's Wild Croc Territory, from a height he could not survive. The collector died in the fall and the pilot was substantially injured when the aircraft impacted the ground.

Mellon went to the crash with a prime purpose of preserving the scene. While placing Mr Wilson's body into a body bag, Mellon removed Mr Wilson's mobile phone from his pocket and handed it to Burbidge, the bush pilot, who later destroyed it.

Other charges were for a series of unrelated offences over the course of several months in 2022. A full report on the accident can be found on the www.atsb.gov.au website

MOVE ALONG THERE

At RAF Benson, Oxfordshire, Caterham and the Royal Air Force (RAF) have teamed up to create this: a one-off Caterham Seven 360R with the components of a Puma HC2 helicopter.

The effort is to commemorate the retirement of the helicopter. Upcycling apparently. The aluminium skin from the Puma's tail and doors have been refashioned into panels for the Seven and interior bulkhead.

The door jettison handle has been left in situ as a reminder of what it once was.

The helicopter's ammunition box holds the car battery, and the panels are NATO Green and Desert Sand.

[Top Gear]



A truly unique Seven, celebrates over 50 years of the Puma HC2 helicopter.

The vehicle's body has been shaped using the untouched aluminium skin from the decommissioned aircraft's tail boom and doors, which retain the Helicopter's serial number, XW232. To finish it off, the interior has been trimmed in quilted soundproofing, while the aircraft's toggle switchgear and clocks have been used for the dashboard.

The one-of-a-kind car was unveiled at the British Grand Prix on July 5 and is due to be auctioned later this year to raise money for Mission Motorsport and the RAF Benevolent Fund.

DO NOT DRINK THE WATER

After the variety of scare stories surrounding the approach to the Summer Olympics now being held in Paris (France) it was interesting to see the Mayor of Paris Anne Hidalgo saw fit to take the media down to the River Seine to demonstrate it was safe for competitors to bathe in. **INSANE.**

P.S. Well it was worth her effort it seems. There were pollution delays to avoid but the event finally went ahead just 24 hours later than planned.



©PA Image

I managed to find and speak to one of our local police officers last month – it was a brief meeting and an activity I rarely get the chance to repeat too often.



©WAPCollection

We all know it's a difficult job to do, I and I would not wish to return to policing ever, but some of the information I gleaned left me somewhat puzzled. Not many of the laws have changed over the last 25 years or so and very little has been removed from the statute books but it seems that the people in the blue cloth are more choosy in what they do as far as relates to work.

I was particularly concerned to learn that the passage of time has not been kind to the 1984 Police & Criminal Evidence Act (PACE). I hated it and struggled to make it work but it seems that I was more efficient than I had realised. It usually took most of a day to process prisoners back in the last century but now I am led to believe that some forces are utilising four officers over four days just to deal with a shop lifter! *Amazing.*

EVENTS

EUROPEAN ROTORS has announced registration is now open for the 2024 edition, which will take place from 04 November to 07 November, with the show floor open from 05 to 07 November. As Europe's largest event dedicated to the vertical flight industry, EUROPEAN ROTORS 2024 promises to be an unparalleled occasion for innovation, networking, safety, and collaboration.

Over 5,000 people from nearly 80 countries attended EUROPEAN ROTORS 2023 in Madrid, which also included more than 200 exhibitors and dozens of aircraft on display.

Held at the RAI Amsterdam, the show once again kicks off with the European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) EASA Rotorcraft and VTOL Safety Symposium. The one-day event on 04 November is a unique forum in Europe to discuss the latest developments from a safety perspective. This event gives the opportunity to actively exchange ideas between Authorities, Industry, Operators, Pilots, Safety Investigators, Researchers, and all those interested in improving safety.

Organised by EASA and European Helicopter Association (EHA), EUROPEAN ROTORS is produced by Vertical Aviation International. The show has the support of European and international operators and manufacturers, and many of these companies exhibit on the show floor.

Based on previous years' success, EUROPEAN ROTORS 2024 will again feature an expansive exhibition showcasing the latest advancements in helicopter technology, unmanned aerial systems, and urban air mobility solutions. Industry leaders, manufacturers, suppliers, and service providers from around the globe will gather to present their cutting-edge products and services, making this a must-attend event for anyone involved in the vertical flight sector.

EUROPEAN ROTORS | THE VTOL SHOW AND SAFETY CONFERENCE





More arrivals for APSCON Houston on July 27 . [Norpress]



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 A photograph of a crowd of people at an event, with blue and red geometric overlays (squares and lines) overlaid on the image.

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 A collection of military-related imagery including the Norwegian flag, a biplane with "AH 177" on its side, and several military emblems including the Royal Air Force roundel and the Royal Norwegian Air Force crest.

Home base of the Norwegian Air Force 1941-5